

European Society of Catholic Theology (ESCT)

Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Margit Eckholt, President
Professor of dogmatics and fundamental theology
Institute of catholic theology, University of Osnabrück
Schlossstrasse 4
49076 Osnabrück

Slovenska sekcija evropskega združenja katoliških teologov
Doc. dr. Mateja Pevc Rozman, predsednica slovenske sekcije ESCT/ET

Osnabrück, March 2nd, 2022

Call for Peace!

At the beginning of the Paschal Penitential Season, peace be upon you all!

We have war again in Europe – for the generation of most theologians of the European Society for Catholic Theology, war was the decisive event in the lives of their grandparents and parents, for some even in their own lives. We belong – especially in Western Europe – to the generation of the peace movement, striving to counteract the Cold War and the rearmament, and to overcome them above all through the many human and cultural contacts.

In 1989, as our Society was founded, a new Europe was emerging, the polarities between East and West seemed to be overcome. It gave the Christian Churches a chance to get closer and work together for the good of the world. With our theological work we have also contributed to understanding, mutual acceptance and respect among people of different faith traditions. Partnerships have been established with theological centres in Ukraine and Russia, and we have experienced how these connections, across the borders of nations, denominations, and languages, have given rise to a new “fraternity among all people”, to quote Pope Francis’ most recent encyclical, a fraternity based on God’s creation and redemption in Christ.

Now tanks are rolling, bombs exploding, destroying lives senselessly, driving people from their homes. There is war in Europe. We are deeply affected; we experience a failure of humanity. Where is the voice of our Christian faith?

As theologians, our task is to walk in the footsteps of the Son of God who became human, in the footsteps of the Incarnation to give voice – surely always only stammering – to the message of Christmas: Peace to this world! To speak of God in our times means also to strive for peace in this wounded world. This is at the core of what the word “theo-logy” means in the first place – to speak responsibly of God with reason and heart.

We stand with our sisters and brothers in Ukraine who are suffering greatly, whose national sovereignty has been violated, who are fighting for their freedom. We stand with the sisters and brothers in Russia who have been deprived of the right to face the truth. We are pronouncing the message of peace, that the demands to stop this war resound loudly in Europe, Ukraine, and also in Russia. Our hope and wish is that the way for the truth and freedom, that the incarnate Son of God lived and died for, can be realized in our world. Christian faith has shaped the history of Europe and the history of Russia. Today, we are only credible witnesses of Jesus Christ if we are at the service of his message of peace and call for an end of this war. This message of peace unites us across the borders of denominations and cultures.

We stand up for this message of peace and we demand an end to the senseless and immeasurably suffering fratricidal war.

With Saint Francis of Assisi we pray:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
that I may love where there is hatred;
that I may forgive where there is offence;
that I may unite where there is strife;
that I may speak truth where there is error.

May Peace be!

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the Praesidium of the European Society of Catholic Theology,

Prof. Dr. Margit Eckholt