

*Text: Pat Gaffney, speaking in Parliament Square at rally and vigil to mark Trident vote in the House of Commons.*

So many messages. So much energy. Such creativity. Students, faith groups, trades unions, scientists, and all of our traditional peace groups gathered here tonight. A powerful reminder of all the cooperation and good things to be grateful for in these past months. We have lobbied and written letters. We have taken part in vigils and protests. We have prayed that our Government will have the wisdom and integrity to vote against the renewal of Trident tonight.

Faith groups, including Pax Christi, the Quakers, Christian CND, Buddhists, Anglicans, Methodists are here tonight carrying a clear message “NO FAITH IN TRIDENT”. We carried this same message through the streets of London in February and at AWE Burghfield in June. Last week we stood here in the Square during the Lobby of Parliament when this message was taken to our MPs. We have NO FAITH IN TRIDENT

It is indeed an act of ‘faithlessness’ to claim that we can be protected with a weapon of mass destruction. People of faith say it is never permissible to use nuclear weapons or to threaten to commit mass murder with nuclear weapons. The very existence of nuclear weapons is an affront to and a theft from the poor and vulnerable of our world. In recent days these messages have been affirmed in statements from Church leaders which have also been communicated to MPs. Let me share some with you.

**The Catholic Bishops of Scotland** said: we urge the Government of the United Kingdom not to invest in a replacement for the Trident system and to begin the process of decommissioning these weapons with the intention of diverting the sums spent on nuclear weaponry to programs of aid and development.

**Church of Scotland** said: We should be building peace through strong and courageous leadership and not by commissioning more nuclear weapons.

**The Baptist, Methodists and URC** have said that the proposals to renew the Trident nuclear weapons system are "unwarranted" and "unethical."

**Roman Catholic Bishops England and Wales** have urged that the decision taken tonight will include the intention and the steps to achieve our undertaking under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty which oblige us to work for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Whatever happens tonight, our Members of Parliament have heard legal, humanitarian and moral arguments against Trident. I wonder if they are truly aware of the gravity of their decision? They cannot say they were uninformed! They cannot say the people were silent. We have shared our views and our visions.

And whatever happens tonight, we have a community of people ready to respond in whatever way is needed. So, when the vote NOT to replace Trident is carried we will be ready for the next step. We will be there to ensure that the money, resources, skills, technology of TRIDENT are rapidly turned to meet the needs of the poor and used to prevent conflict and address the real threats to our earth and her people.