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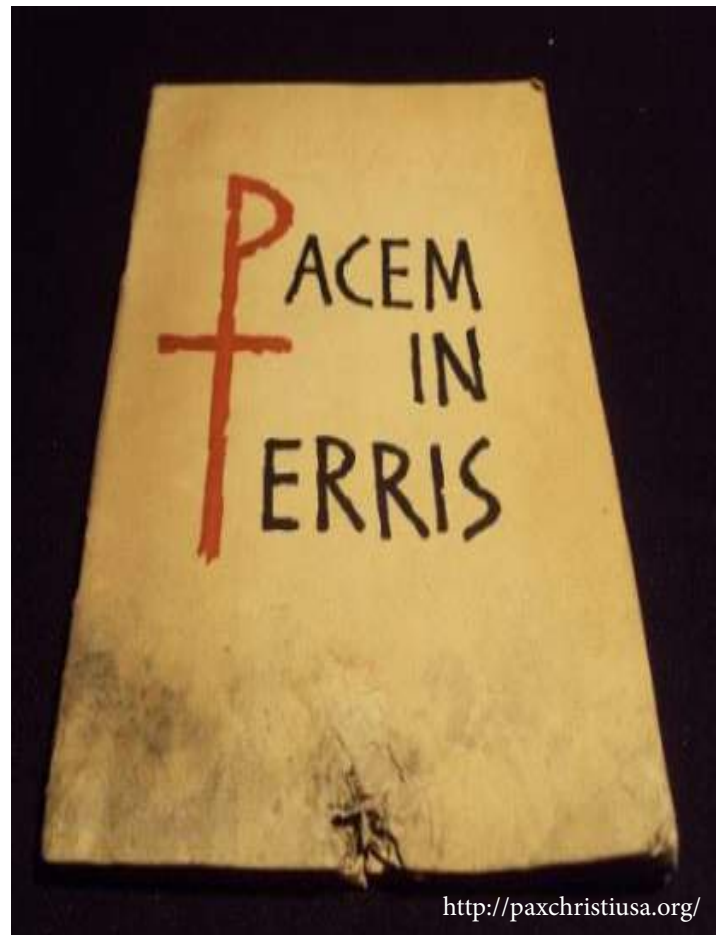
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Pacem in Terris

On Holy Thursday in April 1963, Pope John XXIII promulgated the encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, “Peace on Earth.” The encyclical was released two months before Pope John died. The first of four sessions of the Vatican Council had concluded and some considered the encyclical as the Pope’s commission for the remaining sessions of Vatican II. The Council needed to incorporate an agenda for peace, human dignity and human rights.

Pacem in Terris was the first encyclical addressed to “all men (people) of good will” and not just to Catholics. The Pope used the common language of human rights and not the specific language of Catholicism. It was the only encyclical published in its entirety in a major secular newspaper, the *New York Times*. It is also the first time the Vatican gave approval for a composer to set the text to a Papal encyclical to music, a choral symphony that may be accessed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Joe2N8kN3xE>

To understand the significance of Pope John’s message we need to look at the political history of the time. In 1963, Poland was under Wladyslaw Gomulka and Communist rule. In 1963, large parts of the world, including Kenya, were still under the yoke of colonialism and the Berlin wall was two years old. In 1963, Father Walter Ciscek was ending his time in Soviet prison for the crime of practicing his Catholic faith and Nelson Mandela was imprisoned in South Africa for encouraging peaceful workers to strike in protest of apartheid. In 1963, Ku Klux Klan members, arrested for murdering four children when a bomb exploded in an African American church, were set free after being fined \$100 for the illegal possession of dynamite. In 1963, Luther King was imprisoned for speaking out and advocating for nonviolent resistance of racist policies in the United States. In 1963, Joao Goulart re-established the presidency in Brazil and took office as president.



<http://paxchristiusa.org/>

It is contrary to reason to hold that war is now a suitable way to restore rights which have been violated.

(Pacem In Terris 127)

In 1963, the end of the Second World War was fewer than 20 years old and it was fewer than 20 years after the development and use of nuclear weapons. Amid these events, there occurred the chilling standoff between the United States and Russia that probably brought the world closer to nuclear war than any time since. It was his role as mediator during this standoff that led to Pope John's writing of the encyclical.

In the encyclical, the Pope stresses, "The common good is the sole reason for the existence of civil authorities." He mentions "common good" 46 times in the encyclical, as many times as the word "God." One of the great lessons that humanity learned from the world wars was that protecting the well-being and interest of the common good, and especially peace, is the duty of all.

Peace can only be built by respecting human rights of all and accepting the duties that come from upholding the sanctity and dignity of human life. Pope John's formula for peace initiated a transformation in Catholic thought because he based peace on the rights of persons rather than on state power.

Pope John heralded a return to the nonviolent tradition brought to our world by Jesus Christ. "It is contrary to reason to hold that war is now a suitable way to restore rights which have been violated." (127) *Pacem in Terris* set the Church on a course whereby a follower of Christ could never support war.

Fifty years have passed and the Church's work to build peace on earth remains incomplete. War strips all, but especially women and girls, of the dignity they deserve as human beings made in the image and likeness of God. War destroys God's creation. The question for us now is how to make nonviolent peacebuilding our own personal practice as Felician Franciscan Sisters.

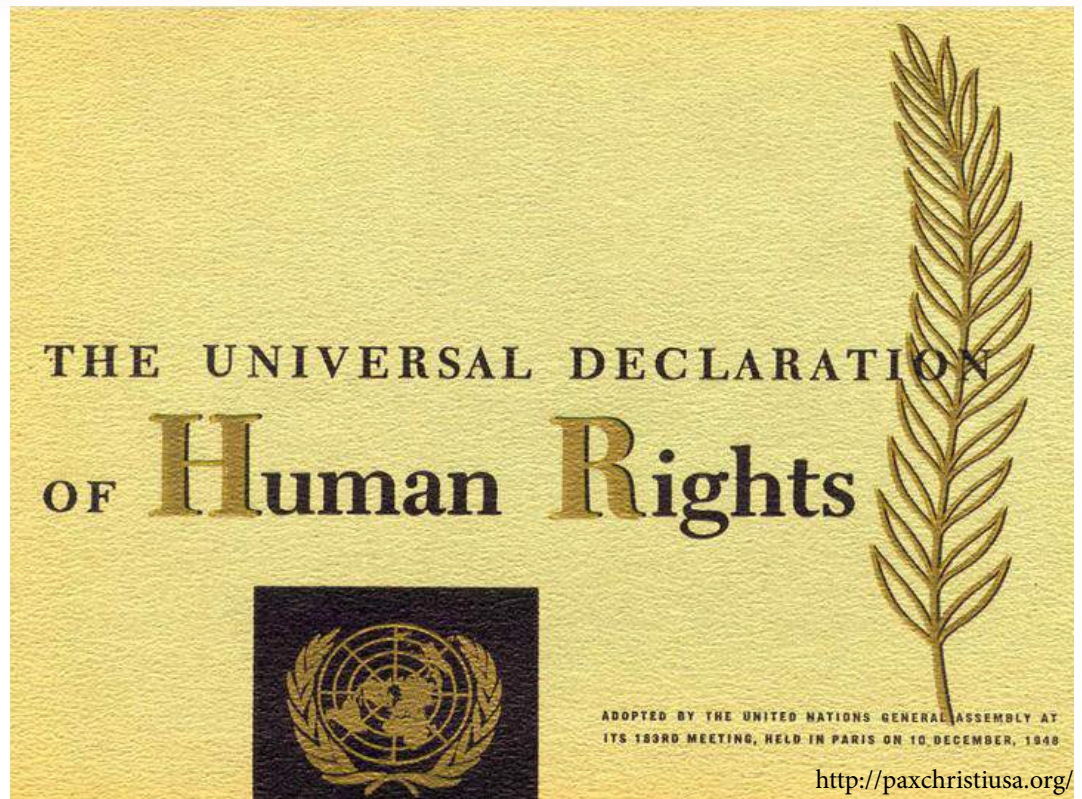
- S. Maryann Agnes Mueller, NA -



<http://paxchristiusa.org/>

Global Efforts to Preserve Human Dignity

In the aftermath of World War II, the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was a significant achievement with regard to the protection and promotion of human dignity and human rights. The UDHR finds its roots in the desire for peace of all peoples. Despite differences in political systems and ideologies, the UDHR has been adopted by the Member States of the United Nations.



The Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that the “inherent dignity of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.” The UDHR associates human dignity with the basic rights desired by every human being. Among these rights are the right to life and liberty, the right to freedom of opinion and religious expression, the right to seek asylum from persecution and the right to freedom from torture. Although the UDHR is not a legally binding document, it has been the source of inspiration for human rights legislation and serves as a benchmark for conduct regarding human rights and humanitarian protection globally.

It is with this background that the concept of “Responsibility to Protect (R2P) evolved after the Rwandan Genocide in 1994 and the Srebrenica massacre in 1995”. Recognizing the failure of the international community’s failure to respond to the human rights abuses that occurred during these tragedies, the United Nations proposed that when a nation fails to protect the human rights of their citizens, such as through genocide or ethnic cleansing, the international community has a responsibility to intervene. Intervention may involve measures such as mediation and economic sanctions but may include military intervention. One of the first occasions R2P was implemented was in Kenya after the disputed presidential election of 2007. The response of the international



community was praised as “a model of diplomatic action under the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ principles.” (Human Rights Watch)

R2P encompasses principles which include the responsibility to address root causes of internal conflict and hopefully prevent conflict, the responsibility to react, and the responsibility to rebuild by assisting in reconciliation and reconstruction. R2P is not perfect and critics rightfully question why the international community has not responded to protect all human beings from state sponsored atrocities, such as the Syrian people in their homeland or the Palestinian people who live in Gaza. As followers of the nonviolent Jesus, we must also question if the use of military

intervention is an acceptable means to ensure that the human dignity of our brothers and sisters in other lands is upheld.

In our globalized world threats to the human dignity of even one person in our world is a threat to the human dignity of all people. How are we called as Felician Sisters to ensure the human dignity of all persons made in the image and likeness of God? How are we called to promote a culture of non-violence, and build lasting peace? How are we called to lay a foundation and to develop new forms of global citizenship and solidarity that are so needed in our world today? How are we being faithful to the spirit of peacemaking that we inherit from the Gospel and from the Franciscan tradition of St. Francis, Saint Clare and Blessed Mary Angela?

- S. Maryann Agnes Mueller, NA -

[God] shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

(Micah 4:3).

Impact of War on Women and Children

When we think of war, we may imagine mostly men combatants and men being casualties of wartime. However, women and children are also casualties of war. “Over the last ten years, over two million children have been killed in conflict. Over one million children have been orphaned, over six million have been seriously injured or permanently disabled and over ten million have been left with serious psychological trauma. Moreover, children are also being deliberately recruited as combatants.” (www.cultureofpeace.org)

According to surveys by UNICEF:

- In Sarajevo, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 55 percent of the children reported that they had been shot at one or more times. Sadly, 66 percent of the children reported that they had been in a situation where they expected to die.
- In Angola, 66 percent of children reported that they had seen people murdered, while 67 percent had seen people tortured, beaten or hurt.
- In Rwanda, 56 percent of children had seen other children kill people. Nearly 80 percent of children had lost immediate family members and 16 per cent had been forced to hide under dead bodies.

Disturbingly, more than 60 percent of the Rwandan children interviewed said they did not care whether they grew up.

Children who have been involved in or have suffered atrocities of war are filled with rage, aggression and guilt. They will have lifelong scars. There is no one

best approach to help these children. According to UNICEF, “the most important factor contributing to a child’s resilience is the opportunity for expression, attachment and trust that comes from a stable, caring and nurturing relationship with adults.” Getting children back to a routine of taking care of their own physical needs, preparing food, or

even washing clothes can serve as lifesavers for them. These activities of everyday living give them a renewed sense of purpose.

“For women, the dangers of war go far beyond the violence of combat. In situations of armed conflict, women suffer some of the greatest health and social inequities in the world. They risk human rights violations, suffering death that can and should be prevented.” (International Rescue Committee)

In recent years, rape has become a weapon of war, especially in civil conflicts. “Women and girls may



be forced into prostitution or trafficking, sometimes by their own government or by military authorities. Poverty, hunger, and desperation can also force women into prostitution. With sexual violence comes an increased risk for women of contracting sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS” (Culture of peace.org) “Acts of gender-based violence, particularly rape, committed during armed conflicts constitute a violation of international humanitarian law.”(UNICEF)

Women and children constitute the majority of people displaced due to armed conflict. They are also the most vulnerable among displaced people. In refugee camps, men are in charge of the basic needs of food, shelter, water, etc.; therefore, bribery /sexual favors are forced on women or children as the only way they can survive in the camp.

Moreover, armed conflicts put a strain on those who remain at home. Poverty prevalent during wartime

and the lack of males in the home put more of the burden of work with the women and children. There is also a direct correlation with an increase in domestic violence during wartime.

What can we do to help in situations such as this?

- Pray Pray Pray
- Read the Justice and Peace Newsletter
- Sign Petitions
- Google Issues
- Be informed

Sources: Articles from the internet:

Cultureofpeace.org

Unicef.org

Warchild.org

Rescue.org

- Sr. Carol Marie Saladin, NA -



<http://morningstarnews.org/>

Reflections on Nonviolence

Reprinted from the Felician Sisters' 2015 Lenten Reflection Booklet



Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares (...) and never again will they train for war .
Micah 4:3

These words from Micah's vision proclaiming a new revelation, full of hope for a kingdom of justice and peace, became the inspiration for a monument that stands in front of the United Nations in

New York. The socio-realistic style of the sculpture depicts a blacksmith lifting a hammer in a very dynamic gesture. The blacksmith is about to hit the sword that is held in a hand. At the end of the sword is a plowshare. From the information on the plaque written in Russian and English, we know that the title of this piece of art is "Putting swords into plowshares." It is a gift of the Soviet Union to the United Nations.

If these prophetic words that fit so well with the vision of the United Nations would be shared and followed, then we would have a civilization of peace and love. However, peace is not established by building monuments or by beautiful preaching. Even Jesus' teaching did not bring expected messianic peace.

Why?

What is needed is conversion of heart for every one of us, where the sword of egoism and pride are hammered into a plowshare of love and service!

What is your sword?

- Sr. Mary Krzysztofa Koszyka, PR-

"Peace for the whole world divided by violence related to...incorrect exploitation of the earth's resources! Peace for our Earth!"
Pope Francis

Let us carry peace... Let us make our world more beautiful, let us care for all creation, and let us be the witnesses of love. Is Love loved today? Whom or what should I love to make the world the image of paradise? Saint Francis knew how to follow this beautiful way even though it is strange for our times. How do we call creation brother and sister when it is normal in today's world to kill a person next to me? How? Brother moon, sister water, are you not

the image of God's beauty?

Water...humble, pure and good; source of life, source of purification in baptism, source of mercy on the cross of my Lord. Water is for the weary wanderer. Give us, Lord, love for the world; let us see Your face in it.

Peace and good may sound to the ends of the earth. Let us be witnesses of peace by the humble utilization of the gifts that are not our own but are given to us. As water hollows the rocks, so may we make a path for all our brothers and sisters. Let us give them to drink. Jesus allows us to drink from the Source of Living Water each day. Should not a bride be like her Spouse? Lord, give me humility and purity that is humble, pure and good. Teach me to give, not only to receive. We desire to be poor for the Lord with the poverty that can stop imprudent use of nature; the poverty that destroys in us the attitude of consumerism, constant taking; poverty that renews the earth and human heart.

Lord, what should I do to be a witness of your peace?

- Sr. Mary Berenika Komorowska, KR-

"Violence never brings peace. War brings war and leads to bigger violence."
Pope Francis

Thanks be to God we live in a free country, but the world is being torn apart by wars. It is hard not to think about it.

Peace in the world will never directly depend on us; however, just for today we need to do everything within our power to promote peace, namely, to have peace in our hearts. Each war begins in the human heart, while peace is the fruit of one's personal encounter with Jesus, who touches our wounds and overcomes our anxieties with His love.

Christ's disciples remain in His peace and become the tools of peace. This may be painful. Such an attitude demands one's acceptance of human wounds, requires one's ability to forgive as well as accept the truth about oneself. It may be that I am the aggressor. I may be the one who needs to come back to Jesus – the Source of Peace.

The world would not need tanks today, if it had met Christ...

How do I care for my personal relationship with Jesus, the Source of Peace?

- Sr. Mary Benedykta Prus, KR

The Effects of War on the Environment

The most obvious effects of war in our world are those that personally affect our lives and the lives of people we learn about from media reports. We see the devastation from bombings, drone strikes, face-to-face combat, suicide bombers, and detonation of IEDs (improvised explosive devices.) These actions result in loss of life or limb and the destruction of infrastructure: houses, businesses, bridges and roads. While being aware of these direct actions of war and praying for those affected by these events, we may be oblivious to the environmental effects of war. There is little media coverage of the long term effects war has on God's creation, for example, the effects of war on water, land, food safety, and air quality.

The environment has been a "victim of war" since the beginnings of recorded history. Five thousand years ago, warring Mesopotamian city-states breached dikes to flood the fields of their enemies. In the Book of Judges, it is recorded that King Abimelech salted the fields of Shechem, which destroyed the food crops. The Romans did the same after they overwhelmed Carthage in 149-148 B.C.

One of the most environmentally destructive wartime programs in recent years took place during the United States involvement in the war in Vietnam. The United States sprayed Agent Orange on an estimated 35 percent of the forests in South Vietnam in order to break the forest cover sheltering the Viet Cong. This defolia-

tion also served to destroy the food crops for those living in the area. Forty years later, approximately 14% of southern Vietnam's hardwood forests have failed to recover. Some of the denuded areas became desert-like with blowing sand dunes while scrubby bamboos and exotic grasses invaded other areas, crowding out tree seedlings and preventing normal forest regeneration.

Destruction of the environment affects all species of animals. Animal habitats that are severely altered during the war may take decades to return to normal. The number of birds and animal species in some areas will never be restored. In a study reported in the journal

Science in 1969, only 64 birds belonging to 12 species were spotted in the forests of Vietnam after the spraying with Agent Orange. Prior to the defoliation of the forest, it was habitat to hundreds of birds representing 80 species. Fifteen

years after the spraying with Agent Orange, only 24 species of birds and 5 species of mammals returned to the affected forest areas compared to 145-170 species of birds and 30-55 species of mammals found in forests that were not sprayed and were still intact.

In addition to the human lives lost and of the countless people permanently disabled by war, millions of people face the aftereffects of war after peace agreements are signed and military troops have gone home. Many people lose their farmland and their food source, due to the pollution of water and soil. This leads to the





<http://www.tadamon.ca>

displacement of individuals and families who cannot return home. Furthermore, the resultant overcrowding in refugee camps destroys land.

Chemicals weapons cause changes in the bodies of all living creatures for generations. Chemical weapons also alter ground water, affecting future food production. Some of the more environmentally damaging military tactics have been banned, including the chemical defoliants used in Vietnam. Use of chemicals such as Agent Orange is now a violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Conventional weapons also pose risks to the environment. During World War II, British forces destroyed dams in Germany inundating farms, factories and flooding coal mines. In 1977 the Geneva Conventions were amended to ban the intentional breaching of dams in wartime, but only if the attack would cause "severe losses among the civilian population." It is significant that environmental impacts are not even mentioned in the Conventions.

There are also incidents in which a desperate leader uses environmental terrorism as a military tactic. The most famous example is Saddam Hussein, who set fire

to hundreds of oil wells on his way out of Kuwait in the first Persian Gulf War. Saddam also deliberately dumped 11 million barrels of oil into the Gulf, the largest oil spill in history at the time. Oil lakes and thick deposits of tarcrete covered the area, and scientists found traces of oil in ants and sand lizards more than a decade later.

A thought to ponder: In the past armies defeated each other by killing huge numbers of enemies in direct battle. Today, military strategists try to undermine the enemy's war machine with less bloodshed. This usually means occupying huge swaths of land and destroying the industrial infrastructure. In other words, as war becomes "safer" for humans, it may be increasingly dangerous for the planet.

How are we to deal with these realities? Accept them as the normal course of life? After reading and reflecting on the environmental effects of war what changes will you make in your life of prayer and action?

- SM Leanne Hartmann, NA -



<https://en.wikipedia.org/>

Prayer Intentions



*To pray for and to bring to our awareness
the condition of neglected children.*

1. For children abandoned by parents at birth, that they receive protection and loving care from others.
2. For children who live in orphanages or in foster care that people of good heart would love them and provide them with a loving family atmosphere.
3. For children who don't have an opportunity to learn because of a lack of material means, that they would receive financial help from wealthy people and governments.
4. For parents who ignore their children in favor of professional work, career and money, that they realize the treasures they have in their children and dedicate attention, time and care to them to prevent their loneliness and association with bad company.
5. For sick and physically challenged children that the protection, care and dedication of relatives and volunteers would relieve their pain and make their lives more cheerful and spiritually richer.



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Abbreviations

- Rome, Italy – RO
- Kraków, Poland – KR
- North America – NA
- Przemyśl, Poland – PR
- Warszawa, Poland – WA
- Curitiba PR, Brazil – BR
- Embu, Kenya – KE