

Jim McEntee: Champion for Peace and Justice

Notes from Msgr. Gene Boyle's memorial to Jim McEntee at the Interfaith Council Advent Retreat, 2005

James P. McEntee, Sr. is the Director of the Office of Human Relations since 1976. He is responsible for the Human Relations Commission; Citizenship & Immigrations program (CISP); Dispute Resolution Program Services (DRPS); Network for a Hate-Free Community; Institute for Non-Violence program, and the Youth Advisory Task Force.

Jim has a long history of building bridges between communities, bringing programs and services to the people in Santa Clara County. He is a founding member of the Confederation de la Raza Unida, founding chairperson of the Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara County, a founding member of the Emergency Housing Consortium and the Help House the Homeless Coalition and the Interfaith Council for Religion, Race, Social and Economic Justice. Jim has also worked very closely with the United Farm Workers of America since 1965.

Mr. McEntee received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1953 and a Master Divinity Degree in 1973. He is a native and life-long resident of the Bay Area and has been a resident of Santa Clara County for 37 years. He is married to his wife Ann, a teacher and has raised with her a large multi-cultural family.

My attitude this evening is one of gratitude -- gratitude to God for gifting us with a man, who though fallible and mortal as we, yet so wonderfully incarnated for so many years the Spirit of the God of justice and compassion and concern in our Valley. For this reason Jim McEntee cannot be fully understood unless he is seen as a God-inspired man, a man in touch with the Spirit of God, in touch with his own spirit and in touch with the spirit of others

Jim is a man of the Book and so much of his work has been inspired by the spirit of God speaking through the prophetic words of Isaiah and Jesus.

Jesus returns to the synagogue at Nazareth and the scroll of the prophet Isaias was given to him. -- He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it is written:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me
Because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To let the oppressed go free,
To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor!
Then he began to say to them: -- Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

A little later in the same gospel Jesus is even more articulate about his Spirit-driven work of extending the unconditional acceptance of a compassionate God to all, but especially, the lowliest and neediest. When challenged by the disciples sent by John the Baptist from prison to explain himself, he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me." (Lk 7: 18-23)

"Here is my servant whom I behold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased,
Upon whom I have put my spirit;
He shall bring forth justice to the nations!
I, the Lord, have called you for the victory of justice.
I have grasped you by the hand;
I formed you, and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations.
To open the eyes of the blind,
To bring out prisoners from confinement,
And from the dungeon, those who live in darkness.
This is what Yahweh asks of you, only this: to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God." (Michah 6:8)