



---

# Press Release

---

PR 170034

08.01.2017

**PRESS RELEASE BY THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**

*Speech by President of Malta Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca at the Bethlehem Peace Light event, held at San Anton and organized by the Baden Powell Scouts 2017*

Dear friends,

I would like to thank the Baden Powell Scouts for their initiative and for inviting me to be part of this celebration of peace.

Peace is a fundamental value, which is shared, by all people of goodwill across our islands. As we have heard, stated, in one of today's poems, and I quote: "When there is harmony, there is peace."

It is our responsibility, yours and mine, to work towards harmony. This may sound like, a difficult concept to put into practice, but there are several practical ways, in which we can achieve, more harmonious communities.

For example:

1. We can begin, by promoting the inclusion of others, by rising above our differences, by inviting their participation, as valued contributors in our communities, and in our society.

Another example is that:

2. We can work to stop bullying and discrimination, wherever we see it, whether in our schools, our homes, or on our streets.

Most importantly, we must practice, the principle of respect in all our relationships. We must recognise and respect, the fundamental rights and human dignity, of each and every person we meet.

I would like to take the opportunity, as many a time I do, when speaking of peace, to specifically address young people.

As young people, you must be the present activists of change and the future champions of peace. You can make a difference, in the lives of other young people but adults too. If you commit yourselves, in favour of inclusion and peace, you will help shape our society and our nation, today and for years to come.

This is a great responsibility, but it is also a wonderful opportunity, to put into practice, the core values you have learnt as scouts, and as citizens, of our democratic country.

You must be role models of dialogue; of friendship; and examples of generosity and selfless service. Your potential has no limits.

A healthy society is like a strong team, where each member works together, to achieve the common good.

There is no place for egoism, resentment, or discrimination in the work for peace. Each one of us contributes a small part, to the larger whole.

Peace is like a flame, and we are like candles. Alone we can only supply a little light, but together, we can light up our country.

No matter, how many other candles are lit from the flame we bring, our candle is never diminished. It does not burn less brightly.

The brightness we create, by sharing our light with others, is the guarantee that will drive out the darkness of ignorance and fear.

Do not be afraid of sharing with others what is best within you. The desire we feel to connect with one another, forming dignified and effective relationships, is the greatest gift we can share.

Let's make this New Year a time, when we re-commit ourselves, to the service of society, and to the wellbeing of others, especially those, who are most in need.

I am sure you are all aware that the United Nations has a new Secretary General, my dear colleague Antonio Guterres. He has pledged to make 2017 a "Year of Peace" around the world.

We can be real collaborators, in this global promise, to build sustainable peace in our nations. Let us therefore keep in mind, the realities faced by people, who are living in situations of war, of poverty, and of oppression.

Let us not forget, that our commitment to peace must begin in our own hearts, and in our own communities, so that it will also reach out, into the wider world.

Let me conclude by encouraging you all, to continue sharing the light of peace and love in your lives.

Be the people who are known, by everyone you meet, as young leaders, who are always ready to lend a hand, and create opportunities for peace, so that you will ensure wellbeing for all.

I have faith in you and your potential. I encourage you to make this New Year, a time, to actively practice inclusion among your friends, in your families, throughout your communities, and across our country, to ensure, for both yourselves and for us, a unified and peaceful Malta.