CATHOLIC PEACE ACTION

MAY 1987

7 PUTNEY BRIDGE RD
LONDON SW18 1HX

Dear Friend

Peace be with you. We hope you had a joyful and blessed Easter. As you will see from this rather large package, we have a lot of news to share with you in this newsletter.

Our monthly gatherings continue in the Undercroft , St George's Cathedral on the third Friday of each month at 6.30 pm. On 26 June, however, we move our meeting to Clive's place, **12 Knowsley Road SW11**. We will begin at 6.30 with a liturgy followed by a party. We hope people we have not met before or seen for a long time will join us for an evening of prayer and celebration.

In the last issue we mentioned the upcoming baptism of Clare Francis, Carmel and Dan's third child. it went off beautifully. Fr David Standley presided, Theresa Dean played the guitar and led us in song. Ray Towey and Pat Gaffney are the proud Godparents. The other children present participated in the blessing of Clare who cooperated completely, not uttering a single cry of discomfort or complaint. There was also one mishap. As we all left one part of the Cathedral and processed to the Baptismal font singing our alleluias, Fr David, who was leading us all, quietly turned back and Dan and asked if we were headed in the right direction!!

ASH WEDNESDAY

You have probably heard of the witness in London and Liverpool as they were well reported in the Independent, Guardian , some Radio and Television and Religious press. In London over 300 people attended the Liturgy and 45 were later arrested at the MOD. Several of those were released without being charged , either for medical reasons or because they had not actually marked the building with their blessed charcoal before being arrested. The police then did not want to charge these few with 'going equipped to commit criminal damage' or 'conspiracy' or whatever. So be warned: walking around the MoD building on Ash Wednesday with a piece of charcoal in your pocket may lead to your arrest. The rest were charged with 'criminal damage'. Everyone has pleaded 'not guilty' and different groups are on trial from April to June. So far, everyone has been found guilty and have been given conditional discharges. Some defendants have also been ordered to pay prosecution costs, non-payment of which could result in a prison sentence. Some will refuse on principle to pay anything while others are undecided.

A report on the Liverpool action is attached. Fourteen people, including an R.C. and an Anglican priest, marked their local MoD and no arrests were made despite their openness and length of time they spent marking the building.

A video documentary of the event is being prepared. If you would like to use it let us know, as it will probably be ready before our next Newsletter.

LOW WEEK: 72 HOUR FAST FOR PEACE.

A prayerful time; also a time of much discussion about the state of the peace movement. On the second day a man was so offended by our message and proximity to the Cathedral that he attacked one of our placards. A few discussions with Bishops took place but mostly it was an opportunity to speak with our presence and action about the world's desparate need for peace and justice. At any rate, Dan and Sarah, and hopefully all the others who visited us or were in solidarity with us, believe our cry from the heart was heard by God and will play a part in making the world a better place.

SOME THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION.

'Jesus , in my humble opinion, was a prince among politicians. He did not render unto Caesar that which was Caesar's. He gave the devil his due'

Gandhi.

It is time to resist our participation in government policies that conflict with the Gospel. We must change public policy in accord with the clear teaching of the peace pastoral'

Bishop Thomas Gumbleton.

Racks

PTO

VIGIL FOR HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI.

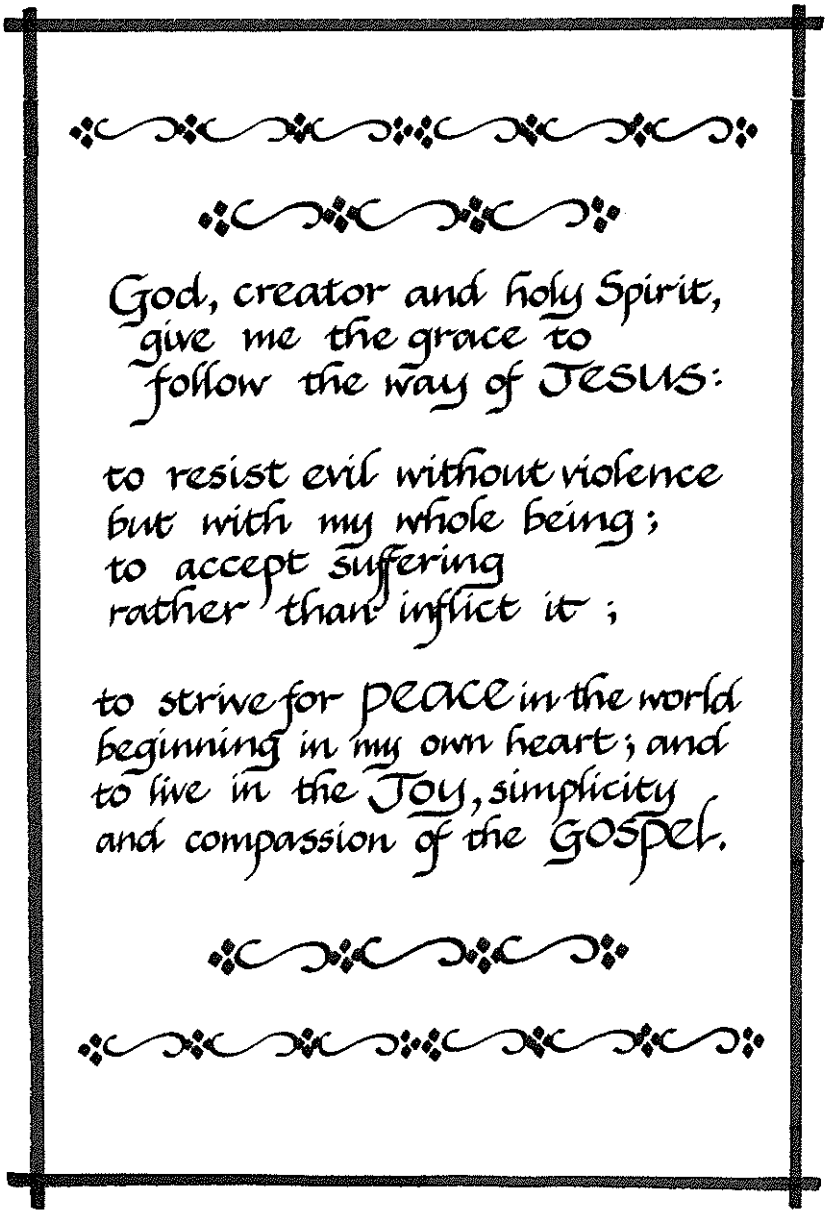
Traditionally we have conducted a vigil of witness at the MoD over the time of the anniversaries of the dropping of the atomic bonb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, August 6 - 9th. Hopefully we will undertake some form of witness this year also. Planning needs to begin in earnest very shortly but we would like to guage the level of interest and support which we can rely on before preparations begin. Please let us know whether you think a vigil should be planned and if so for how long over the August 6 - 9th period. We are particularly concerned to avoid the situation that arose last year when only one or two people were left to maintain the witness over long periods of time. Also , do you think some form of civil disobedience should be planned and if so when? If you would like to help plan the vigil contact Pat on **01 735 4907.** As at the Ash Wednesday witness, we hope that members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and Christian CND will join us at the MoD.

August 9th as well as being the anniversary of the bombing of Nagasaki is also the anniversary of the death of Franz Jagerstatter, the Austrian Catholic conscientious objector who refused to fight for Adolf Hitler and was executed by the Nazis in 1943. This anniversary is often overlooked because of the Hiroshima/Nagasaki commemorations, but this year hopefully there will be a liturgy recalling Franz's heroic witness with readings from his own moving writings.

Thank you for your continued support. We hope to see you on 26th June.

With our love and peace.

Carmel, Dan, Daniel, Sean and Clare Martin , Ray Towey, Sarah Hipperson, Pat Gaffney.



You may remember the prayer of non-violence that we shared with you in the last newsletter. Carmel has produced this as a postcard and copies can be obtained through C.P.A.

(5 p each)