



THE CHURCH IN MALTA

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
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THE QUEST FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE IN OUR SOCIETY: AN INTEGRAL STEP IN THE PATH FOR PEACE

SYNOPSIS OF THE DOCUMENT BY THE CHURCH'S JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION AND THE EMIGRANTS' COMMISSION ON WORLD DAY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE 2018

The human person, not the 'god of money', must be at the centre of our social and economic systems, if social justice is to prevail.

This is the key message of a document published by the Justice and Peace Commission and the Emigrants' Commission of the Archdiocese of Malta to mark World Day of Social Justice, today February 20th. On this day we are reminded that poverty is real and that some amongst us are struggling to survive, and that we are called to take concrete action to combat poverty in all its forms. Pope Francis clearly states: "Poverty is not an inevitable misfortune: it has causes that must be recognized and removed."

Since the theme selected by the United Nations for World Day of Social Justice 2018 focuses on migration, the document reflects on how to make Malta's laws and policies on migration and asylum more just, by putting people at the centre. It also calls upon the Government to implement the following measures, which will go some way towards ensuring more equitable treatment of migrants and refugees living among us:

1. Create a strong legal framework to protect migrant workers, particularly in a context where their recruitment and employment is being facilitated to encourage economic growth, in order to ensure that they are not treated simply as cheap, disposable labour.
2. Take the needs of beneficiaries of protection for stability and full inclusion in our society into account, and amend our citizenship laws to facilitate their access to citizenship.
3. Grant beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, the right to be reunited with their families in Malta. It is impossible for people to rebuild their lives if a part of them is in another country, possibly at risk of harm.

4. Heed the calls for the creation of a legal pathway for regularisation of non-returnable migrants who have made Malta their home, in order to allow them to live with dignity and achieve their full potential.

While these recommendations are primarily addressed to Government, as the entity with power to effect the necessary legislative changes, the Justice and Peace Commission and the Emigrants' Commission stress that it is the duty of all Christians to work for justice. It calls on us all to work to promote justice towards migrants and refugees in our daily lives, especially during this time of lent, by:

1. Combating indifference in our lives, questioning our lifestyle choices and becoming more attuned to the needs of others;
2. Welcoming the stranger – renouncing defensiveness, fear and indifference and opening our hearts, our communities and parishes to migrants and refugees;
3. Upholding the dignity of migrants and refugees by: ensuring that all our dealings with them are characterized by respect and justice; standing against intolerance, prejudice, racism and xenophobia; and recognizing every migrant and refugee as a person, just like us;
4. Working to achieve true equality by doing our part to ensure that the structural causes of poverty and injustice are addressed by those with the power to do so.

Whilst acknowledging the difficulties inherent in this battle for social justice, the document encourages each one of us not to lose hope, in the knowledge that we are working to bring about the kingdom of the risen Christ, who “will bring forth justice to the nations”.