

- Seabury Press, 1975), 1492–1495, at 1493.
- 15 James Alison, *Raising Abel: The Recovery of the Eschatological Imagination* (New York: Crossroad, 1996), 46.
  - 16 Strictly speaking, one can sacrifice only to God, since this is an act of worship. Notwithstanding this traditional acceptance, we may say, with Alison, that the death of Jesus was God's sacrifice to us humans in the sense that the Father 'gave him up for all of us' (Romans 8:32).
  - 17 Sebastian Moore, 'The New Convivium', *The Downside Review* 111 (1996): 40–55, at 41.
  - 18 Maury Schepers, OP, 'An Integral Spirituality of the Paschal Mystery', *New Blackfriars* 82 (2001): 283–290, at 286.
  - 19 Jean-Noël Bezançon, *Dieu sauve* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, and Montreal: Bellarmin, 1985), 64.
  - 20 See Louis Roy, OP 'The Passion of Jesus A Test Case for Providence'. *New Blackfriars* 79 (1998) 512–523
  - 21 See Charles C. Hefling, Jr 'A Perhaps Permanently valid Achievement: Lonergan on Christ's Satisfaction', *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 1992: 51–76, esp. 60–61.
  - 22 I want to thank Harvey Egan SJ and Matthew Levering who helped me make this article clearer and more elegant.

## A Plea in Favour of a Vulnerable Peace

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The fall of the Twin Towers in New York on September 11th last year shattered the confidence of many people in the security of modern society. Modern society was supposed to guarantee a safe and happy human existence. It promised solutions of difficult problems through its impressive technological developments, it protected the individual against arbitrary decisions of government through its democratic institutions and kept poverty away thanks to the benefits of the free market economic system. The western world looked like a rather peaceful world, apart from some small pockets of violence such as Northern Ireland, the Basque country and Cyprus, and, at the edge of the western world, Israel and Palestine. Democratic states do not make war against democratic countries. It is difficult to count wars for it depends how one defines a war, but since the Second World War almost all the wars in the world were civil wars.

The destruction of the Twin Towers showed how vulnerable modern society is. Individuals and small groups can terrorize a neighbourhood, a community, or a state by killing key figures in society, by attacking power stations and destroying vital communication systems. In all those cases the use of rather simple weaponry suffices. There is no foolproof protection possible against those who carry a bomb on their body to make it explode on a market place, near a power station or a TV station. While in the 19th century churches often were the target of terrorist attacks and of mob violence, at present banks and large commercial buildings are the sacred places that symbolize the value system of society and thus are attacked. The challenge of terrorism is met with a war on terrorism though war can only be a metaphor in more or less the same way as the American war on drugs. Still for many people this war may replace the Cold War. Anyway it creates peace, restores confidence and overcomes feelings of powerlessness.

War creates peace: it is a well-known phenomenon. Before September 11th President Bush's support in the country was small for he won the presidential elections with fewer popular votes than his opponent Al Gore. After the attack on the Twin Towers he got the unanimous support of the American nation and was able to forge a worldwide coalition against terrorism. His father President G.H.W. Bush enjoyed a similar popularity during and shortly after the war against Iraq for the liberation of Kuwait, but his popularity was short lived and when the economic prospects worsened he lost the election. This peace, a fruit of war, is often seen as an ideal peace. It is a peace based on unanimity. People back the leadership of the country unanimously. Criticism of the government disappears, everybody is united, and former opponents become friends. It becomes a duty to stand united for divided we fall. This peace inspires people, makes them enthusiastic, and gives them a sense of purpose. The pictures of Hitler cheering and of the crowd kneeling down in front of the imperial place at St. Petersburg when war was declared in 1914 are famous. Political differences become unimportant and even the uncertainties of daily life melt into thin air. The chaos that is always present underneath loses much of its threat for order seems to prevail. The road to the future seems to be clear for it is possible again to make a distinction between us and them. People have again a sense of belonging.

War against a common enemy creates unanimity. This unanimity is often seen as the ideal form of peace in politics, in daily life and in relationships. How nice it is to live in full agreement with your partner, family members, colleagues, and neighbours. It makes life safer. When people are all in favour of something they are sure to be on the right track. They feel strong, self-confident and able to face the world with all its

difficulties and challenges. The unanimous voice of the people is the voice of God. The recognition of the fruits of unanimity is the basis of the Anglo-Saxon tradition of *trial by jury*. If twelve sensible persons decide unanimously that this person is guilty, one may be sure that guilty he or she is. Being elected or acclaimed by a unanimous vote grants a clear mandate to a candidate for office. In meetings about important business, the chairperson will strive after a consensus, an unanimity, rather than forcing a decision by majority vote for the minority can resent its defeat and fight later on. If a decision, taken by a unanimous vote, turns out to be the wrong one, everybody is responsible and thus nobody.

Nationalism appeals to people because it promises the peace of unanimity. It emerged in the 19th century as a reaction to modern developments such as the industrialisation by which people were forced to move from one place to another, from one job to another, from the country to the city, and had to accept that again and again their knowledge and experience became obsolete and had to be renewed. The loss of identity and of pride in oneself made people pay attention to elements which had not been very striking before because they were self-evident. In the new situation they looked as if they were of great value. The regional language, the local symbols, the religion of the ancestors had been taken for granted before, but now they became elements that could be used to express and to create an identity. Being in exile, either geographically or socially or both, people discovered that they were related to one another because they shared the same traditions, symbols, language and religion: they began to see themselves as a nation. Members of the intelligentsia and of the lower ranks of the nobility, who did not have much political power, promoted the nationalist movement and made their lack of power a symbol of the position of the lower classes. They often created a tradition for the nation that did not exist before. They invented symbols such as a flag and a coat of arms and reshaped the different memories of the past into a common history. Rediscovering dead heroes of the past and remembering them together made a great contribution to the feeling of belonging and of being one people. Formal education became the most successful way to hand over the invented tradition of the nation, the common language and the new sense of identity.

Nationalism is older than the nation. It is the mother of the nation. It united people over against a government that ruled a conglomeration of peoples with different languages, religions and customs. This did not have roots in a particular nation, at least not until it was identified by its critics with one group or nation. Sovereignty was invested in a king who, as the focus of attention of everybody, kept everybody together. If the monarchy was not able to become a national symbol, nationalism

abolished it. The pluralist state broke up into smaller, more uniform sovereign units. Some nations were strong enough to form a viable state but other nations did not survive as independent units. The nation state tolerated small minorities, but the general policy was to absorb them into the dominant national group. Already existing states tried to assimilate minorities (France), to incorporate them (Germany) or to exclude them (United Kingdom). Paradoxically, the nationalism that emerged as a reaction against modern industrialisation promoted the very same industrialisation because the nation had to grow economically in order to survive in the struggle with other nations. The economic growth and prosperity of the nation states attracted people from all over the world with the result that at present most European states are multicultural ones that have to cope with tensions between the minorities and the majority.

The recent showing of strength of nationalist movements at the ballot box in almost all the countries of Western Europe reminds one once again of the desire for the peace of unanimity. Feelings of insecurity run deep in present society. People complain about the rate of criminality; they are robbed in the streets, they have their houses broken in, or at least they know stories about people to whom those things happened. Crime rates have to be handled cautiously. More police in the streets results in higher figures in the statistics for more small crime is noticed. The crime rate may even have gone down, but still people may feel less safe than before. However, in many areas crime has gone up and people are right to feel unsafe. The roots of the feelings of insecurity run deeper, though, than the threats of being robbed, raped or beaten up. The feeling that life is chaotic and that it is hard to survive in present society is rooted in the fact that it is difficult to trust one another. Everybody can compete with everybody else. Husband and wife may become competitors; nobody is sure that his wife or her husband will still be at home when one returns from work in the early evening. Everyone can choose a new partner, and can be tempted to change his or her loyalty. Colleagues easily become rivals, all trying to get higher up. For people are equal, at least in principle. Equality means the freedom to desire and to strive after anything other people may already possess or desire as well. People become doubles, twins, brothers and sisters in the game of competing with one another and trying to be just a little smarter than their competitor. Everybody's position, job, intimate relationship is in a continuous danger of being lost. One is unprotected over against the competition of other people. This is nice when one is sure to be a winner but one may be a loser. The free market is not only an economic market; love, care, attention and emotional fulfilment are put into this free market as well and are thus objects of competition. All this makes people in our society very insecure. This

process is strengthened by the increase of prosperity. The expectations of people that they become more prosperous all the time grow in such a way that reality is forgotten. Disappointment is the result and at election time a disgruntled public votes the very government out of office that helped to provide the new wealth as happened in the Netherlands last May. Terrorism of small resentful groups reveals the vulnerability of modern society and this strengthens the feeling of being by oneself in a hostile and insecure world in which everyone is a potential or factual victim. One looks for peace, for safety, for unanimity.

This desire for unanimity is found in the Christian tradition as well. The members of synods and councils have always been looking for some kind of consensus. A simple majority vote did not suffice unless it concerned procedural questions. At a General Council of the Catholic Church a two thirds majority is needed to take a decision, but if possible unanimity is sought. A pope is not elected with a majority vote; a Cardinal needs two third of the votes of his equals to be elected pope. The new rules concerning the election of a pope, however, allow a majority vote when after a certain number of ballots none has got a two third majority. According to the ancient rule of Vincent of Lerins (died c. 450) Christians should believe what was believed at all times, at all places and by all. (*Commonitorium* 1, 2. PL. 50, 610).

The catholic truth demands universality, tradition and consensus. These criteria are not cumulative but consecutive; if universality is missing, tradition, the age of a common conviction, is decisive. Again: the unanimous voice is seen as God's voice. In modern times the philosopher Jürgen Habermas followed the same train of thought. Something is true if all the partners in the discussion define the same thing in the same way (J. Habermas, *Theorie des Kommunikativen Handelns*. Frankfurt a. M. 1981, 144).

This desire of Christians to be unanimous, especially concerning matters of faith and ethics, became stronger in the age of the growth of nationalism. In this the Catholic Church led the way. While most Protestant Churches claimed to be national Churches, the international character of the Catholic Church made this impossible. A different policy was chosen, a very successful one. A kind of ecclesiastical nationalism was developed with the pope in the centre. The Church was centralized and Romanised. The appointment of bishops became the privilege of the pope, the canon law was rewritten after the model of the Napoleonic law books, and new, more supraregional, places of pilgrimage such as Lourdes were promoted to replace the more local and regional ones. The papal institutions in Rome dominated the liturgy and theological formation. The Vatican invented a new tradition: it pointed to the Middle Ages as the culmination point of

Catholicism and as a model for the present and the future generations. It strengthened above all the authority of the pope. The plea and even machinations at the First Vatican Council (1870) in favour of the dogma that some papal declarations are infallible was part of this policy. Pope John Paul II tends to continue this policy of centralization and the pursuit of unanimity. Many people believe that the pope is infallible (and not just his solemn declaration) and many of those who represent him assume that they share in his infallibility at their own level. In their view the task of theologians is to explain and defend the theological ideas of the pope to the faithful. Unanimity and peace within the Church are identified. The ecumenical movement may well have been inspired by the desire to find a new unanimity between the Christian Churches.

The pursuit of unanimity is an attractive ideal for families, towns, political parties, nations and the churches, for unanimity evokes the idea of peace. If we would think in the same way about the same things and act accordingly, peace would descend on us as from heaven. Unanimity is the seal of mutual loyalty. Both the group and the individual are safe, for its members are loyal to one another. United they stand. However, in spite of everything unanimity is suspect. In most cases it is the fruit of a war or of some kind of violent action against a common enemy. The violence may be merely verbal and the enemy may be beleaguered by arguments and accusations rather than by physical violence; however, the violence is still present. It is on a sliding scale; verbal violence may turn into physical violence. Everybody knows by experience that it is possible to relieve tensions and mutual feelings of animosity in a family or a club by starting gossiping. The atmosphere changes for the better almost immediately. People feel united in talking about this or that person. The media make an important contribution to promoting and maintaining social cohesion by publishing articles and broadcasting programmes on movie stars, pop idols and well-known politicians. It is a modern form of gossip. Gossip is a form of scapegoating and is thus verbal violence. Peace based on unanimity is the result of scapegoating, a universal social mechanism, studied by the French scholar René Girard. Competition can result in a chaos in which everyone is imitating the desires and competitive behaviour of everybody else. The only way to obtain peace and order is to point the finger at a person (or a group of persons) and to announce that this person is guilty of causing the present chaos. Everybody will tend to look in the same direction and order is thus restored. The scapegoat is driven out, often lynched and killed. People place their feelings of unrest, their violence and guilt on the scapegoat who carries all this away. Peace is restored thanks to the unanimous expulsion of the scapegoat. The reasons for selecting this person as the scapegoat may be arbitrary, but the

mechanism works. In later stories and myths the scapegoat becomes a larger than life figure and in the course of time he is seen not only as the guilty one but also he may be seen as the cause of peace, so that he may be both reviled and glorified. Unanimity is in many cases based on the use of the scapegoat mechanism. It is often achieved at the expense of a third party, person or group. It may tolerate a harmless minority but generally it does not welcome minorities, on the contrary its power is based on expelling minority groups and minority points of view. It is a form of peace but a peace based on making common cause with other people against an enemy. Losing such an enemy is a disaster and as soon as possible a new enemy has to be found or created.

From this point of view unanimity is suspect. In the Jewish tradition it is said that if the Sanhedrin is unanimous in declaring a person guilty he or she should be released immediately. Democracy supposes that there is no unanimity and that a public debate is necessary. There is not even a true democracy if the majority lays down its will on the minority without at least listening at it. Minorities have to be respected and even to be supported, for instance financially, in order to make their voices heard. People are different and have different points of view. If those differences do not show, something may well be wrong. I know that at least one bishop, David Mathew, brother of Gervase Mathew OP, voted against the Constitution on the Liturgy at the Second Vatican Council, because he sensed that it would be unhealthy if there were no adverse votes at all. When we look at the sources of Christian faith we cannot help noticing that those very sources do not speak with one voice. Scripture is a library of books written in various ages. Rather than presenting one interpretation of reality it offers a discussion between different interpretations.

An example is the different ways Scripture is trying to find possibilities of living together in peace. Several models or ideals of a peaceful society turn up in the texts. The first model is the organisation of Israel as a segmented society, a society based on families, tribes and clans, bound together by kinship. It was ultimately a failure because the conflicts between the clans could not be contained and the enemies from the outside were stronger. Another attempt was the monarchy, the state: the violence of the head of state, the king, had to make sure that there was peace in the land. However, after a lot of violence Israel soon was divided into two states. They did not survive the attacks of more powerful kingdoms, Egypt and Babylonia. A new and unique concept was that of the Covenant: the stronger person or group takes a responsibility for the weaker one. In the same way God makes a covenant with Israel. This concept made it possible for Israel to survive without a king and without a state. The covenant is transmitted from generation to generation by



education. Every generation and every individual has to commit him/herself. This concept is worded in the Deuteronomist tradition. Actually, this tradition is a very violent one: the conquest of the Holy Land and the ban witness to this. It is verbal violence for Israel did not possess any military power in and after the Babylonian exile, but it is still violence. It is a typical example of trying to survive as a group and to maintain one's identity. Israel should avoid being infected with the religious ideas and practices of other nations; this is symbolised in the commandment to kill everybody in cities of nations close by. Though those nations did not exist any more when these commandments to destroy them were written down, the commandment to uproot them is a violent one. (See N. Lohfink, 'The Destruction of the Seven Nations in Deuteronomy and the Mimetic theory', in: *Contagion 2* (1995) 103-117).

The violence of the Deuteronomist tradition is linked with attempts to maintain the Covenant; this concept itself is not violent. The priestly tradition is hardly violent. In the books of Chronicles the enemies perish through their evil acts, through their own violence. (See N. Lohfink, 'Die Schichten des Pentateuchs und der Krieg', in: *Gewalt und Gewaltlosigkeit im Alten Testament*, ed. N. Lohfink, Freiburg im Br. 1983, 76ff.).

The violence of the priestly tradition is limited to animal sacrifice in the temple. Thanks to the limited violence of blood sacrifice, violence against enemies was supposed to be almost superfluous. The relationship of the individual with the temple and sacrifice was constituted by the obligation to keep the purity rules. They could be repressive, especially for women. The eschatological concept in which peace is postponed to the future can be either very violent—in many apocryphal writings the day of the Lord is a bloodbath—or peaceful: evil destroys itself, as the book of Daniel seems to suggest. (Dan 2, 34, 44)

The five models were all kept within Scripture rather than a choice being made for one model or a new one. The model of the covenant became the most important one at the end of the first century, but the other ones were not forgotten. While the Deuteronomist tends to see the covenant as a closed shop and does not seem to escape completely from scapegoating, the psalms and the book of Job place the victims of possible scapegoating in the centre. They give voice to the factual or potential scapegoat who is surrounded by the crowd that wants to drive him or her out unanimously. The prophets often were victims of the king and of the mob. These traditions seem to be a rejection of at least important elements of the Deuteronomist writings. (See R. Hamerton-Kelly, 'The Mob and the Victim in the Psalms and Job', in *Contagion 8* (2001) 151-160).

One profound insight runs through all those Old Testament texts like a continuous thread: God's voice is to be heard when the victim comes to



voice. This voice creates history. This thread has many colours and goes in many different directions. Opinions may differ in defining who the victim is here and now, but again and again his voice is heard.

Jesus had an interpretation of the biblical writings that differed from most of his contemporaries. He was closer to the tradition of the psalms and the prophets than to the Deuteronomist and the priestly one. Probably he started his career by resisting the landowners who demanded from their tenants that they should pay back their debts, in spite of the sabbatical year, by taking an oath in the presence of a judge (W.R. Herzog II, *Jesus, Justice and the Reign of God. A Ministry of Liberation*. Louisville 2000, 105–108).

One should remit, Jesus says, debts all the time, thus not only in the sabbatical year [Mt 6, 9-12; 18,22]. While the Pharisees tried to have their meals according to the standards of purity required from the priests in the Temple Jesus ate with tax collectors, prostitutes and sinners. He forgave them unconditionally. In Mark 2, 5, the story of the healing of the paralysed man, he acts as a priest in the Temple: he proclaims forgiveness even though a sacrifice was not made, so that the Temple with its sacrificial violence became superfluous. Mercy is more important than sacrifice [Mt 9, 13]. The children of God are exempt from paying taxes to the Temple [Mt 17,25-26] though the common conviction was that the Temple was the place where the debt is to be paid for the gift of the land. His cleansing of the Temple was probably not only a protest against abuse, but also a prophetic criticism of the sacrificial system itself (W.R. Herzog II, *ibidem* 124-132; see also: E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*. London 1985, 61-90, E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus*. London 1993, 254-262 and J.G. Williams, *The Bible, Violence and the Sacred. Liberation from the Myth of Sanctioned Violence*. San Francisco 1991, 226-230).

Every form of human authority, even paternal authority, is subject to God's authority: there is no one who has given up home, his family or land who will not receive in this age hundred times as much, but he will not receive back his father (Mk 10, 29-30). The passion story —we do not know anything about the historical facts of the execution of Jesus, apart from that the Romans crucified him — tells us that his trial and execution was a kind of lynching. The author of the story sides with Jesus, the victim. His voice is God's voice. God's voice is not the unanimous voice of the mob, the priests and the authorities. Simon Peter, the first among the apostles, betrays Jesus by taking refuge in the warm atmosphere of the housekeeping staff of the high priest; he joined the mob.

The Church is an attempt to keep the words and deeds of Jesus alive. There was little unanimity in the Early Church on how to do this. Reading the New Testament one is struck by the many conflicts between

individuals and groups: the conflict between Peter and Paul, the conflict of Paul with the followers of Apollos, the difference between Paul and the letter of James, the conflict between Greek speaking and non-Greek speaking Christians in Acts 6, 1 and several others. The New Testament does not offer one picture of Christ, but four, and the views of Paul and the other authors of the New Testament texts have to be added to them. Today's theologians consider attempts such as the one by Tatian (c. 160) to make the different gospels agree and to assimilate them into one text as not even desirable. The different views of the New Testament on Jesus, this lack of unanimity, are enriching. They make a wealth of interpretations and reinterpretations possible so that the texts remain alive, do not become an ideology, and can invite different people from different walks of life to imitate Christ. While the Quran can be interpreted as a form of revelation and as the proclamation of God's will, the contents of which were dictated, Scripture emerged out of a discussion of many different people that never was concluded, and is still going on under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In the Bible God reveals himself through and in human experience and reflection, of which the ongoing discussion between different people is an essential part. Even the Quran is not as monolithic as some people may think. Repeatedly verses and rules are changed. Coffee was first forbidden, then permitted, wine was first permitted but later forbidden (see David Brown, *Tradition and Imagination. Revelation and Change*. Oxford 1999, 151-167).

Meeting God is an event that requires a long process of reflection and discussion (Keith Ward, *Religion and Revelation. A Theology of Revelation in the World Religions*. Oxford 1994, 216-221).

No single soteriology is formulated in the New Testament though the search for redemption is at the heart of it. The Great General Councils made statements on the relationship of Jesus with God but never defined a soteriological doctrine. No General Council defined the doctrine of the Trinity, but still this theological interpretation of who God is was accepted in the whole Church as a result of the discussions of Jesus's relationship to God. There is more change and movement in the history of the Church than meets the eye. Looking at this history the conclusion must be that the differences in faith and in the appreciation of certain rituals and devotions varied over the ages.

If unanimity is suspect and peace, based on unanimity, exists at the expense of a third party, what is the alternative? Instead of trying to find unanimity by using the scapegoat mechanism one strives after a situation in which the different points of view are heard by all as much as possible, are respected and are shown to full advantage. They are to be seen as a mine of potential wealth instead of as a source of rivalry and animosity.

This is a peace of people who are continuously conversing with one another. The first purpose of this ongoing conversation is not to make the other person accept one's point of view, though it will be a great thing if some consensus is found, but to take care that the different points of view are respected and heard. Such a dialogue presupposes the willingness of those involved to change during this conversation and to be a different kind of person at the end of it. It asks taking risks so as to have one's view thoroughly transformed or even rejected. It requires admitting that neither traditions nor images of the future determine everything. In such a conversation people may testify in a matter of fact way to what they think is the truth. A personal testimony resists any pretension of being the absolute knowledge but rather expresses faith and trust. A consensus may sometimes be reached but it will only be a temporary and provisional one.

This conversation does not tolerate everything. It does not accept that a partner in the conversation harms another member of the group, tries to exclude someone, draws all the attention. However, the conversation may have the character of a discussion in which arguments are exchanged. It may be a fierce exchange where essential issues are tabled. The dialogue may even turn into a conflict. Conflicts have to be solved by non-violent means or some way of regulating them has to be found. Sometimes they have to be put in the icebox. It may be extremely hard to find a way to go forward, for while the discussion goes on important decisions may have to be taken that cannot be postponed. Arrangements and procedures have to be agreed on to make it possible to go forward and to take concrete steps so as not to be stifled.

This peace may look like a row sometimes. It is not as attractive, inspiring and quieting as the peace of unanimity. It is a vulnerable peace or a weak peace, analogous to the Italian philosopher Gianni Vattimo's 'weak thinking', a thinking that gives up the pretension that it would be possible to have a complete description of (and thus power over) the world (G. Vattimo, *Il pensiero debole*. Milan 1983).

This peace is not powerful. It does not unite people over against a common enemy. It does not give people a strong identity and a great sense of security but instead it invites people to accept that their identity may have to change, that security is limited in this world and that they have to take risks. People are to be convinced that life is so complex that it is impossible to have full control over it and that one can only take decisions at the best of one's abilities. It implies accepting that one's point of view will not always prevail. Actually peace is often forced on the conflicting parties by social and international pressure. This may be a good strategy, but unless a new dialogue begins, such a peace is only an armistice in which the new war is prepared.

In Africa, it seems, Islam is expanding more quickly than Christianity because it provides people with a much stronger sense of identity. A small number of rules have to be followed, a creed is to be uttered and one becomes a member of a world wide community. Many Moslems claim that Islam is the religion of peace because it has rules to solve any situation whatsoever; one only has to apply the right rule. For them peace is the extension of the House of Islam over the whole world, in which Jews and Christians will be tolerated as second-rank minorities. Compared with Islam, Christianity is a very complex religion. It has only one rule, to love God and one's neighbour; and in every new situation Christians have to sort out in a discussion how this one rule should be put into practice. They try to imitate Christ but have to discover what imitating Christ demands here and now. The peace they hope for is the peace of the kingdom of God, not the peace of a dominating Church. They know they are in need of redemption. Christians often claimed a strong identity as well, but this always happened at the expense of betraying the crucified one.

The vulnerable peace, this often-tiresome attempt to treat everybody and every point of view with justice, may be less attractive, efficient and inspiring than the peace of unanimity, but still it is in my view closer to the peace Jesus proclaims. When he says: I have not come to bring peace, but a sword (Mt 10, 34) he is referring to the peace of unanimity. When the risen Christ greets his disciple with the word 'Peace', he refers to a peace that unmasks the unanimity by which he was driven to death. He appears with his side pierced, as someone who is open over against Thomas whose name — the twin — symbolizes uncommunicativeness. In the same way Jacob is made asymmetrical at the end of his fight at the ford of the Jabbok. He meets Esau limping, carrying a white flag, so to speak, showing the vulnerability that makes him willing to communicate (Gen 32.) The rivals make peace, but even so they keep their distance and guard the difference. In the beginning God takes one of the ribs of man and builds it into a woman (Gen 2, 22.) Human beings are made vulnerable and are called to be communicative. This communication may be hard and at times painful. Still going on to communicate creates peace, though a vulnerable peace. It may be useful to protect one another from dreaming of unanimity and a peace built on it. Visions of the peace of the Kingdom should not be confused with the relative peace of conversation, dialogue and discussion. The peace of Christ is down to earth.