

SPEECH OF THE GRAND MASTER TO THE POSTULANTS

18th June 2022

Dear Postulants,

I hope that my words today will stay in your minds for a very long time, because I am going to speak about the most important principles that guide us, Knights of St John, Knights of Malta: **The principle of Peace and our fight against War.**

I'm not going to speak about any specific war but about all the wars in general, because **there are no good wars and no fair wars: all wars are bad, unjust and unfair.**

When a wolf kills and eats a lamb, he does not explain his motives to the lamb, and even if he would explain, the lamb would never accept any motives to be killed and to be eaten... .

The fact is that the wolf kills and eats the lamb to survive and also among the States, many leaders and dictators start cruel wars only to survive politically and to hide the disastrous economic and social results of their governance, because to make very rich a few men and some generals who support their dictators is not the same as to make rich or even less poor the people of their nations. To make a few men rich is just to buy their fidelity, because, for the dictators, fidelity is either bought or achieved by fear, never by love or by respect.

However sometimes the wolf, instead of a lamb, attacks by mistake a porcupine, and porcupines, although being smaller than wolves can defend themselves very well and their sharp quills can blind the wolves or even open wounds in their flesh, wounds that can slowly infect and cause death to the wolves...

What worries me presently is that we are only concentrated on one specific war because it is happening next door to us and we forget all the other wars as terrible, as bloody, as cruel, as devastating as this one, that are taking place right now but in other continents, so, in general no one does care about them, because these wars happen far from us, and as we say in my country: "far from the eyes, far from the heart".

Indeed the ongoing faraway wars are as cruel as the war near us, there, war crimes are being perpetrated equal to those in our neighbour war, but still no one seems to care... Women and children are being raped and killed, elderly and civilians are being slaughtered and refugees from those countries are forced to run away to save their lives too, but the care, the attention and the solidarity that we give to the refugees from next door countries is totally different of the care and attention that we give to the other refugees, and still all refugees are human beings, they all are trying to save their lives, they all live horrendous tragedies.

Dear Postulants,

as there are no good wars or bad wars, also there are no good refugees or bad refugees, there are only human beings, like you and like me, looking for safety, looking for a better life.

Each civilian who is killed, each woman who is raped, each child who is murdered, each non-combatant who is tortured in Europe, in Africa, in Asia or in Latin America are human beings like us, like our mothers, our wives or our children.

For us Knights there are no first class humans and second class humans, there are only humans.

Freedom is an **absolute** concept: there is no such thing like **more freedom, less freedom or a little bit of freedom**. Either there is Freedom or there is no Freedom at all. There is no middle term for freedom and our obligation as Knights and Dames of Saint John, Knights and Dames of Malta, is to fight for Freedom and for Equality for all, is to help those in need without any discrimination whatsoever, is to treat everybody equally and to fight for **Peace**, but we must never forget that Peace is not the absence of War: Peace is the absence of Violence and Misery, Poverty, Starvation, Illiteracy, Oppression and Bullying are forms of Violence and while they exist we can never have real Peace.

Do never forget that at the end of the Chess game the King, the Queen, the Knight, the Bishop and the Pawn go all to the same box, where they are all alike... We count on you, dear Postulants, for our gigantic task, sure that we will not be able to change the world, but that we all can contribute make of the world a little better place for all and for our children.

Be Welcome!