



## Peace Day 2016

### Overcome Indifference and Win Peace

#### Overview

The third Sunday of January is designated by the bishops of England and Wales as *Peace Sunday*, a day of prayer for world peace. Pax Christi encourages schools to pray for peace in a special way around this time.

For Peace Sunday 2016 Pope Francis invites us to reflect on the theme *Overcome Indifference and Win Peace*. This assembly remembers the actions 20 years ago of three women who refused to be indifferent to the suffering of their brothers and sisters around the world.

The assembly needs a minimum of two voices – Andrea and a Narrator – but others voices for readings, prayers etc. is preferable. The person playing Andrea should be dressed in dark clothes, hat, gloves etc... Slide numbers are indicated in square brackets [x]

Other prayer and liturgy resources for Peace Sunday are available on from Pax Christi [www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk)

**[Slide 2] Andrea:** The security patrol sped passed by for a second time. We knew they had only a few minutes. We picked ourselves out of the ditch in which we had been hiding – it was time.

**[3]** Using bolt cutters we fashioned a gateway in the fence and squeezed through. Heading directly for the hanger – we knew exactly what we were looking for. I broke a pane of glass... Lotta broke another... but we could not get the door open. Jo had slipped away for a moment as we continued to struggle – *I have found a way in* she whispered...

**[4] Narrator:** Around this time every year the Pope invites us to pray for peace in a special way. This year Pope Francis has invited to reflect particularly on the theme *Overcome indifference and win peace...*

**[5] Andrea:** Just before cutting through the fence the three of us held hands for a moment of silence, reflecting on what we were about to do, and why.

Images came flooding into my mind; young people, covered in blood, screaming in terror... a young boy stood defiantly before a banner shortly before he was shot – another victim amongst so many. A third of the population of East Timor had been killed.

**Narrator:** Twenty years ago this month Andrea, Lotta and Jo broke in to a weapons factory in Lancashire. Moved by the plight of the people of East Timor they simply had to do something...

**Andrea:** I thought of the promotional video we had watched about Hawk aircraft. Along with much gloating over the attack capability of the plane – the narrator declares that the Hawk

‘packs a healthy wallop’ – there are shots of a Hawk flying in low and firing a missile into a tank, which explodes in a ball of fire. Although it was obviously a scene created for the camera, it was impossible to watch it without thinking about the outcome if the target was a house in East Timor.

**[6]** Standing in that ditch, many thousands of miles from East Timor, I felt a great connection with the people who would be at the receiving end of these British weapons, and a great sense that what we were about to do was right and necessary.

**Narrator:** These Hawk aircraft were being sold by a British weapons manufacturer to the Indonesia government who were responsible for this oppression of the people of East Timor.

**[7]** On 29 January 1996, Jo Blackman, Lotta Kronlid and Andrea Needham broke into a British Aerospace factory in Lancashire and used household hammers to disarm a Hawk warplane bound for Indonesia. They were arrested, charged with £2.4m of criminal damage, and sent to prison to await trial. A week later, Angie Zelter was also arrested on her way to repeat the action.



### [8] Reading (from the Prophet Isaiah)

In days to come  
the mountain of the Lord's house  
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,  
and shall be raised above the hills;  
all the nations shall stream to it.  
Many peoples shall come and say,  
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,  
to the house of the God of Jacob;  
that he may teach us his ways  
and that we may walk in his paths."  
For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,  
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.  
He shall judge between the nations,  
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;  
they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,  
and their spears into pruning hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
neither shall they learn war any more.

[9] **Andrea:** I believe that above all else in life, we are called to love and to be human. I can therefore not stand aside and allow the Hawks to be delivered without doing all that is in my power to peacefully resist. I believe that to be silent in this situation is to be complicit with injustice. I pray that what we do today in disarming these planes will be a small ray of hope for our sisters and brothers struggling for peace and justice in East Timor.

[10] **Narrator:** Imprisoned, charged with causing and conspiring to cause criminal damage, the women were tried at Liverpool Crown Court in July 1996. As the foreman of the jury stood and delivered the verdict there was a gasp around the court, Not Guilty. The jury recognised the role of these peacemakers in preventing a greater wrong, the death of the people of East Timor.

It was a triumph of justice, a victory for disarmament and, above all, an amazing day for the people of East Timor. The careful disarmament of weapons such as the Hawk warplane with hand tools is a step towards preventing potential acts of violence and senseless destruction. Refusing to be indifferent to the needs of others, these women planted seeds of hope for humanity.

[11] Let us pray that we might be moved with compassion and grow in determination to work for peace and justice for our

brothers and sisters throughout the world... (Please join in the responses)



### [12—22] Prayers

Leader: With the help of God's grace

**All: We will struggle for justice.**

L: With the compassion of Christ

**All: We will stand for what is true.**

L: With God's abiding kindness

**All: We will love even our enemies.**

L: With the love of Christ

**All: We will resist all evil.**

L: With God's unending faithfulness

**All: We will work to build the beloved community.**

L: With Christ's passionate love

**All: We will carry the cross.**

L: With God's overwhelming goodness

**All: We will walk as pilgrims of peace.**

L: With Christ's fervent conviction

**All: We will labour for truth.**

L: With God's infinite mercy

**All: We will live in solidarity with all people.**

L: In the end there are three things that last:

**All: Faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love.**

L: Let us abide in God's love.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

### For more information about the Seeds of Hope Ploughshares:

Pax Christi's Peace People series contains a profile of the four women.

2 Films: *How to destroy a warplane with a Hammer* and *SEEDS OF HOPE - Women Disarming for Life and Justice*

*I have found a way in!* published in Peace News, December 2015/January 2016 edition

Links to all these resources together with slideshow for this assembly can be found at  
<http://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-education/assemblies/>

Andrea Needham's book, *The Hammer Blow – how 10 women disarmed a warplane* will be published by Peace News on 29 January 2016

This assembly script draws on these resources. Scripture quotes are from the New Revised Standard Version. The Prayer is by Christian Peacemaker Teams ([www.cpt.org](http://www.cpt.org))