

Peace and participation of women

To all of you who seek for peace :

Peace!

The UN proclaimed the 8 of march as an "International Women's Day", in order to change attitudes towards the role of women in nowadays society. On this occasion, I invite you to think and pray on the contribution of women to peace on earth. They are many times victims of wars and conflicts, but they also are important builders of reconciliation.

If many processes and dialogues in order to ensure peace do not succeed, it is because we do not give enough space to women. The Palestine doctor Izzeldin Abuelaish, who lost three daughters in a bombing in Gaza and who founded "Girls for peace", says : "We must accept the idea that women can largely contribute to the changes we have to make (...). When feminine values will be better taken into account at all levels of society, the values of society themselves will change and life will be easier."

In order to ensure participation of women in negotiations of peace, the Security Council of the UN, during his 4213th meeting of the 31st October 2000, approved resolution 1325. This document proposes that the UN and the Member States implement initiatives in order to give women an important role in the prevention of conflicts, in negotiations for peace, as well as in the reconstruction of societies in war-torn conflicts. Three words can sum up the resolution : prevention, protection, participation.

The resolution insists upon the fact that nation make efforts so that women may be better represented at all levels of decisions - national, regional, international - in order to prevent conflicts, deal with them, settle them ; so that they are more present as military observer, member of the civilian police, specialist of human rights and member of humanitarian operations. The document also proposes to bear in mind equity of sexes during the negotiation and settlement of peace agreements. It demands that all parts of an armed conflict respect fully the norms of international right towards women and little girls, protecting them from violent acts in the perspective of the genre in the process of peace : we have to rethink the relationship between men and women towards a partnership for peace, which requires a new understanding of masculine identity, less belligerent and more reconciliatory.

In order to put into practice these resolutions in all countries of the worlds, let us pray the Lord :

O Lord of peace, you created man and women in your image and likeness, so that they are one. Bless all initiatives of collaboration of men and women for peace on earth. Inspire all women so that they dedicate themselves to reconciliation and resolution of conflicts. Enlighten the mind of all heads of nations so that they give a greater role to women in negotiations and processes in order to ensure peace. And the entire earth thus reconciled, as a big family, will bless your name for ever. Amen.

Kindest regards,

br. Irénée Rezende Guimarães

Benedictine monk at Notre-Dame Abbey, Tournay, France.

Tournay, th 25 february 2014