
BEYOND STORIES

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The world is one, and more and more the brutal news stories come to remind us of this fact. For many years, in the West people thought they could visit exotic countries at specific times (when on leave) and at their conditions (in the locations, format, accommodation and currency they have chosen) and then stay among themselves for the rest of the year. Visitors from those same exotic countries were not welcome at home. Traveling was one way. Even people fleeing war had no other option than crossing the border to next door, equally poor country, for the majority of them. This has changed: the world is one, movement is global.

For many years we also lived in the illusion that we are not at war. Our governments were engaged – were engaging us – in many wars, but these wars were taking place there. For the majority of their inhabitants, our societies were not confronted with those wars, apart from the evening news, which we could choose to watch - or not. The war is also global and has reached our peaceful societies. We are one. We cannot bombard other countries and stay safe at home. Violence has reached us. What can we do to protect ourselves from violence? The first violence is in our hearts. Let us not let darkness take control of our lives. Let us invite and embrace the light in our lives.

I am saddened to see more and more, even among my friends, speak of “us” and “them”. Fear and hatred and separation are not a good idea and will only increase the divide and the spread of violence. Please refrain from spreading negative ideas. Fear is not a plan. Hatred is not a good plan either. Fear and hatred can only promote more violence. We have a choice to make: either live in darkness or embrace our brothers and sisters.

In 2016, we intend to continue working for peace and togetherness.

I wish you a happy new year,
Cynthia Petrigh

What can we do then, to oppose the messages of hatred, violence and divide? Our duty is to work, each one of us at our level and with our resources and capacities, for peace, understanding, compassion, respect and togetherness. Our duty is to close our door to fear and hatred. There is no “us” and “them”. Don’t be afraid. We are together, we are one. Let us spread love, compassion, light and togetherness. It is our duty. Each one of us. Let us open our arms and our hearts to our brothers and sisters. Let us chant for peace and love. Let us keep darkness away from our lives. In the Parable of the Long Spoons, one day a man said to God, “I would like to know what Heaven and Hell are like.” God showed the man two doors.

Inside the first one, was a large round table with a large pot of stew. It smelled delicious and made the man’s mouth water, but the people sitting around the table were thin and sickly; they appeared to be famished. Stitched to their arms were spoons with very long handles; each found it possible to reach into the pot of stew and take a spoonful, but because the handle was longer than their arms, they could not get the spoons back into their mouths. The man shuddered at the sight of their misery and suffering. He had seen Hell.

Behind the second door, the room appeared exactly the same, with the large round table with the large pot of wonderful stew that made the man’s mouth water. The people had the same long-handled spoons, but they were well nourished and plump, laughing and talking. They were using their long spoon to feed each other.

The choice is ours. Let us make the choice of love and peace.



Beyond (peace)

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