



“When I speak of solidarity I mean much more than the promotion of philanthropic works or financial assistance to help those who lose out. Because solidarity is not the sharing of crumbs from the table, but to make space at the table for everyone.”

Pope Francis, *Let Us Dream*



If we truly believe that we are all sisters and brothers of one another, made in God's image and likeness as seen in the guideline of human dignity, then seeking the good of one another cannot be ignored. Solidarity is not just feeling sorry for those who suffer. It is a commitment to action. It is love in action.

“We are all really responsible for all” – all of us. Wherever we are. Whatever our age. Whatever our circumstances. We are all responsible for one another, those close by, and those far away. All of our actions have consequences locally and globally. From how we treat people we meet in the street, to the coffee we buy in the supermarket.

Flowing from solidarity is the promotion of peace. If we are to live in solidarity with one another we must want the peace of all. Pope Francis warns us that “until exclusion and inequality in society and between peoples are reversed, it will be impossible to eliminate violence.”

(The Joy of the Gospel, 59)

“Indeed, it is individualism, the opposite of solidarity, which is the cause of so much violence”

Pope Francis *The Joy of the Gospel*

“War is not a ghost from the past but a constant threat.”

Pope Francis, *On Fraternity and Social Friendship*



It looked like any other bin, but was taller, with a big padlock on it, and made out of metal. It sat in the church entrance for a month. Mike had heard about it. Like most of the rest of his friends, it was about safety, but more about status. He was sure none of his family knew, nor his teachers – I mean, he's at a good, Catholic school. But it was important to carry a knife. You never knew when someone might turn on you. Not that he ever thought he'd use it. Although that's probably what Sophie thought. She was drunk. She was angry. When she started lashing out with the knife there was nothing anyone could say to calm her down. Thankfully, it was only superficial damage she did to Nicola, but the amount of blood and pain it caused was huge.

Mike knew what the bin was for. He didn't need to carry a knife. He didn't want to. He managed to sneak it into the knife bin as part of the amnesty in the local community, and felt a sense of peace.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God”

This Beatitude makes us think of the many endless situations of war in our world. Yet we ourselves are often a cause of conflict or at least of misunderstanding. For example, I may hear something about someone and I go off and repeat it. I may even embellish it the second time around and keep spreading it... And the more harm it does, the more satisfaction I seem to derive from it. The world of gossip, inhabited by negative and destructive people, does not bring peace.”

Pope Francis, *On the Call to Holiness*, 87

REFLECTION



Using the model from Cardinal Cardijn, reflect on where solidarity and promoting peace is not being upheld locally and globally, what our faith calls us to do about it, and what actions we may be able to take to enable all people to flourish.

Where is there conflict in the world, your community, your family, your heart?

SEE

Where have you caused or encouraged conflict?

JUDGE

How will you be a peacemaker?

ACT



Solidarity is "a commitment to the good of one's neighbour with the readiness, in the gospel sense, to "lose oneself" for the sake of the other instead of exploiting him, and to "serve him" instead of oppressing him for one's own advantage"

Pope Saint John Paul II, On Social Concern, 38



It's worth repeating this quotation from St John Paul II as it sums up the principle so well. As sisters and brothers of one another, created by God, we have a bond to all people. It is lived out in wanting peace among all peoples.



Who is there within your family, friends, colleagues, community who you need to be reconciled with?

Make an effort this week to bring peace to that relationship, even if it's hard to do.



ACTION

GET INVOLVED!

Pax Christi and their members take responsibility to promote peace, reconciliation, and non-violence in their own lives and their world
paxchristi.org.uk

Get involved in [Million Minutes](http://millionminutes.org), promoting solidarity amongst young people and across generations
millionminutes.org

Help make our streets safer. Get involved in [CitySafe](http://citysafe.org.uk) and create a safe haven for young people in your community
citysafe.org.uk

[One World Week](http://oneworldweek.org) – an annual opportunity to join a worldwide movement for people taking action for justice locally and globally
oneworldweek.org

Work with [Word 4 Weapons](http://word4weapons.co.uk) to reduce knife crime in your area
word4weapons.co.uk

PARISH PLAN

Think about gathering a few times to look together at how we can respond to the needs of our local community in the light of what we're learning in Love in Action.

Resources and ideas are available to help identify the needs of the community and plan how to respond.

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