

## The Summons

*Will you come and follow me,  
if I but call your name?  
Will you go where you don't know  
And never be the same?  
Will you let my love be shown,  
will you let my name be known,  
will you let my life be grown  
in you and you in me?*

*Will you leave your self behind  
if I but call your name?  
Will you care for cruel and kind  
and never be the same?  
Will you risk the hostile stare  
should your life attract or scare,  
will you let me answer prayer  
in you and you in me?*

*Will you love the 'you' you hide  
if I but call your name?  
Will you quell the fear inside  
and never be the same?  
Will you use the faith you've  
found  
to reshape the world around  
through my sight and touch and  
sound in you and you in me?*

*Lord, your summons echoes true  
when you but call my name.  
Let me turn and follow you  
and never be the same.  
In your company I'll go  
where your love and footsteps  
show.  
Thus I'll move and live and grow  
in you and you in me.*

John Bell (1949- ) and Graham Maule  
(1958- ) Tune: Kelvingrove



# Ash Wednesday 25 February 2009

## *Resistance and Repentance*

*to*

## *Nuclear War Preparations*

## *Ministry of Defence, London*



Organised by:

Pax Christi, St Joseph's, Watford Way, London NW4 4TY  
Catholic Peace Action, 7 Putney Bridge Road, London SW18 1HX  
Christian CND, 162 Holloway Road, London N7 8DQ

Please read this before the Liturgy begins. The sponsoring organisations have agreed to guidelines for this action, for those taking part in the marking of the building and those taking part in the procession and liturgy. 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. 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 disobedient activity.

### 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. This means

- Showing respect for all people we encounter.
- Taking care that you do not endanger yourself or others when crossing roads, and keeping pathways clear for those passing by.
- Engaging 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.

**Please note:** The police are normally courteous, but under recent legislation may deem this an 'unauthorised protest'. If the police decide to disrupt our liturgy by threatening people with arrest, you will be given sufficient **warning to walk away and avoid arrest**. Members of CPA and Pax Christi will give guidance and further warnings if required.

### Commitment - said in two parts

**Side 1.** In this world of hatred, indifference, fear and anxiety, we pledge to be instruments of your love

**Side 2.** In this world of selfishness, greed and materialism, we pledge to be instruments of your selfless service and generosity

**Side 1.** In this world of revenge and retaliation and resentment, we pledge to be instruments of your mercy and compassion and forgiveness

**Side 2.** In this world of doubt and despair, we pledge to be instruments of faith and hope

**Side 1.** In this world of lies and darkness, to we pledge be instruments of truth and light

**Side 2.** In this world of war and nuclear weapons and death, we pledge to be instruments of your peace and nonviolence and life.

### Blessing

And so, may the God of peace, who loves each one of us infinitely, send us forth as an instrument of God's peace, love, and nonviolence, and may the God of peace bless us, the Creator, the Christ and Holy Spirit! Amen.

*(Adapted from prayer offered by John Dear sj at the Los Alamos, New Mexico liturgy of sackcloth and ashes)*



**Final song/overleaf: Will you come and follow me (The Summons)**

**C:** We now face the Ministry of Defence building, looking up,  
Offering our collective voice as a sign of hope

**B:** To you, Creator of nature and humanity, truth and beauty, we  
pray:

**Hear our voice.**

**B:** For it is the voice of the victims of all wars and violence among  
individuals and nations.

**Hear our voice.**

**B:** For it is the voice of all children who suffer and will suffer when  
people put their faith in weapons and war:

**Hear our voice**

**B:** When we beg you to instill into the hearts of all human beings the  
wisdom of peace, the strength of justice and the joy of fellowship.

**Hear our voice.**

**B:** For we speak for multitudes in every country and every period of  
history who do not want war and are ready to walk the road of peace.

**Hear our voice**

**B:** And grant insight and strength so that we may always respond to  
hatred with love, to injustice with total dedication to justice, to need  
with sharing of self and to war with peace.

**Oh God, hear our voice and grant unto the world your  
everlasting peace.**

*Pope John Paul II (amended)*

**A:** Let us now offer one another a sign of peace

## **Welcome & introduction from Pax Christi**

**A.** You are welcome here in the name of Jesus Christ, to share his way  
to the Cross, that we may pass with him from death to life.

**B.** You are welcome here in the name of Jesus Christ, to repent of all  
violence and to accept a life based on hope, through trust in God,  
rather than despair through  
trust in nuclear weapons.

**A.** This year marks the 27th consecutive year that a Lenten witness  
has been held outside the Ministry of Defence. We are here to defend  
our belief that it is better to risk living by the code of nonviolence,  
rather than to live a half-life hiding behind the false security of  
nuclear deterrence. We shall not be deterred from our  
witness, which we make in the name of Jesus Christ, who was  
arrested and scorned for his acts of civil disobedience, when he  
opposed the hypocrisy of the Holiness code and overturned the tables  
in the Temple.

**We will pray here, as Christ prayed in the garden of Gethsemane,  
in preparation for our journey with him to Golgotha. With  
Christians throughout the world on this day, we turn from sin and  
proclaim an alternative to the world's way by committing ourselves  
to the Way of Peace in solidarity with Christ and the kingdom of  
God.**

## **Call to worship**

**A.** 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 the agenda  
of world powers today. Our Lenten Witness attempts to speak out  
against those powers and dominations, particularly with regard to the  
threat to deploy and use nuclear weapons. We are here as those who  
dissent from the notion that the MoD speaks in our name on this issue.

Our liturgy is intended to ask: "what exactly is the Trident missile system going to deter?". We are here to proclaim a Christian alternative to nuclear deterrence, and to put our trust in God.

B. The government is now backing a replacement system for Trident, in contradiction of our obligations to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and there is every possibility that our nation's intolerable reliance on weapons of mass destruction will increase over the coming years. We protest against this idolatry by being here to worship God, who sent his Son as a sign of peace. We offer worship here, in the presence of those who are required to carry out the bidding of the government to maintain the Trident missile system. We pray to God, undeterred by the indifference of our political leaders, and convinced by the power of God to bring life out of death, and to help restore a maddened world to its rightful mind.

#### Prayers of Penitence

A. Within weeks of the bombing of Coventry Cathedral in 1940, a wooden cross of charred timbers was set up, and in chalk on the wall was written 'Father, forgive'. Before we go to mark another place with that same call to repentance, let us recognise our own sinfulness and ask our God to forgive us of all that separates us from his divinity and from one another.

Together:

We confess that in our lives  
we do not always choose the way  
of peace;  
we spread gossip which fans the  
flame of hatred;  
we are ready to make any sacrifices  
when Caesar demands,  
but few when God invites.  
We worship the false god of security  
and nationalism;  
we hold out our hand in friendship

From the desire for power...  
from the conspiracy of silence...  
from the negation of life...  
from the worship of weapons...  
from the politics of terror...  
from the plundering of the earth's resources...  
from the dispossession of the poor...  
from the despair of this age...  
from world suicide...

*As the sprinkling continues we sing:*

*Look around you, can you see?  
Times are troubled, people grieve  
See the violence, feel the hardness,  
All my people, weep with me*

*Chorus  
Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison,  
Kyrie eleison*

*Walk among them, I'll go with you  
Reach out to them with my hands  
Suffer with me, and together  
we will serve them, help them stand  
Chorus*

*Forgive us Father, hear our prayer.  
We'll walk with you, anywhere.  
Through your suffering, with forgiveness  
Take your life into the world.*

*Chorus  
(Jodi Page Clark)*

C: Sometimes we may feel that we are living in a culture of death. Human life, human worth is diminished at every stage of its journey. Technology, financial and human resources, social policies are used to serve death rather than life. The scripture tells us to listen so that our hearts will not harden. Listen to the poor, the homeless, the vulnerable, the victims of abuse and violence. Merton urges us to listen follow our conscience and withdraw our consent.

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; the nuclear weapons policies and the false peace they offer our world.

A sheet of sack-cloth is place in from on the MoD building. The word **REPENT** will be marked out at the steps of the MoD. Once the outline is marked, those who wish may come forward and add to the outline with blessed ash or sprinkle ash onto the cloth as our community symbol of repentance.

*While the marking takes place, we say this prayer*

A. Let us pray to Jesus Christ, the Lord of Life, that we may be set free from the chains of violence and the threat of nuclear war. Lord Jesus, by your cross and Resurrection...

*Response: Deliver us*

by your suffering and forgiveness...  
by your nonviolence and love...  
by your witness to the truth...  
by your passion and death...  
by your victory over the grave...

but keep a weapon in the other  
behind our back.  
We have divided your body of people  
into those we trust and those  
we do not.  
Huge problems challenge us in  
the world - but our greed, fear  
and selfishness prevent us from  
uniting to solve them.  
Lord, we pray for your help, your  
forgiveness, and your reconciling  
power in our lives. *Pax Christi*

Blessing ash & charcoal

*Those who have prepared to mark the building come forward with charcoal. Others bring ash. The ash and charcoal are blessed with holy water and we will mark ourselves before going to mark the Ministry of Defence*

A. 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

*Representatives of the sponsoring groups use the ash to mark each of us with a cross on our forehead*

A: From the dust of the earth were we created.  
To the dust we shall return

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

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

A: Direct our hearts to better things, O God. Heal us from sin and ignorance, as we turn again to you, to repent and believe the gospel.

*Those who wish to be marked with the cross come forward. Those marking us with ash say:*

Repent, and believe the Gospel.

*Response: Amen*

During the ashing we sing

*O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer, when I call, answer me.  
O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer, come and listen to me.*

Commissioning

Our merciful God gave his son to die for us upon the cross. We who have been marked with the cross bear witness to salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A: Do not put your trust in princes, but trust in God alone

Dismissal

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

B. 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...

## Station 2: the Ministry of Defence

I set before you, life and death - choose life!

A: See, today, I set before you life and prosperity, death and disaster. If you obey the commandments of Yahweh your god that I enjoin on you today, if you love Yahweh your God and follow his ways, if you keep his commandments, his laws, his customs, you will live and increase and Yahweh your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to make your own. But if your heart strays, if you refuse to listen, if you let yourself be drawn into worshipping other gods and serving them, I tell you today, you will most certainly perish; you will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today: I set before you life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life then so that you and your descendants may live, in the love of Yahweh your God, obeying his voice, clinging to him; for in this your life consists, and on this depends your long stay in the land which Yahweh swore to your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob he would give them. (*Dt 30:15-20*)

B: "The free choice of global self-destruction, made in desperation by the world's leaders and ratified by the consent and co-operation of their citizens would be a moral evil second only to the crucifixion. The fact that such a choice might be made with the highest motives and the most urgent purpose would do nothing whatever to mitigate it. The fact that it might be made on a gamble, in the hope that some might escape, would never excuse it. After all the purposes of Caiaphas were in his own eyes, perfectly noble. He thought it was necessary to let "one man die for the people". The most urgent necessity of our time is therefore not merely to prevent the destruction of the human race by nuclear war. Even if it should happen to be no longer possible to prevent the disaster (which God forbid) there is still a greater evil that can and must be prevented. It must be possible for every free {man} person to refuse consent and deny co-operation to this greatest of crimes."

*(Christian Choice essay, Peace in a Post Christian Era, Thomas Merton)*

*Feel for the people we most avoid,  
strange or bereaved or never employed;  
feel for the women, and feel for the men  
Who fear that their living is all in vain*

*To the lost Christ shows his face;*

*Feel for the parents who've lost their child,  
Feel for the women whom men have defiled,  
Feel for the baby for whom there's no breast,  
And feel for the weary who find no rest.*

*To the lost Christ shows his face;*

*Feel for the lives by life confused,  
Riddled with doubt, in loving abused;  
Feel for the lonely heart, conscious of sin,  
Which longs to be pure but fears to begin.*

*To the lost Christ shows his face;*

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Glasgow*

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.

*We now walk to our second prayer point  
singing the chant, Ubi Caritas*

*Ubi caritas, et amour.  
Ubi caritas, Deus ibi est  
(Where charity and love are, God is there).*

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 twice for prayer and reflection Please take care - crossing the road.*

Station 1. Old War Office

Waiting and Betrayal

Then Jesus went with the disciples to a place called Gethsemane: and he said to them,  
"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,  
"I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me."

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

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

A: Again he went away from the second time and prayed,  
"My father if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."

**A:** 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,  
**“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)

**A:** We choose to prayer here today. To ‘stay awake’ to the threat of nuclear terrorism and reality of nuclear war. As Jesus faced his fear, we too face our fear of violence with our longing for peace. We choose to confront the power of this place through our prayer, our physical presence and our resistance.

**Call us Lord Jesus to stay awake and follow you. We long to walk with you and learn the meaning of your way for our time.**

*Our cross is brought into the centre of our worship*

**Song:**

*Stay with me, remain here with me,  
Watch and pray, watch and pray. (x 5)*

**B:** Betrayal is a feature of war and nuclear war preparations. The poor at home and globally are betrayed when billions are spent on military rather than human security. The poor are betrayed when their crops, their homes, the places of work are damaged and destroyed. Victims of war are betrayed when they have to leave behind their homes, their livelihoods in search of peace and security. Among these we remember the peoples of Iraq, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Congo, Israel, Palestine. Indigenous people are betrayed when their lands are used as testing ground for nuclear weapons. Scientists are betrayed when their skills and talents are turned to creating systems of death and destruction. Nations are betrayed when their politicians place their security in weapons and threats and fear.

Nations are betrayed when their security is ‘sold’ or ‘tied’ to that of others, who offer a mantle of protection in the form of nuclear weapons and military might.

**A:** Britain has been nuclear armed since 1952, buying into the US nuclear weapons system Polaris from 1968 to 1996 and Trident from 1994. Each Trident submarine carries up to 48 nuclear warheads, each of which can be sent to a different target. Each warhead has an explosive power of up to 100 kilotons, the equivalent of 100,000 tons of conventional high explosive. This is 8 times the power of the atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945, killing an estimated 140,000 people.

**C:** The British political and defence establishment views nuclear weapons as an important component of Britain’s armed forces that give it the confidence to engage in such ‘liberal interventionist’ activities even in circumstances in which the prospect of nuclear use is very distant. Nuclear weapons facilitate Britain’s willingness to support America militarily and are thereby seen to play a crucial, if indirect role in allowing Britain to remain Washington’s primary military ally. (*Trident: The Deal isn’t Done, Dr Nick Ritchie*)

**B:** We now remember all those who have been betrayed by war, nuclear and conventional and invite you to come forward and tie a ribbon to our cross in memory of a person or place you wish to remember in our witness. While we do this we sing :

*Christ’s is the world in which we move,  
Christ’s are the folk we’re summoned to love,  
Christ’s is the voice which calls us to care,  
And Christ is the one who meets us here*

*To the lost Christ shows his face;  
To the unloved he gives his embrace;  
To those who cry in pain or disgrace,  
Christ makes, with his friends, a touching place.*