

Pax Christi WNY
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**Following
The
Nonviolent
Jesus**

The Iraq War



Authored by Regional
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Christi USA, the
National Catholic
Peace Movement

As Members of Pax Christi, the Catholic Peace Movement, we issue this statement to the people of the United States, especially all Christians, all church leaders and national policy makers in consonance with Pope Benedict, when he was Cardinal Ratzinger, who stated, "There were not sufficient reasons to unleash a war against Iraq."

We believe that God is nonviolent, active Love. (*Micah 4:3,4*)

We believe that Jesus is the incarnation of the nonviolent God of Love. (*John 10:30, John 14:9*)

We believe that Jesus' instruction to His followers regarding love and nonviolence is explicit, unambiguous and straightforward, especially in His call to "love our enemies". (*Luke, 6:27-35*)

We believe that to be a Follower of Jesus, we must proclaim and live nonviolently as he did. (*John 13:34*)

We believe that Jesus calls us to be peacemakers (Matthew 5:9), in the midst of a violent world, who recognize that the works of war (including preparation and justification for war, torture, destruction of resources and opportunities for right livelihood) are

diametrically opposed to the works of mercy and the common good of all God's people.

We believe that to follow the teachings of Jesus, we must seek:

- To love God;
- To love our neighbor and to treat all others as we would wish to be treated;
- To not judge but rather to pray for others;
- To purify our hearts and to be Peacemakers;
- To be merciful and to forgive others in their trespasses; and
- To store up treasures in heaven, not on earth.

We believe that human logic used in support of starting or continuing war and violence explicitly contradicts Jesus' teachings and example of love and nonviolence. We recognize such human logic as immoral, and therefore reject it.

We believe to be immoral any violent attempt to deprive a nation of its God-given natural resources.

Our faith in the God of Peace inspires us to expend all our energy to abolish war and to secure justice for all.

From our unwavering commitment to these beliefs, we call on the United States administration and Congress to take the following steps **immediately**:

- **Remove** all United States troops and US military bases from Iraq;

- **Request** that the United Nations send teams of peacekeepers to Iraq. Turn over full control to the UN, which would work with the Iraqi government and regional actors, including the Arab League, to pursue a comprehensive peace process to help build a stable Iraq;
- **Cease** all funding of the military occupation;
- **Commit** significant funding for the reconstruction of Iraq, under the control and direction of Iraqis;
- **Pay** reparations and engage in restorative justice for the damage and destruction caused to the Iraqi people.

In view of the shame brought about by the United States war and occupation of Iraq, we call upon all people of the United States, especially all church leaders and national policy makers, to ask our God of love and mercy, the Iraqi people and the people of the world for forgiveness for violating the most explicit revelations of the Nonviolent Jesus.

We pledge to take every nonviolent step possible to make peace a reality.