

JUSTICE IN THE WORLD*

by Mr. Kinhide Mushakoji

First, it is necessary to understand the deep meaning of the historical trends underlying the contemporary world crises. We should not be over-pessimistic and take it to be the sign of a world in decay. Quite on the contrary, the crisis we are witnessing is a healthy, though painful, *crise de croissance* of a world which is at last reaching its age of maturity. The world society today is in a period of transition. From an immature authoritarian stage built on fundamental inequality between the powerful and the weak, the privileged and the under-privileged, the ruling elite and the passive masses, toward a participating society where all the members of the human family achieve a "greater sharing in responsibility and in decision-making", to use an expression of *Octogesima Adveniens*.

It is therefore of no avail to try to promote justice through authoritative declarations. Justice will be promoted only when our world-wide action is organized with the participation of the powerless, the poor and the alienated.

The second point is probably less optimistic than the first one. We should face the fact that a variety of conflicts, international wars on conventional or guerilla levels, internal conflicts of different magnitudes, make the present world more hazardous to live in than even before, because the super powers and their allies waste precious world resources for armament; not only because this wastage generates arms trades because it justifies all sorts of interventions by the big powers who claim that if they do not maintain the *status quo* by force, a change in the power balance would lead to a nuclear war.

The Vietnam war is a tragic consequence of this position.

The efforts to maintain the *status quo* is unjust because it benefits the North against the South and within nations especially in the Third World, the privileged elite against the deprived masses.

This is one of the major obstacles which has to be overcome if a participatory society where justice prevails is ever to be built. The incapacity of the existing structures to meet the demands of those who want more justice and more participation forces the latter into opting for violence.

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Violent actions start a vicious circle of uprising and oppression instead of achieving any constructive results. Indeed the powerless betray their cause by using violence.

To use violence is to deny this basic position and to fall into the trap prepared by their opponents. To promote a just and participatory society and to stop the proliferation of conflicts, it is therefore necessary to practice a non-violent action following in the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Dom Helder Camara.

Non-violent action is a fish which needs water. Water in this case means a supportive action in public opinion, from the grass-roots level up to the level of the international organizations, such as the United Nations.

In short, we must prepare all the people in and out of the national and the international structures to accept a non-violent social change. This requires a pluralistic approach, and this pluralism must even accept contradictory positions. We must, for example, denounce the nationalism of the powerful nations and support that of the small ones. We must be non-violent but we must stand with the people who fight for national liberations. We should be on the side of the oppressed, but we should also do our best to convince the oppressors not to oppress. Only a combination of such contradictory actions on all levels of the national and international community will allow us to prepare a favorable condition for non-violent action. We must find a pluralistic strategy of non-violent social change towards a more just and participatory society.

The fourth point. If I am allowed to make an abstraction of her essence, considering her merely from a sociological point of view, I would say that the Church is the only world body which can be present at all levels of the world society. It is present on the parochial community level, it is present at the local, national and the regional level. It is also present on the international and diplomatic level. If, to use an expression of Nicholas of Cusa, the Church can be this complex of oppositions with prophets and diplomats, fighters for liberation and peacemakers in its ranks, she would have a privileged role to play as a catalyst of a worldwide non-violent social change.

To play this role the Church must be careful not to become inward-looking even when it faces its own crises of growth. The Church should realize that it is experiencing the same crises as the world is undergoing. This is why I terminate my humble intervention by calling on you, dear Fathers in Christ, to initiate an ecumenical, non-violent and pluralistic action by the Church for the promotion of a more just and more participatory world society.