

**“Work for peace and justice to end violence”**

*Pax Christi response to the events of 7<sup>th</sup> July 2005*

As a movement committed to reconciliation and nonviolence, Pax Christi is deeply saddened by the events that took place in London on 7<sup>th</sup> July. We offer our sympathy and solidarity to all those whose lives have been touched by violence.

We believe that the most authentic way to be faithful to those who suffer the violence of terrorism and war is to work for peace and models of security that create justice and trust between peoples. Vengeance is not a constructive or appropriate response. We must not add further to the cycle of violence which is crippling our world.

We will challenge actions and policies that seek to:

- Scapegoat or blame ethnic or minority groups in our communities;
- Use this tragic event to justify pre-emptive military actions or a clamp-down on democratic freedom in the UK or elsewhere in the world.

We urge our leaders to learn from the events of the past five years.

Global military expenditure is rising. Nuclear weapon states have obstructed attempts to bring us closer to a nuclear weapons-free world. Our government is planning to modernise its own nuclear programme. None of these so-called security policies have made the world a safer place. Instead they breed fear and suspicion between countries.

Our military responses to acts of terror continue to destroy lives in Afghanistan and Iraq. Instability has been created that may last for years to come.

Now is the time for critical reflection on the acts of violence and injustice that continue to alienate so many thousands of our brother and sisters around the globe. Now is the time for the peacemaking which Pope Paul VI spoke of when he said “ **Peace is the fruit of anxious daily care to see that everyone lives in justice as God intends**” (*Populorum Progressio*, 76). Now is the time for prayer, for healing, for forgiveness and for acts of solidarity that change the way we relate to others.

Pax Christi, London

8<sup>th</sup> July 2005

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### Pax Christi Prayer for Peace

O God, you are the source of life and peace.  
Praised be your name forever.  
We know it is you who turn  
our minds to thoughts of peace.  
Hear our prayer in this time of violence.  
Your power changes hearts.  
Muslims, Christians and Jews remember,  
and profoundly affirm,  
that they are followers of the one God,  
children of Abraham, brothers and sisters;  
enemies begin to speak to one another;  
those who were estranged  
join hands in friendship;  
nations seek the way of peace together.

Strengthen our resolve to give witness  
to these truths by the way we live  
Give to us:  
**Understanding** that puts an end to strife;  
**Mercy** that quenches hatred, and  
**Forgiveness** that overcomes vengeance.  
Empower all people to live in your law of love.  
Amen.

### Witness/vigils

- Organise a public vigil in your local community or a time for prayer and reflection in your local church and if possible with other faith communities. Silent vigils are often the most powerful - with simple messages that reflect the sentiments that vengeance is not an appropriate response/ this is a time for peace, healing and solidarity / work for peace and justice to end violence/ our God is a God of love.
- Be alert for any attempts at local level for laying blame upon our Muslim brothers and sisters and respond to these. Be prepared to offer practical support and partnership to any in your community who experience abuse or who become scapegoats of anger or frustration
- If you live in London take part in the event entitled *"How should we respond to terror in London?"* on 12<sup>th</sup> July at St Ethelburga's Church, 78 Bishopsgate, EC2N 4AG at 6.00pm A range of Christian, Muslim and other speakers have been invited to contribute. The event will include an ecumenical ritual for peace. Details will be announced on their [website](http://www.stethelburgas.org): <http://www.stethelburgas.org> . Similar events could be organised around the country.