

Inspirations for Peace Between Theory and Practice



Poznań, 14-15 December 2022

Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań
European Society of Women in Theological Research
AMU Institute of Cultural Studies
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have the pleasure of announcing an international conference

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Peace is variously concretised in European culture as images and concepts contributing to a coherent semantic network and iconographic space. The first of these is the Greek concept of *Eirene* (*Εἰρήνη*). This goddess known from Greek mythology is depicted with Plutus, the deity of wealth, on her arm and with a cornucopia and an olive branch, thus linking a state of peace with abundance. In Roman mythology, the equivalent of *Eirene* was the goddess *Pax*, whose name launches us into the realm of Latin meanings of the concept, developed in a specific historical and cultural context. One of the relevant terms here is the *Pax Romana*, a reference to the external and internal peace of the Empire introduced and sustained by means of violence and armed aggression. Furthermore, fundamental for understanding the concept of peace in European culture is the Judeo-Christian context of its development. It is strongly linked to the biblical text whose canon consists of books written in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic. In order to derive the meanings of the word peace from the biblical text, we should first of all recall the Hebrew concept of *shalom* and return to the Greek concept of *Εἰρήνη*. The former appears in the Bible in a variety of contexts. The term *shalom*, which is the primary form of greeting, refers above all to friendly relations between nations and individuals; it also denotes a state of material and spiritual well-being. Additional connotations are introduced by the term *salam*, which is associated with Islamic culture, as well as the Sanskrit term *Santi*, which in Hindu and Buddhist culture denotes inner peace, a state of harmony. Even a cursory analysis of the concept generates a number of different, though interrelated, semantic fields, indicating the deep anchoring of the concept of interest in religious traditions, for which it is a key category. Peace is the core value for all world religions, an intrinsic component of the experience of transcendence.

Theoretical reflection on the question of peace seeks to design effective practical strategies to counteract any form of aggression and to efficiently extinguish it. Knowledge of both pro-peace and anti-war activities always grows out of an analysis of the concrete experience of armed conflict. In the 1950s, the fragmented reflection on peace was systematized and a separate field of interdisciplinary *Peace Studies* emerged. The category of peace is not always directly related to the experience of war and violence and is a designation of the area of preventive actions aimed at avoiding direct confrontation, including education for peace. Work for peace is the effort of empowered actors: human rights activists, sensitive to discrimination against ethnic, religious and gender minorities. Emissaries of peace flag manifestations of violence. Furthermore, art going beyond mere representation of reality, activating a range of attitudes of social engagement from critical art to activism, becomes a field of action for social and cultural change, restoring order based on the idea of social justice and peaceful relations.

The category of peace is anchored in a specific cultural and historical reality and requires constant reflection, taking into account the current state of affairs. Today's reality we all indirectly and directly experience, i.e. the consequences of the war in Ukraine, requires a renewed recognition and deep reflection in order to redefine or strengthen the existing ways of addressing the issue of interest, in its theoretical and practical aspects.

We invite you to a joint debate and propose a number of perspectives whose consideration will help us reconstruct the complexity of the issue of peace and indicate the

directions of practical prevention, actions during a conflict, including humanitarian measures, as well as those aimed at extinguishing conflict, striving for reconciliation.

Our suggested themes include the following areas:

- Historical and anthropological contexts of action and reflection for peace
- Religions and peace
- Communities and the idea of peace: education system, historical memory
- Art and criticism and the experience of war and peace
- Education for peace
- Emissaries of peace: activists, volunteers, human rights organisations; past and present.

The conference will be held in hybrid mode, which will enable us to interact with researchers from international centres.

We encourage you to participate in the conference and ask you to send abstracts with the title of the planned intervention (20 Minutes) (up to 800 characters, single spacing), specifying your degree and affiliation, along with your email address:

inspirations.for.peace@gmail.com

by 31 October 2022

Conference Organising Committee

Prof. UAM dr hab. Małgorzata Grzywacz, Prof. UAM dr hab. Dorota Jewdokimow,
Prof. UAM dr hab. Tomasz Żaglewski, dr Maciej Kijko, dr Agnieszka Kulig



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