



Fostering Hope in our Divided World

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“Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all the darkness.”
Bishop Desmond Tutu

Our first Special Issue comprises of select Conference Proceedings from *Our Whole Society Conference* held in Winnipeg (June 15-17th 2025) and other invited articles. The Canadian Museum for Human Rights was a hub for civic reflection and moral dialogue. The Arthur V. Mauro Institute for Peace and Justice at St. Paul's College was honoured to collaborate with the Canadian Interfaith Conversation in co-sponsoring the conference.

With the theme '*Fostering Hope in a Divided World*,' the conference brought together scholars, activists, public servants, and faith leaders in a search for transformative solutions to today's urgent social challenges. Our collaboration was intentional in that the theme for this Conference is directly aligned with Dr. Arthur V. Mauro's vision for Winnipeg, namely, to be cultural center of hope. Hope is complex. It is more than an emotion, mixed with the expectation that

peace, justice, and human dignity might be possible. It is more than a passive attitude. Hope is deeply enmeshed in social, cultural, political, and economic contexts. As a collective and active force, hope is a refusal to give up on imagining the possibility of a better world. Hope can, in other words, be a catalyst for real transformational change. In this Special Issue our authors share their stories and struggles with this phenomenon called hope.

Conference Proceedings:

Dr. Payam Akhavan, a Keynote speaker, shared his storied life journey of the risk of confronting both our shared humanity and the diversity of our community living in harmony amid the onslaught of an age of rage - a rage that moves us in the direction of despair.

Panelists, Dr, Sami Halewa, sj, Joanne Seiff, and Tanya Brothers address Hope through their storied lenses of the politics of belonging and what it means to belong.

Invited Submissions:

Dr. Robert Christmas: Drawing on Jean Paul Lederach's hopeful idea of moral imagination, Dr. Christmas contends that hope can rise from the sea of inhumanity, if we develop empathy and the strength to carry it out.

Dr. Whitney McIntyre Miller reviews the emerging literature on Peace Leadership in considering the importance of promoting individual peace toward building and sustaining collective peace. She positions her review as a guide to foster hope in creating collective and sustainable peace in our world.

Dr. Ahmed Mohammed-Salee, Kaleem Hussain, and Lisa Hilt, explore the idea of post-normal peace, that in-between period where old orthodoxies are dying, new ones have not yet emerged, and nothing appears to make sense. Utilizing the concept and method of a polylogue they attempt to exemplify the use of multiple logics, perspectives, voices, and existences for the sake of bringing people together to foster hope in a divided world.

Can We Begin Anew?

This Special Issue on the topic of Hope is indeed timely and necessary. In our divided world, we need to remain hopeful. But what is hope without action? It is wishful

thinking. It is a mere act of optimism. For the late [Pope Francis](#), however, hope is a verb. Here is what he had to say:

... to live hope requires a “mysticism with open eyes”, as the great theologian Johann-Baptist Metz called it: knowing how to discern, everywhere, evidence of hope, the breaking through of the possible into the impossible, of grace where it would seem that sin has eroded all trust.

Pope Francis grounded his discernment by telling his story:

Some time ago I had the opportunity to dialogue with two exceptional witnesses of hope, two fathers: one Israeli, Rami; one Palestinian, Bassam. Both lost daughters in the conflict that has bloodied the Holy Land for too many decades now. But nonetheless, in the name of their pain, the suffering they felt at the death of their two little daughters – Smadar and Abir – they have become friends, indeed brothers: they live forgiveness and reconciliation as a concrete, prophetic and authentic gesture. Meeting them gave me so much, so much hope. Their friendship and brotherhood taught me it is possible that hatred, concretely, may not have the last word. The reconciliation they experience as individuals, a prophecy of a larger and broader reconciliation, is an

invincible sign of hope. And hope opens
us to unimaginable horizons.

For the sake of humanity, may friendship
guide us along this hopeful journey for
peace. May friendship enable us to not let
hatred be the last word. Why not let hope
open us to unimaginable horizons?