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***Justice & Peace Letter for Epiphany Sunday 2012  
To be read at all Masses Feast of the Epiphany 2012 Sunday 8th January***

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

We bring the season of Christmas to a close at Epiphany by remembering the gifts the Wise Men brought to the infant Jesus. The values of the world were turned upside down as wealth and power fell down and worshipped a poor and vulnerable little child. The values of the powerful and selfish could only reassert themselves with the violence that would stalk the life of Jesus, from Herod's massacre to the crucifixion brought about by those who felt their self interest threatened.

True giving is a sign of a healthy balance of relationship, in ourselves and with others. We give because we want to, not because we have to. Yet that does not mean that there is no sacrifice: quite the opposite. While giving may well involve money or gifts – as we know too well - it also changes us and brings us into a better harmony with God's creation.

We become more aware of those who live without life's basic needs and whose dignity is impaired. We find ourselves unsettled by human inequality, at home and abroad. We are more sensitive to the abuse of wealth and power for personal gain at the expense of others.

The opposite of giving is selfishness, holding on to what we have, by force if necessary. And selfishness is at the root of poverty, war and ignorance, the great social evils. The Gospel calls us to give up this selfishness and practise true charity. True charity is the God-infused love that wants everyone to have life to the full. True charity is rooted in justice – giving people their due. Without that justice there is no true peace.

Charity then is the measure of our responsibility as mature Christians. It is at the heart of what Pope Benedict has called the New Evangelisation, of opening ourselves to bring others the gift of the Gospel, truly a gift worth giving.

+ Peter A. Moran  
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