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The True School of Love

Disciples of Jesus must embrace the double-edged sword of the gospel

By Henri J. M. Nouwen

DISCIPLESHIP IS A TOUGH BOOK. As I began reading it, Heinrich Arnold's words touched me as a double-edged sword, calling me to choose between truth and lies, salvation and sin, selflessness and selfishness, light and darkness, God and demon. At first, I wasn't sure if I wanted to be confronted in such a direct way, and I discovered some resistance in myself. I want the good news of the Gospel to be gentle, consoling, comforting, and to offer inner peace and harmony.

But Arnold reminds me that the peace of the Gospel is not the same as the peace of the world, that the consolation of the Gospel is not the same as the consolation of the world, and that the gentleness of the Gospel has little to do with the "free for all" attitude of the world. The Gospel asks for a choice, a radical choice, a choice that is not always praised, supported, and celebrated.

Still, Arnold's writing is not harsh, unbending, fanatical, or self-righteous. To the contrary, it is full of love. Tough love, but real love. It is this love that flows from the broken heart of Jesus. What makes Arnold's words so healing is that they are not based on an idea, an ideology, or a theory, but on an intimate knowledge of Jesus Christ. Jesus, the Christ, is in the centre of all the suggestions, advice, and care expressed in these reflections. This is truly a Christ-centred book.

Heinrich Arnold does not speak in his own name. He speaks in the name of Jesus. He has heard clearly the words of Paul to Timothy: "Before God, and before Christ Jesus, who is to be the judge of the living and the dead, I charge you, in the name of his appearing and his kingdom: proclaim the message and, welcome or unwelcome, insist on it. Refute falsehood, correct error, give encouragement – but do all with patience and with care to instruct" (2 Tim. 4:1–2).

It is Arnold's deep rootedness in Jesus Christ that makes him a very wise, a very safe, and a very – challenging guide in our spiritual journey. But there is more: his rootedness is not simply a rootedness in the Christ who lived long ago; it is a rootedness in the Christ who is present today in the life of the community of faith.

Arnold is not a pious, sentimental guide. Every word he speaks comes from his experience in community, where discipleship is lived. It is in community that we are tested and purified. It is in community that we learn what forgiveness and healing are all about. It is in community that we learn who our neighbour is. Community is the true school of love. Arnold lived community all of his life. He knew its demands and its rewards. Most of all, he knew that it is in community that we encounter the Christ of the Gospel.

Extracted from the foreword to the book Discipleship: Living for Christ in the Daily Grind, an anthology of J. Heinrich Arnold's writings and letters. Henri J. M. Nouwen (1932-1996) was an internationally loved and renowned priest, professor, and author. He wrote more than forty books offering spiritual guidance and direction.

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Pope Francis in 2022 peace message: spend more on education, less on weapons

Christopher White

ROME — Pope Francis urged global leaders to spend more money on education and devote fewer resources to weapons in his 2022 World Day of Peace message.

"It is high time, then, that governments develop economic policies aimed at inverting the proportion of public funds spent on education and on weaponry," the pope writes in a message released on Dec. 17.

"The pursuit of a genuine process of international disarmament can only prove beneficial for the development of peoples and nations, freeing up financial resources better used for health care, schools, infrastructure, care of the land and so forth," he continued.

Since 1968, popes have issued a call for peace, which is officially sent out on Jan. 1, dubbed by Pope Paul VI as "The Day of Peace." Pope Francis' 2022 message is titled "Dialogue between generations, education and work: tools for building lasting peace."

In his introduction to the three-page text, the pope laments that despite numerous efforts aimed at fostering the conditions for peace, "the deafening noise of war and conflict is intensifying."

The pope continues by offering a grim assessment of the state of world affairs.

"Diseases of pandemic proportions are spreading, the effects of climate change and environmental degradation are worsening, the tragedy of hunger and thirst is increasing, and an economic model based on individualism rather than on solidary sharing continues to prevail," he writes.

As a solution, Francis proposes greater solidarity and dialogue among different generations, devoting more resources to education and increasing opportunities for dignified work.

Returning to a theme that he has sought to emphasize since his 2013 inauguration homily as pope, Francis called for an intergenerational dialogue to facilitate greater understanding between different generations.

"Although technological and economic development has tended to create a divide between generations, our current

crises show the urgent need for an intergenerational partnership," he writes.

"Great social challenges and peace processes necessarily call for dialogue between the keepers of memory — the elderly — and those who move history forward — the young," the pope continues.

Francis goes on to argue that education must be viewed as an investment, rather than an expenditure, which he says is vital for "promoting integral human development."

Such investments, the pope says, "make individuals more free and responsible, and they are essential for the defense and promotion of peace."

Greater educational training, he continues, will help facilitate more "dignified employment opportunities" in the labor market, which he says will also help counter the rise of violence and organized crime around the globe.

In concluding his peace message, Francis acknowledges the myriad of ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted human relationships, economic opportunities and exacerbated inequalities.

Church and world leaders alike, along with all people of goodwill, he pleads, must "walk together with courage and creativity on the path of intergenerational dialogue, education and work."

Masses Times

Sundays: Vigil, 6pm (Saturday), 9.30am, 11am, 5pm

Croatian Community Mass 6.30pm

French-speaking community mass 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month at 12.30

Daily masses 10am only for the moment

-**Rosary** daily after 10am mass

Baptisms:

1st and 3rd Sundays of each month, request forms available from parish office

Marriages

regarding use of St Mary's Church and Pre-Nuptial Enquiries please contact the Parish Office

Parish Office open Monday—Friday, 10.30-14.00

IN MEMORIAM

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Sunday 15 January
Patrick O'Mahoney, Ahhi9versary