

PROMOTION OF JUSTICE THROUGH RESOLUTIONS: A DEMONSTRATION OF LOVE



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Pope Benedict XVI issued his first encyclical letter *Deus Caritas Est* (God is Love) on Christmas Day of 2005. The letter, addressed to every member of the church, clarified the term “love.” In the first part of his discussion, the pope emphasized that love is both a gift and a command. He stressed that both love of God and love of neighbour are, in fact, one single commandment and that neither commandment can survive or grow if they are separated.

In the second part of his discussion, in the context of speaking about the church’s commitment to justice and charity, the Holy Father noted that the church must play a part in the fight for justice, pointing out, “The Church cannot and must not take upon herself the political battle to bring about the most just society possible.... Yet at the same time she cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice. She has to play her part through rational argument and she has to reawaken the spiritual energy without which justice, which always demands sacrifice, cannot prevail and prosper...Yet the promotion of justice through efforts to bring about openness of mind and will to the demands of the common good is something which concerns the Church deeply.”

Our love of God and neighbour are clearly demonstrated in League resolutions. Through the resolutions process, League members are able to “reawaken the spiritual energy.” We do not sit on the sidelines in the fight for justice, but instead the League takes ACTION! This was evidenced recently when a League delegation participated in the Foreign Affairs Canada NGO 18th Annual Human Rights Consultations. [See page 12 for a related report.] To stand up and be heard demands sacrifice – no question about it. As was pointed out by another participant, “Inaction may be more controversial than action.”

During the consultations, a number of areas in which the League could take further action were clearly evident. The following are just a few that were brought to mind:

- Poverty is the greatest human rights challenge. It needs to be a priority for all governments.
- Child protection guidelines need to be enforced.
- The rights of children need to be a higher priority.
- Violence against children needs to be a focus of all governments.

- The rights of persons with disabilities need to be adopted.
- Sexual abuse by peacekeepers on the ground in Sudan must be eliminated.
- Canada needs to ratify the proposal to ban torture.
- Domestic commitment to end racism needs to be acted on.
- Elimination of violence against women needs to be emphasized.
- Access to housing for women living in poverty is critical.
- Canada needs to ratify the migrant workers’ clause.
- Domestic commitment to end trafficking needs to be acted on.
- Corporate social responsibility needs to be addressed.
- Indigenous peoples’ rights to language and culture need protection.
- Religious intolerance needs to be addressed and eliminated.
- The rights of children in foster care need to be enforced.

In summary, the Holy Father seeks to move everyone to true love and action for social justice. While resolutions pose challenges and demand sacrifice, they make a major difference to people around the world. There is no question that action through resolutions “reawakens the spiritual energy.” Therefore, ongoing cooperation, support and commitment of all members is critical to keep the door for justice, moral and Christian values open in the future. †

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