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:

Pax Christi, St Joseph’s, Watford Way, London NW4 4TY
www.paxchristi.org.uk

Christian CND, 162 Holloway Road, London N7 8DQ
www.ccnd.org.uk

London Catholic Worker, 49 Mattison Road, London N4 1BG
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Please read this before the Liturgy begins. The sponsoring organisations have agreed to guidelines for this action for all taking part. See guidelines of back page.

The police have informed us that some of their number will be armed but in the background - they are on high alert. Others will be with us as we cross the road.
Welcome & introduction, Pax Christi

Call to worship
V1. To keep Lent is to confront the principalities and powers first of all in prayer. With Jesus we face the dark side of ourselves. We choose to pray at the Ministry of Defence where the evil that threatens millions of innocent lives is being implemented. Our Government is set on maintaining the UK’s independent nuclear deterrent “to deter the most extreme threats to our national security and way of life, now and in the future.” We have a Prime Minister who has said that she would press the nuclear button. As citizens we too have responsibilities - to repent of these policies, to name them as challenges to the Gospel and to invite the government to repent and turn away from security based on threat, fear and the destruction of our planet.

Prayer:
V2. Brother Christ, help us to follow you, deep into the waters of baptism, to put to death past wrongs, and to face the coming of God’s kingdom
R/ Jesus, our brother, help us to follow you.
V2. Help us to follow your ministry of healing and restoration, so that we may work with you to cast out the forces of greed resentment, hatred and fear.
R/ Jesus, our brother, help us to follow you.
V2. Help us to follow you into the desert, to fast with you, denying false values, refusing the ways of self-indulgence
R/ Jesus, our brother, help us to follow you.
V2. Help us to follow you even to the cross, to seek our hope in your self-giving love, and to die to all that is not born of love.
R/ Jesus, our brother, help us to follow you.

Reflection on Lent: adapted from Pope Francis’ Lent message 2018
Perhaps we see, deep within ourselves and all about us, greed, cold hearts, false prophets... the Lenten season offers a soothing remedy:

We pray, to enable our hearts to root out our secret lies and forms of self-deception
We give alms to set us free from greed and help us to regard our neighbour as a brother or sister.
We fast to weaken our tendency to violence; it disarms us and becomes an important opportunity for growth.

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!
Tune All people that on earth do dwell

Planting hope: As you leave we invite you to take a sunflower seed to plant, here in this area or at home. The sunflower is a symbol of a nuclear weapon free world.

What more you can do

- Share the experience of today with friends, family and your church community.
- 8 March, Pax Christi postcard project: Women thank Pope Francis for his leadership on peace, disarmament and nonviolence
- 12 March: Join Christian CND on their Embassies Walk. This year they will be visiting NATO Member States
- 15 May, International Conscientious Objector Day
- London Catholic Worker hold a vigil for refugees on the third Tuesday of the month at the Home Office, Marsham St. 12:30pm. All welcome.
- 1 June, Open Day, Catholic Worker Farm
- Keep in touch with the organising groups to find out about more actions, meetings and campaigning opportunities.
Final prayer

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.
L: We now offer one another and those us around a sign of peace as our last act of prayer.

Final song

We sing: 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.

Call to repentance - part of the tradition we follow today.

V1: 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.
V1: 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

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 we will use today 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.

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 we were 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 - Again we keep this solemn fast (Tallis canon)

Again we keep this solemn fast a gift of faith from ages past,
This Lent which binds us lovingly, to faith and hope and charity.

Let us avoid each harmful way that lures the carless mind astray;
by watchful prayer our spirits free from scheming of the enemy.

We pray, O blessed Three in One our God while endless ages run,
that this, our Lent for forty days may bring us growth and give you praise.  (Repeat from beginning if needed)

After the ashing

A sheet of sack-cloth is place in front on the MoD building Please come forward and add ash to the REPENT outline.

We sing: over and over as people come forward

Ubi Caritas, et amor, Ubi Caritas, Deus ibi est

Then

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

Call and encouragement to change direction

September 2018  Archbishop Gallagher, Head of the Holy See delegation in New York, signed the Treaty and said: “The Holy See, who signed and ratified it on the very day it was opened for signature and ratification on 20 September 2017, wishes to urge others to sign and ratify it. It will be a strong component of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime once it enters into force. Every signature, every ratification of this Treaty, constitutes an important step toward the achievement of a nuclear-free world”.

July 2018: Bishops Stephen Cottrell, speech at Church of England Synod ...this motion doesn't present the Synod with a binary choice between unilateral and multilateral approaches to nuclear disarmament, but rather seeks to give fresh impetus to the whole debate and to ask our Government to tell us what its plans are. The fact that it hasn't signed the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is for many of us hugely disappointing, but its failure even to engage with the process looks like complacency. Hence we call upon her Majesty’s Government to reiterate its obligations under Article 6 of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which it has signed, and tell us how it proposes to meet them. And what account is it taking of the overwhelming view of the non-nuclear states of the world?

...in this motion we are not telling our government what to do, we are asking them to stop telling us what they will not do and work towards developing plans that will rid the world of the danger and expense of nuclear weapons. ... Let us simply be guided by this: what would Jesus do? (the motion was carried: 260 votes in favour, 26 against:
Our Government finds it must oppose opportunities for Multilateral Disarmament.
From being trapped in a transparently obvious hypocrisy. O Lord deliver us

Our Government ministers condemn the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.
From shutting our minds to the Treaty O Lord deliver us

Do we think we need a nuclear capability for our status in the world?
From ignorance and national pride O Lord deliver us

From addiction to power O Lord deliver us

From being on the wrong side of history O Lord deliver us

Our Cross and messages are held high as we stand in silence and then pray

Litany - with response: We repent and mourn and lift up our voices in resistance

We who are silent in the face of madness R/
When nuclear weapons are developed and deployed around the world R/
When monies are allocated to the development of new weapons R/
When world leaders threaten to use nuclear weapons in war R/
When our investments, our pension funds, are used to build weapons R/
When we still our consciences rather than speak out R/
When we hear hateful speech and do not object R/
When voices of belligerence escalate and put us all at odds with one another R/
When our children and grandchildren to the 7th generation are put at risk of extinction R/

Prayer action

V1: 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.

V1: We remember peacemakers of our time who encourage and inspire us, who remind us that we must put love into action.

Dismissal

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 where we will cross into the lawn area for our procession. We will carry a range of messages on placards which reflect the powerful messages from faith communities and leaders on nuclear weapons

The path of Lamentation - London Catholic worker

As you make your way to the second path to the rail along the side of the MoD please take a ribbon from the basket and continue to spread out along the rail. The blue and purple ribbons represent the countries that have not yet signed the Nuclear Ban Treaty. When everyone is standing we will tie the ribbons to the rail and then stand in silence

Lamentation and prayer action
Leader: As we stand before the Ministry of Defence, we give thanks for the 122 countries who voted in favour of the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty and the
70 who have already signed the Treaty. We lament for the 125 who have not yet signed, including our own Government which has refused to even participate. With steadfast hope, we pray here for a conversion of heart:

All:
Oh God
Your light surrounds us,
Your love enfolds us, and
Your power protects us.
Grant us the wisdom and courage
to turn back to you,
to abolish nuclear weapons, and
to seek true security built on
justice, respect for human life,
and the protection of creation,
in accordance with your will
Amen

Song: x 5 times  Lead us from death to life

Lead us from death to life,
from falsehood to truth,
From despair to hope, from fear to trust.
Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace;
Let peace fill our hearts, let peace fill our world,
let peace fill our universe.

We then move on to the front entrance of the Ministry of Defence. 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 and change of heart - Christian CND

Together: 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.

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?

Prayer reflection
Possession of nuclear weapons is now unequivocally condemned by Pope Francis and many other Christian and religious leaders. Yet our nation holds them ready, a threat of unspeakable humanitarian crimes to be done on our behalf; and cannot think beyond outdated cold war deterrence policy. Are we ourselves thus enslaved by nuclear weapons, possessed by them, in so many ways?

Thousands of our best scientific minds are employed at Aldermaston
From wasting our national talent  O Lord deliver us

We are committed to spending £205 Billion on Trident
From robbing the poor through catastrophic waste  O Lord deliver us

The Government itself promotes the benefits of employment on Trident
(for jobs which will cost between £1 million and £10 million each!)
From the lie that we are economically dependent on Trident  O Lord deliver us

Is nuclear technology a part reason for following uneconomic nuclear energy projects?
From distortion of our country's energy policy  O Lord deliver us

To deploy nuclear weapons we are forced to a profound moral compromise, an inconsistency of thinking which enables us to contemplate the most appalling atrocities (directly or done on our behalf) while still contriving to live good lives.
From this inner moral conflict  O Lord deliver us