

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
BRUNSWICK DIVISION

USA

V

NO. 2:18-CR- 22

ELIZABETH MCALISTER

28 U.S.C. Section 1749 Declaration of Retired U.S. Catholic Bishop Thomas Gumbleton

I, Thomas Gumbleton, do hereby declare, under penalty of perjury under the law of the United States, that the following is true and correct:

1. My name is Thomas Gumbleton. I have been a Roman Catholic priest since 1956. I was Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit from 1968 until my retirement in 2006. I served as the founding president of Pax Christi USA, the catholic peace organization, in 1972 and I remain active in peace-making and other social justice activities.
2. I offer this statement in the trial of the individuals charged for going onto the Kings Bay Naval Station grounds and prayerfully engaging in symbolic disarmament of the materials on that site used for nuclear weapons. I have known the individuals who are on trial for years. They are people of deep faith and are deeply admired for living out the principles of our faith.
3. My statement has two parts. First, I explain why the actions of defendants are entirely consistent with the peace tradition of our Catholic faith. Second, I explain

why actions of civil resistance to evil and civil disobedience are important in our common efforts as people to bring about much needed social change. I have written and spoken on these topics at numerous churches, colleges, universities.

4. Catholic Teaching Condemns Nuclear Weapons as Immoral. In 1963, Pope John XXIII, in his teaching document, *Pacem In Terris*, made the statement “In our atomic era it is irrational any longer to think of war as an apt means to vindicate violated rights.” In my opinion, the Just War theory, used for centuries to justify and bless military and war making, disappeared with that one sentence.
5. Nuclear weapons have been repeatedly condemned. In 1965, the Second Vatican Council ruled out any use of any weapon of mass destruction. The use of such weapons is a crime against God and humanity. In 1976, Pope Paul VI recalled the use of nuclear weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and identified the bombings as “butchery of untold magnitude.”
6. Nuclear weapons are wrong and evil. Resisting such evil is not simply a matter of being responsible citizens. It is a matter of safeguarding and deepening our spiritual well-being. I am convinced that there comes a certain point when evil public policy that cannot be changed must be resisted. People of faith and people of ethics must resist evil. We cannot remain silent. We must resist and say no in whatever way we can to nuclear war, to the arms race which stockpiles and refurbishes nuclear weapons, to the testing of nuclear weapons, and to any step in the process by which the evil is prepared and continued.

7. Thus the actions at Kings Bay of the individuals facing charges in this matter are consistent with our faith tradition and are praiseworthy actions to resist the evil of nuclear weapons.
8. Our Judeo-Christian faith tradition recognizes resistance to evil even if such resistance is against the laws of the time. In Exodus 1:17, Hebrew midwives disobeyed orders of the King of Egypt to kill all boys at childbirth. Moses lived only because of resistance. Likewise, Shadrach, Mesach and Abednego flagrantly disobeyed orders of King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3:12-19. The Apostles before the Sanhedrin explained that we must obey God's law rather than human law when they are in conflict, Acts 5:29.
9. Likewise, our American tradition respects resistance to evil no matter if the evil is protected by law. The whole American revolution was totally against the laws of Britain. From the Boston Tea Party to resistance against slavery, from union sit-down factory occupations to the suffragette illegal actions to secure the vote for women, from Roger Williams in 1635 to Susan B Anthony in 1872 to Henry David Thoreau in 1846 to Rosa Parks in 1955, resistance to unjust actions and unjust laws has been a continuing part of our national efforts to bring about social change and to resist evil.
10. The defendants in this action are part of the respected tradition of resistance that is an integral and respected part of our faith tradition and our US political tradition of social change. The jury that decides their fate should know these traditions and the history that supports their actions.

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I am willing to testify in more detail about these matters if permitted.

Signed this 15 day of June, 2018.

Thomas G. Gumbleton

s/ Thomas Gumbleton