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## Introduction: Essays on Peace Bishops

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**Introduction: Essays on Peace Bishops**

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Our August 2022 issue was a special issue on "Peace Bishops: Case Studies of Christian Bishops as Peacebuilders," which launched our series of essays on Religious Leaders and Peacebuilding. Our initial focus primarily is on Roman Catholic bishops from various countries as a sub-category of Religious Leaders since they share many important characteristics as Catholic bishops in the Vatican II- post Vatican II time period (from 1963), such as the same basic location in church structure and same authority in that structure; all were appointed not elected; all work within the context of magisterial teaching and theology on peace and justice; all share concerns as pastors of their dioceses and leaders in the larger church, among other shared characteristics. Of course Catholic bishops are individuals and enact their roles somewhat differently, but they have much in common and certain behaviors are required as part of their roles as bishops.

However, as Monica Duffy Toft, Dan Philpott, and Timothy Shah demonstrated in their book *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (W.W. Norton, 2011), an inspiration for this JSE series on religious leaders, there has been significant variation among Catholic bishops regarding work for peace and justice. For example, during the dictatorships of the 1960s, 70s and 80's most Chilean Catholic bishops worked for democratization and human rights, while most Argentine Catholic bishops supported the authoritarian regime in Argentina. We also see variation in bishops working for peace and justice in various locations up to the present day. How do we explain such variation in behavior among a category of religious leaders who have so many characteristics in common, and what can we learn from such explanation? What factors contribute to religious leaders working for peace and justice, or not working for peace and justice? While in their analysis Toft, Philpott and Shah looked at the national level of bishops and their behavior regarding peace and justice. we are looking at individual bishops and other religious leaders in our series.

In this section of essays on Peace Bishops in our current issue, we continue with very good case studies of three bishops., one from Uganda by John Ashworth, one from Northern Ireland by Maria Power, and one from the United States by Jens Muller, in basically the same Vatican II- post-Vatican II time period. With the kind permission of US Cardinal Robert McElroy, we have included the text of his recent talk at the University of Notre Dame that helps us to understand Catholic theological developments regarding Just War, Nonviolence and Peacebuilding. We also have a very informative historical overview of Peace Bishops beginning with early Christianity by Ronald Musto, and with the kind permission of Commonweal we have reprinted the article by John T. McGreevy on the decolonization of the Catholic Church which helps us to understand bishops in the Global South. Our concluding essay in the section is a comprehensive analytical essay by Dan Philpott that looks at the factors influencing the work for peace and justice of all of the bishops we have discussed since our August issue as well as highlighting points from Musto's important historical essay.

There is much to be learned about Religious Leaders and Peacebuilding from these essays. We will continue to explore this topic in future issues of the JSE.

*Introduction: Essays on Peace Bishops*

In closing this Introduction, I would like to acknowledge the important contribution that Dan Philpott has been making to increasing in the social sciences the appreciation of the role of religion and religious actors in peacebuilding and in the field of International Relations more generally. Important intellectual foundations for the comparative studies of religious leaders and peacebuilding were laid by Dan. For his important contributions he received in 2021 from the International Studies Association (ISA) The Religion and International Studies Distinguished Scholar Award. A video was made by the ISA highlighting Dan's important contributions -- the video can be found in our Recommended section of the JSE. The Review of Faith & International Affairs, Volume 19, 2021 - Issue 4, published 10 essays in a symposium of essays honoring Dan's work. And Dan's essay in the Review, "Towards Religious Ways of Knowing: Reflections on the REL Symposium and the Future of the Field," which also appears in our Recommended section, provides valuable insights for the study of religion and politics in general, and religion and peacebuilding in particular. We congratulate Dan for his much deserved award, and thank him for all of his pioneering work, and for his contribution to this issue of the JSE.