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A FEW WORDS OF WELCOME TO A VISITING GROUP OF ROTARIANS FROM KNYSNA
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I am always dgreatly pleased to be able to welcome Rotarians to
Ulundi. For me Rotarians are special people. They would not be in
Rotary International if they did not have a sense of commitment to
mankind and to decency in life.

When you stop and look at civilised behaviour wherever you find it,
you will find it taking place within the restraints of the rule of
law and the moral injunctions of churches and other religious
groupings, and you will find it being underwritten and underpinned
and dramatised in a constant attempt to uphold the values on which
civilisation rests for the people.

People seem to think that good and civilised behaviour comes
naturally to the good. My view of society is that if you took away
the friendly London bobby and you closed your jails and had no
courts, Britain would very soon degenerate into a free-for-all in
which people lived with a grab as you can grab mentality.

If you took away a police force in any country and people could in

fact do what they wanted to do, I am sure you would agree with me
that chaos would prevail in a very short space of time. If there
was not good government, mankind would have to invent good

government because without it there can be no civilisation.

But even within the restraints of what the law says and what |is
enforceable by the police and courts, gdgoodness has to be further
cultivated. Stopping people from being bad does not necessarily
make them good. And it is in this business of producing goodness
in people that I Â@believe Rotarians have played their own
distinctive role.

One can understand how the poorest of the poor actually do turn to
help each other and one can also understand how the rich help the
rich because trading in help could obviously have Â@beneficial
results. When, however, the privileged and the richer sections of
society turn to help the poorer sections of society, then you have
to find the roots of that behaviour in decency itself.

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When Rotarians pick up a humanitarian cause and carry it with them and serve it and work for it, they are not doing something for themselves. They are actually doing something for humanity.

I wonder if one could actually think about what I am saying in some kind of quantifiable terms. If one person was seen to be doing good and setting an example, I wonder how many people that one person would influence. If the ratio was one person to a million onlookers, the impact I am sure would be lost. If one person did something good for a hundred people to see, I am sure the impact would be felt.

When Rotarians do something for society I wonder how many people in that society are actually influenced by what Rotarians do. I am quite sure that the very existence of The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the very existence of Rotary and Red Cross and Amnesty International already influence mankind by what they symbolise. When these organisations go into action and work amongst people, that influence spreads.

Looking at these things at that macro scale is enough to make one realise how important Rotary is. When, however, you look at Rotary from a worm's eye point of view, and perceive what Rotary means to the people that Rotary helps, then you get another perspective

entirely. It is this perspective of Rotary that so impresses me. When people live lives which can only be described as nasty, brutish and short, there is a great crying out for evidence that

there is decency and softness in the world.

When desperate poverty is associated with political oppression and people turn to tearing each other apart because the conflict-solving mechanisms of society have disappeared, and social norms are disrupted, then all the angels must cry out for somebody to go amongst them to do good and to uphold the values on which the resurrection of that society can be undertaken.

In South Africa, we are facing hideous levels of violence in public places. People are actually killed simply because other people do not like the way they think. They are not only killed, but they are killed brutally. People are actually necklaced and chopped to

pieces and incinerated in their homes, simply because they believe in something which others regard as a threat to what they are doing.

In South Africa you can believe me that thousands of Blacks die because they believe in democratic decency and because they are saying no to violence and intimidation. Nowhere in all our history has there ever been a more urgent need for Rotarian-type missions to strife-torn and desperately poor communities.

We will have to contend with a whole new generation of Black South Africans among whom hundreds upon hundreds of thousands have never known anything other than a violent community in which people are brutally slain. They have only known the spirit of intolerance and they have only known one way to express anger - in brutal action.

We are still going to face the consequences of revolutionary exhortations to this group of South Africans in which they are urged to help themselves and to do so as violently as they can and to do so with no regard for the inhuman consequences of what they do.

Anything that is done in our strife-torn communities to show that there are decent people in life and that there are caring institutions and organisations, will be of enormous value to the salvation of these communities.

One wonders sometimes why there is not one huge alliance between churches and welfare organisations and charitable organisations and organisations like Rotary. If there was, there could be central planning for the salvation of decency in our society where violence has so threatened not only the people in the community, but society at large in which we so desperately need to establish decent democratic norms.

Trade unions can draw together to form a united front and to undertake the interests of trade unionism. Let there now, I say, be a trade union of benevolent organisations. Let these organisations then speak with a united voice to government and to political parties, and let them work together to reinforce the best that ordinary people are doing to keep alive decency and justice.

I say all these things in a homage to Rotary and I want to conclude by again really welcoming you all to Ulundi and expressing the hope that your visit here will again have enthused you afresh with a determination to help those who so desperately need help and more desperately need to be helped to help themselves.