

**THE SECURITY WE SEEK:
Whose Security? At What Cost? To Whom?
*A Catholic Perspective***

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*Rev. Bryan N. Massingale, S.T.D.
Associate Professor of Moral Theology
Saint Francis Seminary
Milwaukee, WI*

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

St. Francis of Assisi has given us one of the most familiar and beautiful prayers of the Christian tradition. I confess that I find it especially haunting these days. I am haunted by its vision and call of faith as I survey a world that is so much at odds with what I believe, with the values I espouse, with the way I seek to live.

- We meet today in a world where the “gap” between the affluent rich and the destitute poor—a gap that Catholic Social Teaching has consistently called “scandalous”—is no longer a “gap” but a chasm.
- We meet in a nation where one of every six children lives in poverty, and one out of four children at some time this month will not know when their next meal is coming, where they will eat it, or who will provide it.
- We meet in a country still struggling with and arguing over the limits of inclusion, a country of continuing controversies over affirmative action, racial preferences, and so-called “reverse discrimination.”

- We meet at a time when the Statue of Liberty is no longer a beacon of welcome for “huddled masses” yearning for freedom and opportunity. Now the security of our borders is a more pressing concern, and immigrants increasingly are viewed with wariness, suspicion, and alarm.
- We gather today in a nation where protests against “racial profiling” no longer come only from young men penalized for “driving while black.” “Racial profiling” is now a concern of Muslims (or those perceived to be Muslims) and Arabs (or those who appear to look “Arabic”) as well—the new targets of public scrutiny, fear, discrimination, and even hatred.
- We gather in a world poised on the perilous precipice of war . . . at a time when, as the British Foreign Secretary recently put it, “the clock is set at five minutes to midnight,” and a military invasion of Iraq appears imminent and all but inevitable. We meet in the midst of the largest display of American military power in at least a decade— perhaps even since Vietnam. We meet in a world where the threat of nuclear mushroom clouds hovers over humankind yet again, whether from the Korean peninsula, the Indian subcontinent, or perhaps the Middle East. We meet in the midst of a so-called “war” fought with new weapons of devastation such as anthrax, smallpox, or even ordinary shoes made into bombs.
- “Lord, make **me** an instrument of your peace.” When I put the accent here, this prayer haunts me for another reason, as I realize that the disorder, violence, and injustice present in the world are not just “out there,” where I can smugly and self-righteously condemn them. The world’s fears, and the violence they breed, are also within me. To a degree that I am not always conscious of, I participate in and sustain the world’s disorder.

What wisdom can we offer at this crucial and critical juncture in the history of our world and nation? What vision can guide our ministries of justice seeking and peace-making during this precarious and perilous time? The charge given to me is to articulate a theological and spiritual perspective on the pursuit of “security” that so preoccupies our nation and its policies. To do this, I propose that we need to go beyond a narrowly partisan analysis; that is, we should endeavor not simply to critique a particular policy such as a “Department of Homeland Security.” Rather, we should expose, challenge, and critique the mood, attitudes, perceptions, the mentality and the ethos that sustains, fuels, and even demands such obsession with “security.”

In other words, I argue that the issue that faces us is not simply Iraq, or terrorism, or even “security.” We have to go behind or get underneath these presenting crises, and address a fundamental clash of competing visions of the world and the purpose of human life. In the words of the biblical scholar, Walter Brueggemann, “Our primary business is not to chip away at little “causes,” [which always in the heat of the moment seem so great], but to address the basic symbolic issues of what we believe, of what we trust and fear, of what we wish to enhance, and of what we wish to curtail, which are, of course, all God questions.”¹

To this end, I will articulate what I see as two fundamentally different and competing visions of life and “security.” First, I will illustrate the security mentality or ethos in which we live, as expressed in two public documents. Then, I will show the counter-vision of faith that we are privileged to bear as articulated in the Scriptures and the heritage of Catholic Social

¹ Walter Brueggemann, *Peace* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2001) 158.

Teaching. To each vision of “security,” I will pose four questions: What is the definition of “security?” Who is being made secure, that is, who benefits? What are the costs? Who pays these costs? Finally, I will examine the implications that this clash of competing visions of “security” has for a people who are torn between dual allegiances and divided loyalties, and suggest where we might go from here.

The American Ethos of “Security”

The American vision of “security” emerges out of two pivotal public policy statements: “The National Strategy for Homeland Security”(July 2002) and “The National Security Strategy of the United States of America”(September 2002).² Both are official statements of the U.S. government, endorsed by the highest authority, carrying the seal and signature of the President. Again, our focus will not be on specific policy proposals; rather, we seek to discern the understanding and purpose of “security” as articulated in these documents and the policies that follow from them.

Among the most striking features of these texts is the underlying tone of pervasive **fear**. Over and over, the documents speak of “threats” and “enemies.” Continually, they underscore and highlight our unprecedented “vulnerability” to “catastrophic loss of life and property” due to the fundamentally changed atmosphere in which we live. Listen to the opening words of the “Homeland Security” document: “America learned a terrible lesson on September 11. American soil is not immune to evil or cold-blooded enemies capable of mass murder and terror.”³ This document notes that “America historically has relied on two vast oceans and two friendly neighbors for border security.”⁴ But all that has now changed; our borders and oceans did not protect us on 9-11. In a sense, they betrayed us by lulling us into a false complacency. Thus a fundamental rethinking of our homeland security is now needed because of “our enduring vulnerability.”⁵ Over and over, we hear a constant drumbeat of “threat,” “attack,” “enemies,” and “vulnerability.”

This mood of pervasive fear and vulnerability is accentuated by a constant repetition that the danger we face is not only external, but also within our midst. Repeatedly, we are reminded that the enemy is “invisible,” “evil,” “smart and resolute.” The following is a typical statement: “Our enemies seek to remain invisible, lurking in the shadows,”⁶ under the cover of the places where we congregate to celebrate our freedoms: “schools, sporting arenas, malls, concert halls, office buildings, high-rise residences, and places of worship”—none of these are safe because of the enemies hiding in our midst.⁷ Our enemies, we constantly are warned, seek to exploit our freedoms to cause us unthinkable harm.

² Both documents are accessible at the official website for the White House, www.whitehouse.gov. I will be citing the “pdf” versions of these documents downloaded from this site on January 22, 2003. For ease of reference, “The National Strategy for Homeland Security” will be cited as “Homeland Security”; “The National Security Strategy of the United States of America” will be cited as “National Security.”

³ “Homeland Security,” 1.

⁴ “Homeland Security,” viii.

⁵ “Homeland Security,” Presidential Letter.

⁶ “Homeland Security,” vii.

⁷ “Homeland Security,” 7.

This pervasive mood of fear and vulnerability, caused by a smart, evil, resolute, and often invisible enemy, is the context for understanding the current concern (even obsession) with “security.” It is interesting that when the word “security” appears in these documents (and in our public discourse) it is almost always preceded by the words “homeland” or “national.”⁸ Indeed, the documents make an explicit link between the two, stating the purpose of “homeland security” is to protect the homeland from the consequences of pursuing our “national security” policies, goals, and objectives: “Homeland security seeks . . . to provide a secure foundation for America’s ongoing global engagement.”⁹ In other words, we seek to be internally secure, so that we can pursue our global national security agenda without suffering catastrophic harm.

What is our “national security” agenda? The often-repeated goal of “national security” is to protect “American interests” and defend “our way of life”—a way of life that our enemies seek to destroy. “American interests” and “our way of life” are mantras that are constantly invoked in our policy discourse. What is “our way of life” that we seek to promote abroad and defend from hostile attack? It is usually described in a couple of typical phrases, for example, “our democratic way of life and our economic prosperity”;¹⁰ or, “freedom, democracy, and free enterprise.”¹¹ In yet another place, the Administration states, “We will seek to bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets and free trade to every corner of the world.”¹² Thus “American interests” are described as a triad of democracy, prosperity, and free markets. But we have to push further, and ask what is the controlling vision of life and liberty that we seek to secure. For it becomes clear, upon further investigation, that not all the elements of this triad are of equal weight and importance.

In fact, it is clear that the fundamental “American interest” that is key to “our way of life” is economic prosperity: free trade, free markets, free enterprise. Our “National Security” makes this crystal clear: “Free markets and free trade are key priorities of our national security strategy.”¹³ The United States goes so far as to elevate free trade into a central and defining “moral principle”:

The concept of “free trade” arose as a moral principle even before it became a pillar of economics. If you can make something that others value, you should be able to sell it to them. If others make something that you value, you should be able to buy it. **This is real freedom**, the freedom for a person—or a nation—to make a living.¹⁴

Thus our core American value, the freedom we seek to defend, is the freedom to buy and sell, the freedom to acquire and consume, the freedom—dare I say it—to shop.

⁸ I note in passing that I could find only one exception to this pattern in these documents, and that was when the word “security” was preceded by “energy” (“National Security,” 19).

⁹ “Homeland Security,” 5.

¹⁰ “Homeland Security,” 7.

¹¹ “National Security,” Presidential Letter.

¹² “National Security,” Presidential Letter.

¹³ “National Security,” 23.

¹⁴ “National Security,” 18; emphasis added. See also this document’s introductory Presidential Letter, which declares, “. . . economic freedom is the only source of national wealth.”

Our economic prosperity is so central to “American interests” and “our way of life” that it is allowed to trump our concern for human rights (as is the case with China)¹⁵ and our concern for the democratic will of the governed (e.g., our insistence that Turkey host American troops in the event of an Iraqi conflict, despite the overwhelming opposition of the Turkish people to this policy).¹⁶

Now we can see what is central to our “security” concerns. For a primary objective of our military strategy is to protect “our way of life,” that is, first and foremost, our economic prosperity. America’s economic well-being is dependent upon our military dominance: “Our forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equaling, the power of the United States.”¹⁷ We have committed ourselves, then, to the goal of never allowing any global power to rival or threaten our own. The preservation of our military dominance is so central to our security and the protection of our “interests”(defined principally in terms of economics and trade) that we declare that we will act preemptively and unilaterally, with crushing, overwhelming power, to maintain it¹⁸. The document sums up this stance in two direct sentences: “Our best defense is a good offense,”¹⁹ and “We cannot allow our enemies to strike first.”²⁰

Let us sum up our journey thus far. Underlying the American pursuit and understanding of “security” is a deep sense of fear and vulnerability felt in the aftermath of the homeland attacks of 9-11. Our policy documents constantly play upon and remind us of the threats we face and our vulnerability to cold-blooded evil. Our way of life, a life of undisputed military dominance and unfettered economic prosperity, is under attack from nefarious enemies, both known and unknown, seen and unseen. Our fear and vulnerability demand that we maintain and bolster our military preeminence, in order to insure our continued economic prosperity and consumer lifestyle.²¹ Indeed, our national security strategy makes clear the connection between military might and consumerism in ways that we seldom articulate. American national security policy is a concrete example of what some have called a worldview of *military consumerism*. This is one description of this ethos:

This [world view] has, as its “consumer” component, the conviction that well-being, security and happiness are the results of getting, having, using, and consuming, activities that may be done without restraint or limit, even at the expense of others. This construal of reality has its “military” component in the conviction that having a disproportion of whatever it takes to enjoy well-being,

15 “National Security” is explicitly clear about subordinating our concern for human rights in China to our economic interest in it as a trading partner, stating that the U.S. will “not allow” our differences with China over human rights “to preclude cooperation where we agree” (28).

16 “National Security,” it seems, justifies this sort of action under the rubric of “convincing or compelling states to accept their sovereign responsibilities” in combating terrorism (6).

17 “National Security,” 30.

18 “National Security,” 6, 15; “The National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction,” (December 2002) 3. This latter document is also available at the official White House website, www.whitehouse.gov. I am citing from the “pdf” doc

19 “National Security,” 6.

20 “National Security,” 15.

21 Key to this is our commitment to “strengthen our energy security.” See “National Security,” 19.

security, and happiness is appropriate, and that the use of force, coercion, or violence, either to secure or maintain a disproportion, is completely congruent with this notion of happiness.²²

Thus the “underside” of consumerism is the belief that having a disproportion of goods is appropriate, and that using force or violence to get or keep these goods is both necessary and legitimate. This attitude is concretely illustrated in the statement of an American woman who had just purchased a low mileage SUV during the Afghan conflict: “She believes that Americans have a right to do what we want and to buy what we want. [She asks,] Isn’t that why we are fighting?”²³ A consumer society—the American way of life—depends upon violence, or the threat of violence, to maintain itself.

We are now in a position to answer the questions we posed at the beginning of this presentation. What is “security?” In the American ethos, “security” is defined as the maintenance of the American consumer lifestyle and the military superiority needed to defend it. Whose security, or who benefits? “American interests,” more specifically, the interests of those who possess a disproportion of the world’s goods, or who benefit from free trade and unfettered access to markets. At what cost? “Security” lies in protecting “our way of life” at whatever cost, including: huge defense budgets; ballooning deficits; neglect of domestic social programs; unilateral and preemptive resort to violence; “infringement of individual liberty”²⁴; increased surveillance; interference in the affairs of sovereign states; aggressive “nontraditional” law enforcement tactics; and recourse to crushing force. Who pays the cost? We all do. But the burden is most carried by those who do not have a proportionate share in the bounty they seek to protect. The burden of America’s security falls most heavily upon those who are of limited value as consumers, and who therefore are considered expendable or “collateral damage” in our pursuit of security. In sum, “security” lies in the preservation of the status quo, or better put, in a return to the state of the world prior to September 11, 2001.

The Ethos of Christian Faith

“Lord, make me an instrument of **your** peace.” The great social ethicist, Roland Bainton, observes, “Christians bring to social problems, not a detailed code of ethics or a new political theory, but a new scale of values.”²⁵ Values are fundamental ways of being and seeing, that influence how we choose, decide, and act. As Christians, and especially as leaders in the Christian community, we hold values that give a different vision of and perspective on “security.” Our values stem from a worldview rooted in the concept of *shalom*.

We commonly translate this *shalom* as “peace,” which it is . . . and much, much more. *Shalom* is a vision of social wholeness, a state of well-being for all, where everyone has access to the goods of creation intended to meet the needs of all. In the words of Walter Brueggemann, “Shalom is the substance of the biblical vision of one community embracing all creation, [where

22 Walter Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997) 718.

23 *Newsweek* (Nov. 19, 2001) 42.

24 “Homeland Security,” 2.

25 Roland Bainton, as cited in *Sojourners* (January/February 2003) 18.

all enjoy the] resources that make communal harmony joyous and effective."²⁶ The scriptures insist that "if there is to be well-being, it will not be just for isolated, insulated individuals; it is, rather, security and prosperity granted to the *whole* community—young and old, rich and poor, powerful and dependent. Always we are *all* in it *together*. *Together* we stand before God's blessings and *together* we receive the gift of life, if we receive it at all. *Shalom* comes only to the inclusive, embracing community that excludes none."²⁷ In other words, the blessings of *shalom* are either shared by all, or enjoyed by none.

Note the striking difference from what we considered before. Note the litany of "all," "together," "for all," and "everyone," contrasted with the previous mantra of "American interests" and "*our* way of life." *Shalom* is a vision that embraces and promotes the well-being of all, not just the already privileged few. *Shalom* is not a simplistic vision; it is a new way of life.

Let us further develop the contrast between these two visions. The scriptures describe *shalom* as a state without fear, where natural enemies, such as the wolf and the lamb, and the calf and the lion, peacefully coexist (Isaiah 11). Contrast this with the American mood of fear and vulnerability, which causes us to see others as potential threats, and the world as filled with hostile menaces.

The worldview of the American security ethos is inward-looking and self-preoccupied, speaking of "*homeland* security," "*unilateral* initiatives," and the grim determination to go it alone, if necessary. We see a dogged pursuit of self-interest; others' interests matter only insofar as they advance or are compatible with our own. *Shalom*, on the other hand, is invitational and inclusive; it is concerned about communal welfare and expanding the circle of those who matter. We see this is the prophetic insistence that the community cannot enjoy *shalom* unless the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the stranger; the tax collector and sinner; and the despised and insignificant also share in its blessings.

The American ethos is defensive, because it believes that things must be kept as they are. The world is a grim place, where our forces are marshaled in a desperate holding action to keep things in place, or at least from further deteriorating.²⁸ The vision of *shalom* is different. For *shalom* is both a divine gift and a human task. And it is "gift" before it is "task." The fullness of *shalom* is not dependent on human efforts alone. We are its agents, but we are not the exclusive actors in the drama of peace. Moreover, we need not fear the newness that *shalom* requires, because we know that it bears fullness of life for all, ourselves included.

Thus "security," in the biblical worldview, is an outcome of pursuing this more comprehensive vision of *shalom*. When *shalom* is established through the pursuit of justice, then true security is found. In a key passage, the prophet Isaiah declares: "The effect of justice will be *shalom*, and the effect of righteousness, quiet and trust forever. [Then] My people will abide in peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (Isaiah 32: 17-18). Note again that peace and security, through the promotion of justice, are shared by all, or they are enjoyed by none. The realism of the Bible insists that without the pursuit of justice, social peace and true security are impossible.

Our Catholic heritage of social teaching builds upon and expands this vision of *shalom*. It insists that peace is not the mere absence of war, but the positive presence of justice.

26 Brueggemann, *Peace*, 13.

27 Brueggemann, *Peace*, 14-15; emphasis added.

28 Brueggemann, *Peace*, 127.

Tirelessly, we proclaim, “If you want peace, work for justice.” Catholic Social Teaching holds that the work of justice is made concrete in the promotion and defense of human rights—those inalienable conditions of human flourishing and well-being that must not be subordinated to, nor solely dependent upon, the workings of the marketplace. Catholic Social Teaching has repeatedly condemned the arms race, for it is detrimental to the poor, the common good, and authentic peace. Catholic Social Thought holds that the gap between the developed few and impoverished many is scandalous; repeatedly, the popes from Leo XIII to John Paul II have insisted that peace and security are impossible in a world of severe economic disparity. More recently, Catholic Social Thought has severely criticized the consumer mentality that defines human beings by what they have and how much they have.²⁹

Catholic Social Teaching insists that solidarity is the way to peace, and that only when we realize that we are all really responsible for all, including the poor and vulnerable, can we rest in tranquility and security. This ethic of solidarity declares that no individual or nation can go it alone. Solidarity is rooted in the recognition that the human condition is one of radical interdependence. We can reach human fulfillment only in the context of community. Human fulfillment, then, is either achieved together, or it is not realized at all.

In all these ways, Catholic Social Thought shows its rootedness in the biblical vision of *shalom*, the fullness of life for all.

We now can answer our four questions. What is “security?” In this faith perspective, “security” is a state of being that flows from the inclusion of all in the bounty of the earth. “Security” is meant for all, and results from a concern of each one for the other. Security results from a concern for the common good and the promotion of solidarity between nations and peoples. Security stems from a recognition and defense of basic human rights, foremost of which are life and those things necessary for its proper and authentic development. Security results when all have access to and enjoy food, housing, clothing, medical care, social security, education, healthy environments, and a living wage. Security follows from realizing that a preoccupying pursuit of self-interest is a sure path to social disaster.

But what is the price of biblical security? And who pays the cost? The cost, quite bluntly, is “our way of life” . . . and we all pay it. On this point, Brueggemann’s insights are instructive and haunting:

The world wants *shalom*; but we know that the world cannot have *shalom*, cannot possibly have it, on the present terms. The emergence of *shalom*—wholeness for church, people, and earth—requires some radical changes in values, presuppositions, and perceptions. . . . The world hates and resists those who speak of the dismantling required for *shalom*. The dismantling is required by the recognition that we cannot receive what we crave on the present terms.³⁰

It is little wonder, then, that the security of *shalom* is so deeply longed for and yet so strongly resisted. This is why peace is always a work in progress, and justice is never

²⁹ The encyclicals of John Paul II, especially *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* and *Centesimus Annus*, develop an insightful critique of the culture of consumerism.

³⁰ Brueggemann, *Peace*, 125. In another place, Brueggemann notes, “We have so much to abandon: efforts to secure our existence, efforts to control our brothers and sisters, efforts to possess it all” (139).

completely realized, for God's vision far outstrips the capacities of our frail imaginations, feeble hopes, and lame courage. That is why we have to pray that God makes us instruments of *shalom*. For left to ourselves, and relying on our own strength, the challenge of peacemaking is difficult and almost insurmountable.

Coping with Dual Allegiances and Divided Loyalties

Thus we have two competing visions of security, rooted in two highly divergent world views. The first is rooted in a world of fear, seeks security in military power directed to the end of defending economic privilege for a few. The other, rooted in a world view of blessing, sees security lying in the effort of assuring that the blessings of creation are enjoyed by all. How do we respond to these visions?

“Lord, **make** me an instrument of your peace.” I stated at the outset that this prayer especially haunts me when I realize that the disorder, violence, and injustice present in the world is not only “out there.” The world’s fears, and the violence they breed, are also within me. In ways that I am not always conscious of, I participate in and sustain the world’s disorder. You and I are also part of America, part of its “interests” and “way of life.”

So, how do we respond to these competing visions of security? If we are honest, we must admit that all of us are, to some degree or another, torn between these two visions. We are divided between loyalties to our American ethos and to our Christian identity. We first are torn between the reality of the now and the vision of the not yet . . . for *shalom* is a world “not yet known or possessed,” but only promised and glimpsed from afar.

We also are torn because we, like many of our fellow Americans, are afraid. We, too, witnessed the Twin Trade Towers collapse in a ruinous heap. We know that there are dangerous people who pose a real threat to the world’s peace and stability. We also know that while America’s public policy may be short-sighted, the redistribution of the world’s goods that *shalom* requires does not work to our short term advantage. The vulnerability that our public policy documents speak of, while often skillfully manipulated to a calculated advantage, is undeniably real. We thus find ourselves torn between our yearning to trust the vision of *shalom*, and inner voice of fear that wonders, “But what if the Administration is right? What if we are wrong?” Brueggemann once again puts it so well: “Both the church with its vision and the world with its fear are here today, and they are in our guts. . . . We are all of us . . . in a deep conflict between yearning for *shalom* and wanting the world to continue uninterrupted.”³¹

How, then, do we cope with our fears, which are the cause and reason for our divided loyalties and dual allegiances? First, we must admit that we are afraid. There is a constant refrain that runs through the gospels: “Have no fear.” “Do not be afraid.” I take comfort from this mantra, because Jesus can calm our fears and tell us not to be afraid only because we, in fact, are afraid. So then, let us admit and name our fears. We share in the fears of this time; we, too, experience the angst of our fellow citizens. We achieve nothing by disparaging the fear of others, or not owning up to our own.

Second, there is a difference between sharing in the fears of our time and being controlled by them. St. Thomas Aquinas teaches that courage is not the absence of fear. Rather, courage lies in the determination to do what is right despite being afraid. This thirteenth century wisdom

31 Brueggemann, *Peace*, 128.

was expressed more recently by the twentieth century African American poet and social activist, Audre Lorde. She once was asked, after giving a particularly provocative address, whether she wasn't afraid to speak her truth. She answered: "Of course I am afraid. . . . But when I dare to become powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, it matters less and less that I am afraid."³² In the same way, the challenge is to act for *shalom*, even while admitting that we are afraid.

But how does one act despite one's fears? This leads to my third point: Tap into your inner spiritual well. As a way of reaching that inner source of strength, let us ask ourselves, "Why do we persevere in the daily, never-ending tasks of justice-seeking, peace-making, and truth-telling?" Why do we keep doing what we do? When I ask myself this question, the only answer that comes that makes any sense to me is that on a deep level, something has taken hold of me. In the words of a gospel song: "Something down on the inside's telling me to go on." I suspect that's true for all of us. We keep on doing what we do because on a deep level, something has taken hold of us. We've been seized and caught, compelled by a vision of a world made new, a vision of *shalom*. On some level, deeper than we can describe, we have been captured by a vision similar to that of the author of the book of Revelation:

Then I saw new heavens and a new earth. The former heavens and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no longer. I also saw a new Jerusalem, the holy city, coming down out of heaven from God, beautiful as a bride prepared to meet her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne cry out: "This is God's dwelling among mortals. He shall dwell with them and they shall be his people and he shall be their God who is always with them. He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, crying out or pain, for the former world has passed away." The One who sat on the throne said to me, "See, I make all things new!" Then he said, "Write these matters down, for the words are trustworthy and true!" (Revelation 21: 1-5).

This, ultimately, is why we are here, despite our divided loyalties and dual allegiances. Torn as we may be, we continue to seek justice, make peace, and speak truth because deep down we are compelled by the vision of a new world; we have been caught by the One who even now is making all things new; and with knowledge beyond words, we know that this crazy vision is worthy of trust.

Our broken world and hurting nation need what we have to offer. Despite our fears, we offer the certainty that our homeland cannot be secure if we strive to preserve the status quo at any cost. We offer, despite our divided hearts, the certainty that brute, unilateral force will never make us rest in tranquility. And no matter what other doubts we may have, we offer the certainty that security does not come from open markets and military might, but from the promotion of basic human rights for all.

We know what the world does not yet accept. We have something, a saving wisdom, that our country now urgently needs. Will we have the faith and courage to offer it?

Let us pray for the healing of our own torn hearts and divided loyalties, ending as we began:

32 Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider*.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Let the church say, "AMEN!"