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Departure and Blessings from Ming and Laura-Marie

May 1 2022

Dear peace supporters of Nevada Desert Experience,

Hello and happy May Day from the desert, where spring is full and rich with warmth.

I'm writing to announce that Ming and I are departing from Nevada Desert Experience.

It's been an honor to live in the NDE house and do interfaith peace work, meeting brilliant people, praying together, and putting our bodies where our values are.



Ten years ago Ming drove me to Las Vegas, and I experienced my first Sacred Peace Walk. I learned that community is possible, and striving for peace is meaningful work. Once I understood these facts, I was changed. There was no returning to my previous life. I needed to learn more about desert spirituality and come together with other people of conscience to speak our truth with direct action.

During Holy Week 2014, Ming and I married at the test site and crossed the line. That sealed our commitment to one another, and our commitment to going forth together to live our values. Our partnership is interdependent, as we do our best to help the world according to our gifts.

Seven years ago, Ming and I moved here to Las Vegas to live in the NDE house and become volunteer office co-managers. We also became **Catholic Workers**, although we both aren't Catholic or Christian. We learned about the Works of Mercy, the mystical body of Christ, serving hungry and homeless people, and the blessings / challenges of living in community as disabled people.

I'll always remember sunrise ceremonies, vigiling at Creech Air Force Base, the beauty of the Goddess Temple in Cactus Springs, and gardening in the peaceful courtyard here at Bartlett Ave. I cherish

memories of meals shared by the roadside, and the Sacred Peace Walk when Japanese people were brought here by [Jun San Yasuda](#). They chanted Namu Myoho Renge Kyo to me and Ming in the gravel driveway, in thanks for hospitality and food, and I cried.

I'll always honor in my heart holy people Louis Vitale OFM, Steve Kelly SJ, Jerry Zawada OFM, Sister Klaryta Antoszezwska, Johnny Bobb, Bonnie Bobb, Julia Occhiogrosso and Gary Cavalier, Henry Freeman, Rev Felicia Parazader, Rev Senji Kanaeda, Priestess Candace Ross, Rev Carolyn Metzler, Rev Chelsea Page, and countless dear peace walkers whose kindness and faith help me understand that peace is possible.

Ming and I believe in the mission and vision of NDE more than ever. But we're called back to our homeland of California to do the work of love in other ways.

Thank you for strengthening NDE with your participation in events, words of encouragement, donations, and prayers. So many of NDE's supporters have been part of NDE since long before I first came here ten years ago, and before Ming became an NDE council member 20 years ago.

We leave NDE in the hands of caring council members and the two brilliant activist employees hired recently. Please continue to support NDE in all its changes, to make peace and community. It's holy work on holy ground.

Love to you and all the work you've done here and in you own biome, for justice and the well-being of all creatures.

Laura-Marie River Victor Peace Nopales and Ming Lai

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