

Ash Wednesday

10 February 2016

Christian Witness and Resistance against
nuclear war preparations

Nonviolent Guidelines for the Procession and Liturgy

We take this action in a spirit of openness and nonviolence. To create an atmosphere of confidence and security for *all* those involved - and to communicate a clear, strong message to the public and the police, we invite you to be nonviolent in word and deed throughout this action.

Please read and note

- Show respect for all people we encounter.
- Take care that you do not endanger yourself or others when crossing roads, and keeping pathways clear for those passing by.
- Engage only in the scenarios set out in the Liturgy booklet

Our liturgy and witness today is undertaken in respectful opposition to the MoD's preparations for the deployment of weapons of mass destruction. We have never sought permission from the police to engage in the act of prayer and resistance which has taken place here every year since 1982. The police know of this act of prayer and witness. They have warned us that the MOD is on high alert and that there will be armed police among their number.

Members of CCND and Pax Christi will give guidance and further warnings if required.

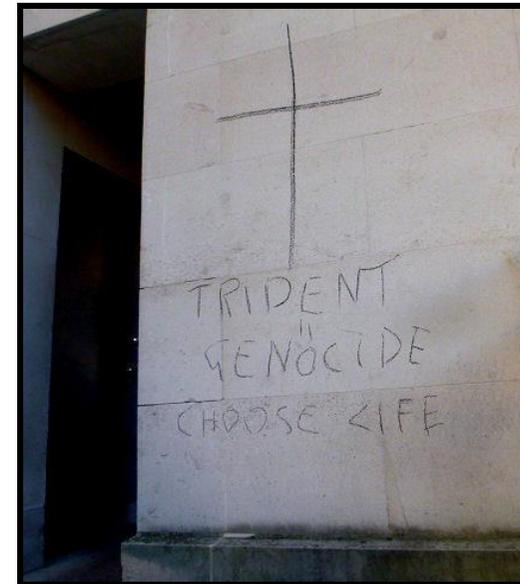
Organised by:

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Spending on nuclear weapons squanders the wealth of nations...when these resources are squandered, the poor and the weak living on the margins of society pay the price. .

Pope Francis, December 2014

Please read this before the Liturgy begins. The sponsoring organisations have agreed to guidelines for this action for all taking part. Those willing to risk arrest today are known to the sponsoring organisations, have prepared themselves through prayer and discussion, and have fully accepted the Guidelines. **See guidelines of back page**

If you **have not been part** of this preparation, we ask you to respect the process for this witness and not involve yourself in any civil disobedience activity.

Welcome & introduction from Pax Christi

Call to worship

L: To keep Lent is to confront the principalities and powers first of all in prayer. With Jesus we face the dark side of ourselves - this is so susceptible to capture and control by the powers. If it happens that we keep vigil publicly at the gates of economic, military, political or religious authority, we do so as an act of repentance, acknowledging the solidarity of sin.

All: Call us, Lord Jesus, to seek your way of peace and proclaim it to the nations. A peace that seeks security through love, justice, cooperation and respect. A peace that has as its ultimate security our trust in and love of God.

Call to repentance

L: Rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God,
All: for the Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

L: Even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart,
**All: With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.
When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears, and rescues them from all their troubles. Amen.**

Silence

Prayer said together

In this Lenten season, O God, we come before you,
asking for courage to open our eyes.
We want to see ourselves as you see us: the empty and barren places,
the half-hearted struggles, the faint stirrings of new life.
We come, trusting your grace, waiting for your illuminating word,
longing for your healing light.
Do not let us be blind to your presence.
Shine upon us, O God, and make our paths clear,
For we pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.
(Marlene Kropf)

Other opportunities for Christian witness to peace and justice in the months ahead

27 February Stop Trident national rally. Faith groups will meet at 11.00am at Hinde Street Methodist Church for interfaith prayer. We will gather around the banner / message: **No Faith in Trident.** March begins at Speakers Corner at 12 noon and ends in Trafalgar Square where there will be speeches. More at www.paxchristi.org.uk

18 April, Global Day of Action on Military Spending

Plan an event for Monday 18 April - the Global Day of Action on Military Spending. Use imagination and humour to bring the skewed reality of global expenditure to public and press attention. Look out for GDAMS material available from Pax Christi and Campaign Against the Arms Trade.
<http://demilitarize.org.uk/>

15 May, International Conscientious Objector Day

The annual ceremony in London.

27 June: Faiths day at AWE Burghfield, near Reading. Part of a month-long period of action against Trident. Contact London Catholic Worker for details londoncatholicworker@yahoo.co.uk

and there is peace

by Laurie Pollack, from Nevada Desert Experience website

Spreading the message

We will now spread out along the rail that faces the Ministry of Defence for our final prayer. Walk in single file and face the building. You may also wish to plant/disperse some seeds into the grass to 'sow peace and hope' for the year ahead.

At a given time we invite you all to say the Our Father.

This marks the end of our witness. The building may have been marked, you may wish to take a walk around to see these markings. We will keep you informed of any arrests that may have taken place and of subsequent support that may be needed.

Reading: Matthew 6:1-6,16.18

Blessing of water

L. All God's creation is holy. This water is already holy, but we ask God our Father to bless it for its special use today.

All: Lord God Almighty, Creator of all life, we ask you to bless this water as we use it in faith. Forgive our sins and save us from the power of evil. Amen

Blessing ash & charcoal

Those who have prepared to mark the building come forward with charcoal. The ash and charcoal are blessed with holy water

L. Dear friends in Christ, let us ask God to bless this charcoal and ash, which we will use as a mark of our repentance.

All: Holy and immortal God, you do not desire the death of sinners, but rather that we should repent of our sins and live. Bless this charcoal and ash, that it may be for us a sign of repentance, and a mark of your salvation through Christ, who died for us and rose from the ashes of death to bring us eternal life. Amen

Act of Penitence

L: From the dust of the earth were we created.

All: To the dust we shall return

L: Through our sins, we have destroyed and squandered the resources of the earth.

All: May our repentance gather us into a new community, which cherishes the earth and all her people.

Representatives of the sponsoring groups use the ash to mark those present with a cross

Repent, and believe the Gospel.

Response: Amen

During the ashing we sing

Wait for the Lord, his day is near.
Wait for the Lord: be strong take heart!

After the ashing

L: Direct our hearts to better things, O Lord; heal our sin and ignorance.
Lord do not face us suddenly with death, but give us time to repent.

All: Turn to us with mercy, Lord; we have sinned against you and one another.

Dismissal

All: As members of the body of Christ, we will witness together to the peace of Christ at the Ministry of Defence.

L. We pray that our peaceful intentions may be clearly expressed in our worship, our symbolic acts of witness, and in the way that we relate to those we meet this day and throughout Lent - particularly any who may not understand the Christian basis for our action.

Let us pray...

All: Loving God, inspired by your Holy Spirit, we go to the Ministry of Defence to worship, vigil, fast and pray. In undertaking this witness, we commit ourselves to act in a spirit of love and nonviolence, in the name of Christ. Amen.

IMPORTANT

*We will walk in **silence** to Horseguards Avenue, stopping three times for prayer and reflection. It is likely that the building will be marked during our procession and we will keep you informed as to what has happened to those marking.*

L: The path to peace is not an easy one and we must seek partners and friends on the way so we pray

Side 1:

Peace takes walking
So we walk
When we feel defeated
When we question whether we matter
When we are just surviving
When we wonder why we are doing this?
When we want to find our own path

Side 2:

Peace takes walking and so we walk
And the rain falls and the wind blows
And the sun burns our eyes with its heat
And we feel our feet
And our hearts beat
And it is hard and we are slow
And we don't know where to go
And we see ourselves for the first time
And we see each other for the first time
And we see the land for the first time

Together:

Peace takes walking and it takes time
And we have time
To hope and we are freed from limitations
And it is a prayer
And we walk from our daily lives
Into different places and we heal the earth
And we walk
Together, alone with direction, with abandon
Carefully, gently deliberately, with passion,
until one day we find
that we have walked home

to tackle evil with the weapons of love and truth alone. (*Pope Benedict XVI, February 2007*)

L: We remember peacemakers of our time who encourage and inspire us who remind us that we must put love into action.

We remember those who gather today making their own Ash Wednesday witness: those from the Glasgow Catholic Worker in Faslane, Scotland and Pax Christi Liverpool, in Liverpool City Centre

L: We remember....

Please add your own names

Song:

Choose Life, Choose Love - the Hour Is Late!

*Choose life, choose love - the hour is late!
Say 'yes' to Christ and 'no' to fate.
Join hands with people of the faith,
reach out in hope to all who live.*

*In seeking space and life for each,
we need to practice what we preach,
to turn into creative deeds
the inner urges of our creeds.*

*With Christ-the-Least, renouncing power,
we face the challenge of this hour,
we rise against the death of earth,
the end of life, the end of birth.*

*The hour is late! Choose life, choose love,
with Christ into God's future move:
life to the full, the earth a feast,
through making, speaking, being peace!*

Fred Kaan Words © 1989 Hope Publishing Company. Tune All people that on earth do dwell

The path of Betrayal, Repentance and Peace Follow the cross in silence.

Our cross is brought into the centre of our worship

Betrayal led by Christian CND - by statue.

L: Then Jesus went with the disciples to a place called Gethsemane: and he said to them,

All: "Sit here while I go to pray."

A: He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them,

All: "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me."

L: And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed,
All "My father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not my will but your will be done."

L: And then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter,

All "Could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you do not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak."

L: Again he went away for the second time and prayed,

All: "My father if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."

L: Once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said,

All: "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand

(Mt 26:36-46)

L: We choose to prayer here today. To 'stay awake' to the reality of nuclear war. As Jesus faced his fear, we too face our fear of violence with

our longing for peace. We confront the power of this place through our prayer, our physical presence and our resistance.

All: Jesus our brother, you call us to stay awake and follow you. We long to walk with you and learn the meaning of your way for our time.

Silence

Reading:

The 2015 Strategic Defence & Security Review reiterates the position set out in 2010: the UK's commitment to a minimum nuclear deterrent, assigned to the defence of NATO, and delivered by a fleet of four SSBN operating a continuous at-sea deterrent. Submarines on patrol will deploy with eight operational Trident missiles and carry no more than 40 nuclear warheads. The UK's nuclear stockpile will also remain as previously set out: no more than 120 operationally available warheads and an overall stockpile of no more than 180 by the mid-2020s. (*Government background document 2015*)

Reading from the prophet Jeremiah: 14:17-21

For all, the least no less than greatest,
All are out for dishonest gain;
Prophet no less than priest, all practise fraud.
They dress my people's wound
Without concern: Peace! Peace! they say,
but there is no peace.
They should be ashamed of their abominable deeds.
But not they! They feel no shame,
they have forgotten how to blush.
And so as others fall, they too shall fall:
They shall be thrown down when I come to deal with them says the Lord.

Prayer Action

L: In the 1980s Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle said, "*Our nuclear war preparations are the global crucifixion of Jesus.*" In this season of repentance we accompany the crucified and betrayed communities around our world who cry out for justice and peace

Peace - putting love into action (led by London Catholic Worker)

L: O God, the heavens are yours and the earth is yours. All our life belongs to you

All: Make us your messengers of peace and justice

L: May your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

All: Make us your messengers of peace and justice

L: May all injustice, violence and oppression give way to justice, mercy and good will.

All: Make us your messengers of peace and justice

L: Teach us to use the many resources of the earth so that none may waste and none may want

All: Make us your messengers of peace and justice

Reading: the revolution of love

The Gospel contains some of the most typical and forceful words of Jesus' preaching: "Love your enemies", (Lk6.27). It is taken from Luke's Gospel but is also found in Matthew. Jesus delivered it in Galilee at the beginning of his public life: it is as it were, a 'manifesto' presented to all in which he asks for his disciples 'adherence, proposing his model of life to them in radical terms.

But what do his words mean? Why does Jesus ask us to love precisely our enemies, that is, a love which exceeds human capacities?

Actually, Christ's proposal is realistic because it takes into account that in the world there is too much violence, too much injustice, and therefore that this situation cannot be overcome except by countering it with more love, more goodness. This 'more' comes from God: it is His mercy which was made flesh in Jesus and which alone can 'tip the balance' of the world from evil to good...

This Gospel passage is rightly considered the magna carta of Christian nonviolence... not succumbing to evil, as a false interpretation of "turning the other cheek" but responding to evil with good and thereby breaking the chain of injustice. One then understands that, for Christian nonviolence is not merely tactical behaviour but a person's way of being, the attitude of one who is so convinced of God's love and power that he/she is not afraid

This is the day,
this is the day we'll lament of war
We'll lament of war.
We will repent,
We will repent and make peace again
And make peace again.
This is the day we'll lament of war:
We will repent and make peace again.
This is the day,
This is the day we'll lament of war.

Litany of Repentance : Response: Lord, Lead us to repentance

L: For questioning the authority of Jesus' teaching on the Cross
L: For placing human standards above divine compassion, we pray...
L: For the moral blindness of our nuclear intention, we beg you...
L: For trusting in instruments of death to save us rather than in the power of the Living God, we beseech you...
L For betraying Christ's love by allowing hunger and violence that claim lives daily, we implore you...

Silence: we hold out our hands towards the Ministry of Defence in a gesture of openness and supplication

Reading: By my mercy I have extended time. I extended time for a perverse human race when I called Noah. I lengthened the time of repentance by sending my prophets. I have averted nuclear disaster many times for you. Jesus offers you all time, time to repent and come to me. Follow my call and there will be time to do what I am setting out before you. Hold hands around the world with my followers, my prisoners. Pray for each other and share my strength with them. I love those who put their trust in me and will put joy in their hearts. *(From My people I am your security: a nuclear prophecy, 1978)*

L: We now offer one another and those around a sign of peace

We move on to our final place of prayer at the South corner

Please come forward and tie a ribbon to our cross in memory of a place/people in need of peace. As we do this we will sing:

Hymn to the Victims

*We sing of those whose lives are lost and broken
who pay the price when reason's voice is stilled.
Across the world their cries come sharply to us
Imprisoned, tortured, starving bound and killed.
We know like them, of evil's dark oppression
we live like them, through hope which God instilled.*

*Where power and terror stand in domination,
where greed dictates the value life can hold
the young, the strong, who shape a better future,
into the jails of tyranny are hurled
Their faith refires the cause of liberation
their tears unite the weak throughout the world.*

*Their struggle points the way of love and justice.
Their battles quell what evil can arrange.
Their anguish shows the depth of crucifixion
Their strength reveals the power we can attain.
God sides with them, the poor and the abandoned
God lives in them the hope for peace and change.*

(Words Vaughan Johns. Music Jean Sibelius.)

Prayer

Side 1: O God, tender and just,
the names of Hiroshima and Nagasaki
cut through our denial
that we are capable of destroying the earth
and all that dwell therein.
Forgive us - and help us to always remember.

Side 2: We must remember because this must never happen again.
We must remember because you would have us live
in harmony with each other,
seeing the joy of your creation in our
sisters and brothers.

Side 1: Holy God, God of all the ages,
lead us from death to life,
to the stockpiling of hope, and of possibilities, and of love
rather than the stockpiling of weapons,
or stones to throw, or of hate.

Side 2: We pray for the healing of the earth and of its peoples,
especially for our sisters and brothers
upon whom a nuclear rain poured down.

We pray too for those trapped in violence in Syria, Ukraine,
Afghanistan, Iraq, Central African Republic

Together: Help us to imagine that another world is possible
and guide our actions towards the peace
you envision, the peace you have already given us.
In the name of the One who came so that we might have life,
and have it abundantly, we pray.
Amen. Adapted: *Rev. Loey Powell, United Church of Christ*

We follow the Cross and walk in silence to our second prayer point, the Ministry of Defence - please cross the road with care. As we arrive we will arrange ourselves to face the building - leaving space behind for people to pass without obstruction. The word REPENT is outlined in ash

Repentance. (Led by Pax Christi)

L: God be with us all today. By tradition on Ash Wednesday each year, we mark ourselves with a cross in ash, to signify our repentance of all that prevents us from following Christ on his way to the cross. The violence and fear, which provoked imperial forces to execute Jesus, still dominate our world today. We are here to repent of our sin and to call others into repentance and the love of God. We are called from the ends of the earth to be here.

Reading: Nuclear deterrence and the threat of mutually assured destruction cannot be the basis for an ethics of sisterhood and brotherhood and peaceful coexistence among people and states... the desire for peace, security and stability is one of the deepest longings of the human heart. This desire can never be satisfied by military means alone, much less the

possession of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.
(Pope Francis)

Our Cross, placards and messages are held high as we stand in silence

L: Trident is the countersign to the cross. It arrogantly threatens to undo the work that the cross has done. By Trident, all things will be destroyed.

All: By the cross, all things will be reconciled.

L: The sign of the nuclear age is Trident.

All: the sign of Christ is the cross.

L: In Trident, violence is victorious.

All: In the cross, violence is defeated.

L: In Trident, evil has dominion.

All: In the cross, evil has been overcome.

L: In Trident, death reigns supreme

All: In the cross, death has been swallowed up. In this nuclear age, let our sign be the sign of the cross.

Reading: Joel Chapter 2

“But now, now - it is the Lord who speaks - come back to me with all your heart, fasting, weeping, mourning”.

Let your hearts be broken, not your garments torn, turn to the Lord your God again, for he is all tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in graciousness, and ready to relent. Who knows if he will not turn again, will not relent, will not leave a blessing as he passes, oblation and libation for the Lord your God?

All: Call us Lord Jesus to repent, to turn away from the culture of death and choose a culture of life. Give us the courage to speak and act against the logic of violence and militarism; nuclear weapons policies and the false peace they offer our world.

Prayer action

A sheet of sack-cloth is placed in front on the MoD building Please come forward and add ash to the REPENT outline. During this time we sing several times

We sing: This is the day sung several times