

Pastor's Column

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"Let There Be Peace on Earth, and Let It Begin with Me"

"There will be no peace among the peoples of the world without peace among the world religions. There will be no peace among the world religions without peace among the Christian Churches."

—Rev. Hans Kung

In the song, **"Let There Be Peace on Earth,"** the first verse simply says: "Let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin with me."

Indeed, each one of us must take responsibility in helping to create peace in our world, at least in our own little corner of the world.

An essential way in achieving peace is in establishing an ongoing dialogue and conversation not only between Christians of different denominations, but also between the various world religions. Our dialogue and conversation needs to be not only ecumenical, but also inter-religious.

This month, here at St. Thomas More, two opportunities are being provided to assist you in your ecumenical and inter-religious conversation.

This Sunday, January 7, at noon, Imam Taha Hassane of the Islamic Center of San Diego will be here to help us "Meet Our Muslim Neighbor." A "pot-luck" begins at noon followed by his presentation. This event is open to everyone, young and old!

If you cannot make the "pot-luck," you are welcome to attend just the presentation.

This inter-religious dialogue reminds us that we, Jews, Christians, and Muslims, are all children of Abraham. We have biblical roots that bind us together. We need to rediscover those roots, and "behave" as brothers and sisters if we expect peace to become a reality in our war-weary world.

Later this month, on Sunday, January 21, at 3:00pm, we are celebrating the "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity." This event will take place here at St. Thomas More.

As of this writing, seven Christian Congregations have committed to be present for this ecumenical prayer. Several more Congregations are still expected to participate as well. Choirs from most of these congregations will be coming together under the direction our Director of Music, Douglas Lynn, to lead the assembly in song.

Pastor Michael Henderson, of the Shiloh Church of God in Christ, will deliver the message that will challenge all of us to act as brothers and sisters in Christ, and to build bridges of unity, not walls of division.

This event is sponsored by Congregations for Civic Action (CCA) of which St. Thomas More is a member. CCA is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization of 15 Churches in North San Diego County representing over 14,000 families, working to advance social justice by guiding congregations and other organizations of good will to become successful participants in civic life.

Both of these events, inter-religious conversation and ecumenical prayer, remind us that it is time that religion loses its "imperialism." Religious imperialism helps to fuel so much of the conflict and violence in our global village.

It is time to live our faith in such a way that we build bridges to bring us together; not create walls that separate us.

It is time to glory, each in our own way, in the face of Mystery. It is time to share our faith with each other in prayer and dialogue, respecting and celebrating different beliefs, practices, and rituals that give praise to "The Holy One" who is beyond all understanding.

It is time to realize that there is one God, one people, and one village.

I invite you and encourage you to participate in both these events!

Lord, that we may be one!

Fr. Mike