

**Jacob Kliatsko**

*Address delivered by Mr. Jacob Kliatsko, President of the Holy Name Society, Caloocan City, at the stated meeting of Zapote Lodge No. 29 on March 18, 1967.*

At the outset, allow me to express my thanks for your kind invitation. It is a rare privilege to speak to such an assembly of men with prestigious standing and calling. It is very encouraging to know the fact that men like these shape the destiny of nations — they are the architects of a better Philippines. Gentlemen, accept my heartfelt gratitude for this generous token. I am profoundly honored.

As I stand before you this afternoon, I am reminded by recent history. This precedent-setting chronicle of our time was created by a humble man of God, a gentle, lovable servant of God who jolted this chaotic world into the full realization of international brotherhood with his fresh idea of ecumenism, a spirit of communion for all. When that old man had advised his fellowmen of God to open the windows for more fresh air then we know that it is time to open our minds to new ideas: notions that may dust off the cobwebs that long stagnated our narrow-mindedness. This was a precedence indeed, because it promised a new horizon in the relation of men—an age of liberalism. That man, John XXIII, Bishop of Rome and Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church, was the person behind such an idea. John had initiated a series of dialogues with leaders of other great religions. He had a dialogue with the Archbishop of Canterbury, the spiritual head of the Church of England; talked with that Communist leader; an audience

with that Buddhist Lama.

This was an actuation that would have been unthinkable ten, twenty years ago. Indeed, to the dismay of many in his inner circle, Pope John had gone out of his way to welcome new ideas from leaders of the world. He had endeared himself to us when he convened the historic Second Vatican Council in Rome which so honored both the religious and the laity, regardless of creed, color, political affiliation and philosophy. Such Council, in the mind of John, was not solely for the triumph of one entity—but was an examination, a confrontation of minds on varied subjects that are generally religious in essence. It was a meeting of minds to thresh out difficulties and differences that impede the progress of man in his quest for spiritual upliftment. And now, we know the urgency of that message. It is a timely call to understanding and harmony.

My friends, we are living in a troubled world. This is an age when the 'spirit of the Good Samaritan is almost drowned in the sphere of dissension, conflicts and wars. It is an era where you find so many peoples of this world locked in mortal combats, nations sowing the seeds of discontent against another, dictators and rulers immersed in the theaters of sabotage and counterplots. Nothing has been spared by the onslaught of hate, jealousy, injustice and misdeeds. Man has reached his pinnacle of success. He has invented the atomic

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bomb but in the end destroyed his fellowmen. He has built Hiroshima, but look at that poor country today in the aftermath of devastation. All these could have been avoided, had man taken time to understand the position of another.

Casting no aspersion on any religious groups, we do believe that our society needs the virtue of tolerance if it has to gain the real PEACE we all crave for. The sense of togetherness, the feeling of "camaraderie" cannot be achieved if we ignore the notions of our neighbors: Love is devoid of meaning when one so unspeakably tramples on the rights of another.

If memory does not fail me, it was that great Frenchman Voltaire who gave the idea that one may not be so enthusiastic about his friendship with others, but an individual must defend to death the privilege of a person to speak out his mind.

When one is likened to a shell, enclosed in his own limited philosophy of life with the utter disregard for the suggestions or opinions of those around him, we can then expect bias and prejudice in such man. On the contrary, however, when a person listens or even considers the views of others — then we see in such individual the embodiment of friendship. We say that he is liberal, sociable in his dealings. But I must add here without fear of contradiction that it is not necessarily true that we must accept the principles or even the way of life of another group, but surely we are happy to have a dialogue with them to iron out few differences. We must be cognizant also of our shortcomings and meet on common grounds. By common grounds, we do not mean a compromise but a certain point of understanding where one enjoys, for example, his religious freedom without fear

of harassment, criticism and intolerance. In this way, friction can be parried without losing the integrity of those concerned.

Regrettably, a great many had veered away from the basic truth that we are all sons of one Almighty God, and as such — we are all brothers under His Holy Fatherhood. Whether one is an Oriental or Occidental, it does not count because our source is one and the same, GOD. All men are created equal in the sense that we are born into this world endowed with souls — we are created in the likeness of His Image, although God in His own infinite knowledge had given us unequal capabilities. Therefore, we notice others to be intelligent, wealthy, very pleasing in physical appearance; while some are retarded, poor and not attractive. But those should not be the causes for envy. These should not be the sources of hatred, because He knows what is best for all of us. Our Father in Heaven likes us to be one, united in His name.

Our century has brought changes. Transformation in the different phases of life — spiritual, social, economical and educational. Man has advanced in science. He has conquered space. He is about to land on the moon, and from there — he will surely explore other heavenly bodies. He is a stereotyped being now, a slave of the machine. He has gone daring in his business enterprises. Man has been yearning for more academic freedom, and society today is teeming with desirables, undesirables — the angry young men and women who are labeled the "beat generation". Whether we approve it or not, religious ideals have been taken for granted, and this spells DANGER. Where once upon a time life was taken as serious business of living, today

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it is "easy does it". With these changes, our sense of purpose has been generally altered. This transformation has ushered in influences on the lives of many. Consequently, we are engaged in a struggle against indifference, where its hands are continuously grabbing victims to its fold. Atheism and materialism are seemingly insurmountable odds that block our way. These ideologies are gaining ground because many unfortunate brethren heed their appealing call. Many ignore their neighbors because they are engrossed in their personal ambitions, politics, wealth and honor. Many forget God because success in material things has dimmed their way to righteousness.

Let us therefore unite to combat these unwholesome influences. If we are divided, we cannot face these impediments. It is time to meet in Seminars, Conventions or Religious Councils to exchange our ideas for the good of all. Let us share our different views for the laudable end of promoting *Peace, Religious Liberty & Brotherhood*. May we join hands to win souls back to the flock of God.

God with us, we should not fear. With the aid of that Heavenly Spirit and His inspiration, we can do task for His greater honor and glory.

We are here on earth on a very important mission — one of Charity. Charity towards our fellowmen does not consist merely in giving out material means to an indigent neighbor. A smile will do because "it costs nothing but creates much; it enriches those who receive it, without impoverishing those who give it — it happens in a flash, and the memory of it lasts forever." Charity is done too in our ordinary lives. You can express command in kindly terms for instance, if you are the boss in an office. An employee appreciates that man in a swivel chair with a kind disposition. It is very heartening to see a stranger with respect and sense of decency when visiting your house. A Good Samaritan sees you in the hospital, prays for your departed one and condoles with you in the hour of distress. These are Charity. It is an open-arm policy, it is an air of acceptance, it is a feeling of belongingness. Doing likewise, you are doing great in the service of God. Δ

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limit so that the general public impression that I have just stated will be corrected and everybody, Mason or non-Mason, will appreciate and adopt the Masonic creed. As has been said, no man is an island. So with Freemasonry. The welfare of mankind and service to God that Masonry has attained and will attain will remain secure only as its environment permits.

Congratulations again to the new officers and may the Almighty God be most gratuitous in bestowing upon you strength and wisdom in advan-

cing the frontiers of Masonry in a world bedeviled with envy, hunger, enmity and war. Δ

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