

## **PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

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Every human being is born inherently with basic human rights which are stipulated in our Philippine Constitution, specifically In Article III. These human rights give everyone the privilege, the freedom and the fundamental or basic opportunities to live a normal life a freeman deserves especially in a democratic country like the Philippines.

I am saddened by the fact that these human rights are violated and trampled upon by lawless elements of the society. We see hungry people around begging for food and money. People who are homeless are seen in the streets, street children who don't go to school. People who are killed because of their desire to express themselves to the society. These are human rights that we are deprived of. We have the right to food, shelter, education, expression, religion, and a lot more. The sad thing is - these human rights are deprived of especially from those who are less powerful less fortunate, the uneducated.

The point of it all is - we cannot have peace when these rights are violated. Respect for these human rights serves as the KEY to the attainment of PEACE. Article III section 1 of the constitution clearly states: "No one is deprived of life, liberty and property, without due process of law". Every Filipino then, must be thankful about these human rights, which are gifts and blessings coming from heaven.

A few days back, my attention was caught on the brutal rape and slay of a two year old girl on TV Patrol ASS - CBN news. I couldn't believe it. I couldn't swallow it. A 62 - year old man raped his own grand daughter who was only two years old. Jennifer, who might have been somebody In the future, was raped, killed and, oh my God, she was beheaded. Her head was thrown among the bushes. I felt outrageous. The crime was heinous, inhuman! Evil world for God sake, I wanted justice. I was like an erupting volcano. Pitiful Jennifer, may she rest in peace. See how human rights are violated?

This is not our first time to hear such tragic news. For everyday we hear children killed, women raped, people kidnapped, senators charged of crimes, sexual harassment; perjury, plunder. We got all satanic deeds on earth: greed, ambition, vengeance, envy, abuses.

Few years ago, the kidnapping by the Abbu Sayaff was tremendously making big news, headlines that have caught attention of people Ground the world. How many would still fall as victims of this group? How many would still die? Our peace and order situation is abnormal because of such violation of human rights. We have unstable peace obviously and now what's the latest? The bombing at the Zamboanga Airport, which alarmed residents here. Such inhuman act has killed lives and injured others. Our right to live is threatened.

Peace is here no more. Conflict reigns among us. This is what we see. This is what we experience. When I realized that the theme of the essay is on peace and human rights, I could help myself but recall the lesson of peace I learned from my literature professor way back in college. On top of it all, I recalled the romantic love story of Romeo and Juliet, exhibiting the family feud between the Capulet's and the Montague's love conquers all, we say, that while the two families were at war, Juliet Capulet and Romeo Montague, who saw each other for the first time, fell in love at first sight. They tried to find a way to see each other every day. No one and nothing could come along their way to serve as villain, odd or obstacle in their love affair. No one could stop their warring families. Not even you! Only death! And they have proven their immortal love in this marvelous masterpiece of Shakespeare. But what is striking in the story is the point where the death of the two made the warring families realize that what they had been through was foolish. So they reconciled. And there was peace! Peace between the Capulet's and the Montague's. And they lived happily ever after. Very touching, very inspiring. This play is a classic. Written in 1595, its message is still quite significant to the present time. Imagine, to achieve peace, human rights are violated. There was inhumanity and disrespect to life. But the story showed us how beautiful it is: to achieve peace. Here, we see that peace is the key to unity, happiness, contentment and prosperity.

This essay of mine speaks about peace, and I address this to peace-loving citizens and those who have violated human rights or are still violating such until now.

Let us do a little analysis. Peace should start from the family. From there, it is radiated to the community, the society. It is propagated by role - models, by parents, teachers, priest, and leaders to mention a few. How can we attain peace when our parents quarrel night and day; when our leaders in the senate and congress and executive branch are always in conflict? We cannot give what we don't have. Now, tell me; who can live in peace like this? Who can have peace when human rights are stepped on by people?

In the state of human chaos, the United Nations Organization (UNO) comes into the picture, bringing with it the constitution, international laws and global justice system. My vision of peace as an educator is seeing people of walks of life corner together as one family, sharing one noble dream of brotherhood and solidarity.

Looking at the world today, we become disgusted, sad, and down - hearted because our leaders who are supposed to be models are bad examples to us. Well, we may call them good models of bad examples. Ridiculous! These are laws - makers who break the law; peace and order authorities who create trouble; educator\$ who teach us to do what is not to be done; seemingly religious people, who inflame in us with the zeal of evil and mortal sin. These are medical practitioners whose philosophy is to save life but are bribed to abort babies or terminate lives for an amount of money. MATERIALISTIC!

The world is in turmoil. This is even an understatement. The world is in turbulence, in the state of delirium. The end is near. Where is peace?

Today, we even hear of priests charged of rape, corruption and immoral acts. Very embarrassing! I just can't swallow it. Are they worthy of emulation? On a personal note, I look

up to St. Francis of Assisi, who brings out his love to every little creature he sees. I'm sure some of you heard of him. A peace-loving servant of God turned to saint. In his prayer, he said: "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is darkness, light; where there is despair, hope; where there is sadness, joy; where there is war, PEACE". Very striking! Very ponderous.

We have to consider that human rights include every right and privilege a human being must enjoy inherently. The right to eat, drink, dress - up, talk, own properties, socialize, pray, go to school, speak and a lot more. For as long as one does not violate the right of others or does not disturb others or affect their lives. These and all other specific rights are what have been referring to as human rights. And unless we give due respect to these lights, we can never have peace. Peace is the key to our nation's progress.

My dear friends, the world is full of evil spirits. Leaders stand in the podium saying "No corruption". But look at the plunder cases? I'd like to laugh but I can't. This is entirely a travesty, an insult to our own Identity as Filipinos. What else can we say? We better shut up. Crimes are committed by policemen. We feel that we are safe, that we are away from danger, but we never know that danger is with us, even when we are in our own home. There is no way out. The name of the game is survival... oh yes! let me complete that, survival of the fittest. Inside job, frame - up, hired killers, huuh! Our ultimate recourse is prayer. Our sole remedy is intercession from the Holy Father, and apostolic work for humanity. Prayer? Work? Let me add, "PEACE. Peace that will make us feel secure and strong, loved and supported. With all these in place, we shall have peace that will blow its trumpet for the world's tranquility and happiness.

While the world is in chaos and tranquility is far - off, we can still have genuine peace. We don't have to die like Romeo and Juliet to achieve peace. Gone are the days of martyrs of patriots and many others. Enough is enough. Enough of the killings, enough of the violations of human rights. Each one of us can be an instrument of peace. You and I can be mediatrix of peace - we can heal the world and make it a better place to live in. for the entire human race. What a wonderful world it would be. Very beautiful isn't it?

My dear friends, this is where we live now - an environment of injustice, terrorism inhumanity, greed, rape, prudence, hypocrisy and what mere? Name it we have it. But friends, we cannot just close our eyes and succumb to apathy. We cannot just nod our head and agree for the sake of pleasing others. As proponents of peace, is the choice as educators. we have our vision to share is our common ground in establishing peace by uniting into a common thread of unraveling values and virtues that we learn from our homes and schools which we don't only learn but apply in the most crucial moments of our lives. As an educator, this is what I can share. We can achieve our vision of peace, by building the solidarity of our family. We must respect our parents and elders, and even the authorities in our workplace. And if we can do this we not only build lives but we galvanize our relationship with our fellowmen. We can even touch the sky in our noble aim of buying the prize of peace. Oh what's the prize? Sweat, tears and blood. Remember PEACE begin in us. It emanates from our hearts. We all are instruments of peace. I wish to share the flame of the torch of my vision of peace to everyone. And by this zeal of commitment, we shall sprinkle peace to humanity. And behold we shall conquer the world.

Peace is a gift from God. It is a radiant light from heaven. It is the fountain of happiness and contentment. Thank God for that peace. Thank you for bringing people together In the name of peace. Thank you for the healing power of peace that has made our lives fun of serenity and compassion.

Let us give peace a chance. Let us build bridge today - not wall, not fences, not towers but bridge of peace where we could cross the other side, surmounting the troubled waters - so we could extend our hands and build our community with fortitude. Let's do it now. For tomorrow might be too late.