

## The Courage to Shout for Peace and Justice

Gennaro Matino (June 15, 2017)



Yet in times like these, when tensions run high, people must search the depths of their hearts for the power to hold high the flag of peace. Never before has it been so important to recall the words of the Lord: “Peace be with you.”

For his disciples, still shut inside their circle of fear, the Redeemer’s word reshapes history and ultimately reveals the true meaning and purpose of life, which can compel men to build a peaceful world. Peace doesn’t mean being blissfully apathetic. It doesn’t mean dodging difficulties. It doesn’t mean closing oneself off in an egotistical bubble to ignore others. Aspiring to peace means, on the contrary, fighting nonviolently, and all of us must become messengers of the kind of peace that the world doesn’t expect, that is far removed from the inner peace of those who sleep easy while the rest of humankind risks extinction.

Peace, that herald of meaning and re-maker of humanity, is a universal struggle to stop injustices that oppress the weak, vulgarity that offends the humble, and arrogance that crushes the different. Peace means fighting for a world where people humbly recognize one another as brothers, charitably reestablish a dialogue, optimistically shape the future, and compassionately suffer for one another in order to rebuild heaven and earth.



There can be no peace when human dignity is offended; the right to life diminished; violence, war, and terrorism promoted; and the weakest among us is trampled upon. If we remain indifferent to those dying of hunger, there can be no peace. As long as we tolerate the unequal distribution of natural resources or the unequal exercise of fundamental human rights between men and women, there can be no peace. If we don't fight for peaceful ecology, if we do nothing to stop nuclear escalation, there can be no peace.

When the Israeli Prime [Minister Yitzhak Rabin](#) [2] was killed in [Tel Aviv](#) [3] during an anti-violence rally, he was holding a notecard that he likely would have read from had he ever been able to finish his final remarks. It read, "That the sun rises, that the morning shines. The purest prayers shall not carry us backwards. No one will carry us back to the dark pit of the past. Not the joy of victory nor the songs of triumph. So, sing a song for peace. Do not mutter your prayers. Sing instead a song of peace. Shout it from the top of your lungs!"

Shout for peace so that beauty triumphs. Shout for hope so that people of all races, cultures and religions shall live together in peace. Should someone say it's impossible to change this disfigured and deformed world, I'd shout back that the world is full of peacemakers who are silently spreading the seeds of peace, certain that at the dawn of a new day the fruits of joy will sprout. Shout for peace. Though our days be filled with laments for the dead, sing songs of peace and harmony.

Courage is no doubt needed to advance a vision for the future in this sick time, in the circumstances we find ourselves living in, in a world still marked by tensions, by an egotistical and individualistic mindset embodied by a diabolical economy that, by trampling on the weak, perpetuates new and violent conflicts. A strong sense of purpose is needed to orient oneself, given all the lives reduced to poverty by political battles that have no scruple, by assurances of salvation that have no truth, by promises that go unkept. Courage and far-sightedness are needed to seek out the path of righteousness, for the peace of one is the enthusiastic, contagious element needed to forge world peace, to reconcile our fellow man so that he may build his life around the sacred principle that we should treat others the way we would have others treat us. That principle is based on the belief that outer peace is derived from inner peace. Thanks to inner peace can we sustain this hardest of struggles. No one can guarantee peace. No one will succeed in building it if she isn't first at peace with herself, if inner harmony doesn't pervade her entire existence.

We have to start over from a place of inner peace that has fortified us during tumultuous periods in history. For all of us with a genuine and firm sense of human values, peace means making the effort to talk with those who are different from ourselves and find common ground, however our needs may vary. In this day and age, amid the clamor of false prophets spewing visions of calamity, courage is needed to remind the world that peace is possible as long as the world isn't divided between those who have it all and those who have nothing at all.

\* Gennaro Matino teaches Theology and History of Christianity in Naples. He collaborates extensively with both traditional and new media.

**Source URL:** <http://iitaly.org/magazine/focus/op-eds/article/courage-shout-peace-and-justice>

### Links

[1] <http://iitaly.org/files/popefrancisahmeseltayebthecouragethoshoutforpeaceandjusticejpg>

[2] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yitzhak\\_Rabin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yitzhak_Rabin)

[3] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tel\\_Aviv](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tel_Aviv)