



Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time February 7, 2016



*They left everything
and followed Jesus.*

—Luke 5:11



Pastor's Column

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Islamophobia

At this time in the history of our global village, it is more important than ever that people of good will come together, rise above differences, rejoice in diversity, seek and celebrate that which we have in common.

It is so important to realize that we are sisters and brothers sharing time together on this Planet Earth only for a while.

Religion should bring people together, not keep us apart.

Unfortunately, today there are people of all religions who are making choices that desire to not only keep us apart, but are choosing to use their religion as a weapon to destroy others whose faith is lived differently than theirs.

Presently, a few fundamentalist Muslims have taken center stage in our world, and they are causing havoc, destruction, and death not only to people of other faiths, but also to people of their own faith who do not live it as stringently as they do.

But what we need to realize is that those fundamentalist Muslims are a very distinct minority. There are 1.2 billion Muslims in the world today!

What would the percentage of these Muslims who are terrorists be? It is probably less than 1/2 of 1%.

Do we blame "all" for the actions of the "few?" Absolutely not! Yet, that is what many in our country today are calling us to do...

We are being told to fear the Muslim, to ban the Muslim from our country.

This kind of fear and action destroys the very foundations of our nation. We are a nation built on new waves of immigrants coming into our country generation after generation.

It is these new groups of people, people of different races, ethnic backgrounds, and religions that bring a freshness, a new energy and enthusiasm into the life of our country. They are the life blood of our future...

Rather than fearing the unknown, we should get to know the unknown.

With that in mind, I want to call to your attention two events that will be taking place in our Diocese and in our Parish this month. These two events can help us to get to know those who many people are telling us that we should fear.

On Wednesday, February 17, at 7:00pm, Bishop McElroy, the Bishop of our Diocese, will be speaking with Sayyid Syeed, of the Islamic Society of North America, at the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies at the University of San Diego. The title of their presentation is "Deepening Inter-Religious Dialogue and Community Alliances."

The context of the talk is: "Violent extremism, terrorism, and transnational violent movements under a religious banner have led to growing public concern. Security-based approaches to countering violence and extremism have in turn created new threats, particularly against the Muslim community in America."

On Sunday, February 28, at 12:30pm on the Upper Level of our Parish Center, Sheikh Yasser Qassim, the Imam of Masjid Al-Ittehad, the Mosque in Vista, will be here in our Parish. The title of this presentation, and our time together, will be "Getting to Know Our Neighbors: A Catholic/Muslim Dialogue." All are invited to attend.

In today's bulletin, there is a flyer outlining both of these events.

Take time to get to know our neighbors. Do not let fear rule your lives as so many voices in our country are pushing us to do!

Let knowledge and friendship rule!

Fa. Mike

Deepening Inter-Religious Dialogue and Community Alliances

Getting to Know Our Neighbors: A Catholic/Muslim Dialogue

Wednesday, February 17

6:00pm | Private Reception

Casa de la Paz

7:00pm | Panel Discussion

Joan Kroc Institute for
Peace & Justice Theatre

University of San Diego
5998 Alcalá Park, San Diego

Violent extremism, terrorism and transnational violent movements under a religious banner have led to growing public concern. Security-based approaches to countering violence and extremism have in turn created new threats, particularly against the Muslim community in America.

Most Reverend McElroy, Diocese of San Diego and Sayyid Syeed, PhD, Islamic Society of North America, will join Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies faculty members Ami Carpenter, PhD, and Fr. William Headley, CSSp, to share their respective efforts, knowledge and experience on inter-religious dialogue, community resilience and public engagement as effective approaches to community and peacebuilding.

Kindly R.S.V.P. to
mtheriault@sandiego.edu or
619- 260-7618 or
online at <http://tinyurl.com/z5toem5>.

Sunday, February 28

12:30-2:30pm

Upper Level of our Parish Center

St. Thomas More Catholic Church
1450 South Melrose Drive, Oceanside

“Faith brings out the best in us. Interfaith brings out the best of our faiths.” —*Imam Abdulo Mujahid*

“Turning to mutual respect in inter-religious relations, especially between Christians and Muslims, we are called to respect the religion of the other, its teachings, its symbols, its values. Particular respect is due to religious leaders and to places of worship. How painful are attacks on one or other of these.”
—*Pope Francis*

Sheikh Yassir Qassim, Imam of Masjid Al-Ittehad, the Mosque in Vista, and Rev. Michael Ratajczak, Pastor of St. Thomas More Catholic Church, will facilitate input, dialogue, and discussion about our faiths: what we hold in common, and how we can work together for the common good.

All are welcome! Let’s take time to get to know our neighbors and not let fear rule our lives.

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