



A RADICAL TEACHING

Jesus and his first disciples knew what it was like to live in occupied territory; oppression by a governing enemy was a daily reality. The Gospel for today continues Jesus' teaching for his disciples with a radical teaching that touched their lives: love your enemies. As Fr Brendan Byrne writes, the examples that Luke lists of what it means to love your enemy, are quite likely common examples of oppression by Roman soldiers that would have been well known to the people listening to Jesus.

THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

In an increasingly fractured world, peace is a longing globally, locally and personally. Writing on this theme in 2015, Fr Andy Hamilton noted:

St Augustine, a sharp observer of his world, said that in all we do we seek peace. That seems an extraordinary thought when we look at the world around us - full of war, violence, social media pile-ons. Augustine's point was that even when nations went to war, they

wanted peace - on their own terms. This is true also in domestic disputes and shouting matches in the media. We want the kind of peace that comes from winning the conflict. In reality, however, the peace that follows war is often a city burned to the ground. A Roman writer spoke of the Roman Empire when he said, 'They make a desert and call it peace.'

GLOBALISED INDIFFERENCE

Throughout *Fratelli tutti*, Pope Francis cites the reality of a fading sense of being one human family and that 'the dream of working together for justice and peace seems an outdated utopia.' This is replaced by a globalised indifference, 'born of deep disillusionment concealed behind a deceptive illusion: thinking that we are all-powerful, while failing to realise that we are all in the same boat ... that leads to a sort of cynicism.' (n 30)

In a speech to international diplomats last month, Pope Francis addressed many of the global areas of concern of this time and named around twelve countries where the destruction and oppression of war has been continuous for the past twenty plus years. The flow on

from that is unprecedented global migration and the re-surfacing of ever more sophisticated forms of nuclear armament. He drew extensively from *Fratelli tutti* to describe a way forward into the future.

Dialogue and fraternity are two essential focal points in our efforts to overcome the crisis of the present moment ... The entire international community must address the urgent need to find solutions to endless conflicts that at times appear as true proxy wars.

The gift of peace is 'contagious'; it radiates from the hearts of those who long for it and aspire to share it, and spreads throughout the whole world.

The Happiest Man on Earth



Eddie Jakov OAM was born Abraham Jakubowicz in Germany in 1920. He completed his memoir before he died at the age of 100 in October 2021. His memoir is titled, *The Happiest Man on Earth*.

In the short preface to his book he says:

My Dear New Friend

I have lived for a century, and I know what it is to stare evil in the face. I have seen the very worst of mankind, the horrors of the death camps, the Nazi efforts to exterminate my life, and the lives of all my people.

But I now consider myself the happiest man on Earth.

Through all my years I have learned this: life can be beautiful if you make it beautiful.

A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR

During World War II Eddie Jaku was imprisoned in Buchenwald and Auschwitz concentration camps. In 1945 he was sent on a death march but led a daring escape on a train, managed to escape and survived in a forest.

With his family, he moved to Australia in 1950. He was well known in the Eastern suburbs of Sydney. He regularly contributed to interfaith dialogue and was a volunteer at the Sydney Jewish Museum from its beginning in 1992.

HATE IS A DISEASE

He wrote:

I do not hate anyone. Hate is a disease which may destroy your enemy, but will also destroy you.

Seventy-five years ago, in the days after the war, I learned of a Nazi being held prisoner in Belgium for his war crimes, and I arranged to see him. I asked him, 'Why? Why would you do this? He couldn't answer. He started shaking and crying. He was less than a man, just a shadow of one. I almost felt sorry for him. He did not look evil. He looked pathetic, like he was already dead. And my question remained unanswered.

The only answer I can find is hate.

EVERY BREATH IS A GIFT

I promised when I came out of the darkest hours of my life that I would be happy for the rest of my life and smile, because if you smile, the world smiles with you. Life is not always happiness.

Sometimes, there are many hard days. But you must remember that you are lucky to be alive - we are all lucky in this way. Every breath is a gift. Life is beautiful if you let it be. Happiness is in your hands.

Please, every day, remember to be happy, and to make others happy too. Make yourself a friend to the world.

Do this for your new friend, Eddie.

EDDIE JAKU ON TEDX

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