

Section 66:
Spirituality of the Heart:
A Spirituality of Societal and Inner Peace.
(By Hans Kwakman msc)

The Church proclaims the Gospel of peace, for she proclaims Jesus Christ, "*who is himself peace*" (Ephesians 2:14), writes Pope Francis in his Apostolic Letter "The Joy of the Gospel" (*Evangeliu Gaudium* 239). However, peace is only possible, the Pope insists in *Laudato Si*, if we always connect peace with justice and the conservation of creation. Otherwise we fall "*into gross simplifications*" (LS 92).

Dialogue between religions "*in truth and love*" is also "*a necessary condition for peace in the world*" (EG 250). This dialogue consists first of all in "*sharing each other's joys and sorrows. In this way we learn to accept others and their different ways of living, thinking and speaking. We can then join one another in taking up the duty of serving justice and peace*" (EG 250).

Pope Francis pays special attention to the peaceful relationship with the Muslims. This relationship is particularly important, he says, because today followers of Islam may, "*freely practise their religion*" in countries with a Christian tradition (EG 252).

In this regard, it is important to remember that, "*the sacred writings of Islam have retained some Christian teachings.*" They testify for instance that in Islam, "*Jesus Christ and Mary receive profound veneration.*" Moreover, the followers of Islam join us in "*worshipping the one merciful God*" (EG 252). Also admirable is it to see that, "*young and old, men and women in Islam make time for daily prayer*" and practice "*mercy towards those most in need*" (EG 252). Indeed, "*authentic Islam and the proper reading of the Koran are opposed to every form of violence*" (EG 253).

Accordingly, the Pope declares that all believers "*must always feel challenged to draw constantly from their deepest convictions about love, justice and peace,*" because, "*by*

continuously returning to their sources, religions will be better equipped to respond to today's needs" (LS 200).

REFLECTION

INNER PEACE

*"Christian spirituality proposes
an alternative understanding of the quality of life,
and encourages a prophetic
and contemplative lifestyle,
one capable of deep enjoyment
free of the obsession with consumption.*

*We need to take up an ancient lesson,
found in different religious traditions
and also in the Bible.*

*It is the conviction that "less is more".
A constant flood of new consumer goods
can baffle the heart
and prevent us from cherishing each thing
and each moment.*

*To be serenely present to each reality,
however small it may be,
opens us to much greater horizons
of understanding and personal fulfilment.
Christian spirituality proposes a growth
marked by moderation
and the capacity to be happy with little.*

*It is a return to that simplicity
which allows us to appreciate the small things,
to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us,
to be spiritually detached from what we possess,
and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack.
This implies avoiding the dynamic of dominion
and the mere accumulation of pleasures."*

(Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*, n.222).