



16<sup>th</sup> November 2017  
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## CALLED TO WORK FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

### SYNOPSIS OF THE DOCUMENT BY THE JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION

One month from the day that journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia was assassinated in a premeditated attack on our society, the Church Commission for Justice and Peace urges all citizens to reflect on the current state of our society, to take concrete action to work for the common good and to promote peace.

The reactions to Daphne Caruana Galizia's murder highlight the polarisation within our society which remains deeply divided along the fault-lines of partisan political allegiance. One month on, we are left with a sense that our society is not at peace, as we struggle to come to terms with the gravity of what happened and to understand its implications, for us as individuals and as a community.

While it is no doubt necessary to pray and ask God for the gift of his peace, it is clear that this is nowhere near enough. 'Peace is both gift and task'<sup>1</sup> which requires a commitment from each and every one of us to work towards a society based on truth, justice, freedom and love – the four interdependent values on which peace is based.

The search for the **truth** requires us to look beyond what is immediately apparent, and to seek information from sources other than just the political party we support, or the posts and opinions shared by like-minded 'friends' on social media.

A **just** society is not one that is lost in legalistic jargon, intent on following the letter of the law whilst breaking its spirit. It is one where the rule of law is guaranteed, where rights and obligations are respected not just by the State but by each and every individual, and where all are truly equal before the law.

The call to **love** requires us not just to alleviate individual suffering through charity, but also to work on the social, political and economic levels to promote the common good.

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<sup>1</sup> POPE BENEDICT XVI, *Message for the 2007 World Day of Peace*.

The value of **freedom** implies both an individual commitment to exercise one's freedom responsibly and a commitment from the State which retains ultimate responsibility to ensure that our society is truly free. A State does this by upholding the right of all, even those it does not agree with, to speak out, to criticise and to engage socially and politically. Not only, it should also create strong and independent institutions, equipped to guarantee the defence of individual freedoms.

The Justice and Peace Commission believes that, while there is a deep need for acknowledgment of, and repentance for, the personal responsibility of each one for the current state of our society, it is also essential for us to engage in concrete action to bring change.

Of course, in a society as politically polarised as ours, there is always the risk that anything we say, no matter how balanced, will be perceived as partisan. Yet this cannot, and should not, be an excuse for us to renounce to our obligation to speak truth to politics and to work unceasingly for the common good.

In a situation considered desperate by many, we are called to be agents of hope by striving for justice and peace.