

AS LONG AS THERE IS LOVE, THERE IS HOPE

From: Stories, Parables and Fables of life of P. Ribes

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War and peace.

Constructive and destructive forces in our world

It had been an atomic holocaust. The war brought destruction all over the world. Nothing seemed to have been left out. Everything had been annihilated. Nations, cities, villages, hamlets, and houses...all lay in ruins. Forests, prairies meadows, grasslands, trees, flowers disappeared. Everything was dead. No greenery, only ashes.

No man, no woman could be seen over the face of the earth. The laughter of children, the charming voices of young girls, the shouts of youngsters, the deep voices of men, the loving whispering of mothers, all ended. All that remained was only an ominous silence and desolation. Had life really come to an end on earth? Was it the end of all?

Fortunately, somewhere, somehow a young boy and a young girl survived the atomic holocaust. Luckily, they met and fell in love. They enjoyed each other's company. Tenderly they kept looking at each other's eyes. They relished hearing each other's voice. Hope was born again in our world!.

One day, while strolling together, they discovered the only flower that had been left alive in our world. In delight, they exclaimed "Oh! How pretty! How beautiful! Let's look after her." Lovingly, they took care of her. And the flower grew and multiplied. Slowly, but surely, flowers decked the earth again. Grass appeared. Trees grew and meadows decked the earth. And again there was beauty in our world.

And the boy and the girl got married. Laughter of children filled the earth again. There was frolic and mischief. Joy was reborn and there was peace. A new promising world revived. People multiplied. Villages reappeared. Even cities sprung up anew and there was peace and joy

But again men turned greedy. Quarrels sprung up again, hatred was born anew. The world again was divided into opposing countries. Armies were rebuilt to protect the people, so they said! Wars broke up. People were killed, cities razed to the ground, countries devastated. It was a new holocaust. Again for the second time, nothing was left alive except a boy and a girl and a little flower hidden somewhere in a devastated earth!

But, my friends, I ask the Lord, "When will we learn? How many times will it have to be so?" (Adaptation of a Spanish Audiovisual)

USES OF THIS STORY

Discussion groups

Prayer sessions
Debates

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. How did the story affect you?
2. What do the boy and the girl in the story signify?
3. What does the flower in the story stand for?
4. How many different titles could you give to the story and why?
5. What signs and/or symbols of peace and war can you find in the story? Explain
6. What is the role of beauty and love in our world?
7. What would be foundations of lasting peace in our world, if any?
8. Comment on the old Latin tag: “If you want peace, prepare for war”. Do you agree to it? Why?
9. Can war ever be justified? How? Why?
10. If not, then how peoples, differences could be settled.
11. Has the Gospel anything to say about peace and war? What is it?
12. Comment on the old saying “If we forget history, we are condemned to repeat, time and again, the mistakes of the past”
13. Draw any other lessons from the story? Which? Explain.

THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION

To build or to destroy the world is in our hands

- We, Christians, still believe that one-day God will finally build a better world. That God’s kingdom will come.
- Greed and pride are the causes of all wars and all evils
- Love is the source of peace, joy and rebirth
- Beauty and its appreciation are necessary to build a better humane society.
- Love and beauty lead us to God. God is not only Love but beauty as well.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

- The audience may be asked to prepare, in groups, some items as posters, collages, cartoons, comic strips, stories, parables etc. on
 - Peace Love Building a better world
 - War Hope Beauty
 - Destruction Joy etc
- They may express the same ideas by means of mime, dance, song, body gestures, postures, tableau etc. namely, the destructive elements in today’s world and the constructive power of love.
- Similarly, they may attempt to express the positive elements for peace, brotherhood and progress and the hopes already present in our world.