

'Peacemeal on the Pavement'

- prophetic proclamation –

PENITENCE

- Identification -

(Wearing black)

Focus: The reality - 'broad is the road that leads to destruction'

Jesus said, "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction" (Matt 7:13-14). In the ancient world 'broad roads' were always built by armies, and their destination led, without question, to the 'destruction' of war and violence. Because journeying these roads was 'easy' merchants and traders, happy to take advantage of the benefits of militarism, soon used them, followed by every other traveller looking for an 'easy' path and wanting to 'feel safe'. Here is militarism and commercialism hand-in-glove supported by a population indifferent to the destruction left in their wake.

Today we stand outside the DSO offices, here at Kingsgate House, government premises dedicated to supporting our nation's arms industries in their sale of weapons, and therefore the horror of death and destruction, around the globe.

We stand dressed in black as an act of penitence and sorrow for the shameful trade in weapons by 'our' arms industries, supported by 'our' government and in which we 'all' stand complicit.

We stand dressed in black as an act of identification with the people of the earth who have died as a result of 'our' weapons. We also identify with those who face ongoing pain, suffering and destitution because of 'our' tacit acceptance of the status quo.

Reflection:

Voice 1: There are currently some 28 conflicts in 24 countries worldwide, 10 of these wars alone have resulted in more than 100,000 deaths.

Voice 2: The UK government alone sells and exports around £5.5 thousand million pounds worth of arms around the world every year.

Voice 1: Many of these conflicts are worsened and prolonged by countries like the UK selling arms to the combatants, very often to both sides in the fighting.

Voice 2: By selling arms to oppressive regimes the UK government has perpetuated the systematic abuse of human rights across the world.

Voice 1: By encouraging high military spending by governments of the world's poorest nations they spend less on schools, hospitals and other essential social programmes.

Voice 2: '... all the land was black ... all the plants of the land, all the fruit of the trees ... nothing green was left, no tree, no plant in the field, in all the land ...' (Ex 10:15)

Voice (Both): In the words of the Hebrew prophets, '... bloodshed follows bloodshed. Therefore the land mourns and all who live in it languish' (Hos 4:2-3). 'My eyes are spent with weeping ... infants and babes faint in the streets of the city, as their life is poured out ... The young and the old are lying on the ground in the streets; young women and young men have fallen by the sword (Lam 2:11-12, 21).

Silence: (two minutes) - ending marked by five drumbeats

Response (All): '*Father, forgive us, for we do know what we are doing and are ashamed*'

REPENTANCE

- Transformation -

(Black to colour)

Focus: The alternative - 'narrow is the path that leads to life'

Jesus calls us to make a different choice, "Enter through the narrow gate", he says. Jesus makes it clear it is a tough choice, "For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life" (Matt 7:13-14). It is the call to transformation that is peacemaking. The Hebrew word for 'peace' is shalom, to be present it requires that all physical and material needs be met, that there is justice in every relationship and integrity in our characters.

For this transformation to take place it requires what the Greek New Testament calls metanoia. This word is usually translated as 'repentance'; it means 'to choose to think differently', 'to change our mind'. Thinking differently leads to living differently, which in turn leads to the transformation and transfiguration of shalom.

Following the 'Reflections' and the 'Shout' we will place flowers on the model of the tank and display our brightly coloured clothes as an act of 'repentance'; turning our backs on all forms of militarism, choosing to think differently and committing ourselves to work hard for the establishment of God's shalom.

In doing so we call on the government to stop supporting the arms trade and instead to provide an agency to enable workers in military industry to find employment in works of peace. As we speak two members of our group are taking a petition to this effect to the DSO.

Reflection:

Voice 1: 'Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may be able to discern what is the will of God – what is good, acceptable and perfect' (Rom 12:2)

Voice 2: 'God makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; God breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; God burns the shield with fire. (God proclaims) "Be still, and know that I am God!" (Ps 46:9-10)

Voice 1: 'God shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away: they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore; but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees and no one shall make them afraid' (Mic 4:4)

Voice 2: '... be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and clothe yourselves with the new self created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness' (Eph 4:23-24)

Voice 1: 'You shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace ... and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands ... instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle' (Isa 55:12-13)

Voice 2: 'So (Jesus) came proclaiming peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near ...' (Eph 2:17) 'The fruit of the Spirit is ... peace' (Gal 5: 22)

Shout: "Shalom!" "Shalom!" "Shalom!"

Response (All): 'God, empower us, to work hard for the transformation you wish to see'

- make this declaration, place flowers on the tank, then reveal your coloured clothes –

PEACEMEAL

- Celebration -

(Wearing colour)

Focus: The Bread - 'love demonstrated'

We stand in the presence of Jesus, who personally bridges the gap between God and ourselves; who within himself deals with both the sin of personal rebellion and the evil of global domination systems. The cross has in fact become the 'Tree of Life', with fruit for each one of us to feed upon, and with leaves for the healing of the nations (Rev 22:2).

Bread is a physical symbol of all that is essential for life; it is also a spiritual symbol of a love that is shared. God puts this bread into our hands. We 'tear and share' it as an act of love today, and as an act of faith for tomorrow when all will receive 'bread and not bombs'.

Reflection:

Voice 1: "If your enemies are hungry, feed them ... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom 12:20-21)

Voice 2: 'Jesus said to them, "I am the Bread of Life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry ... This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven" (Jn 6:35, 50-51)

Voice 1: Helder Camara once said, "When I feed the poor they call me a saint, when I ask why the poor are hungry they call me a communist"

Voice 2: 'Jesus said, "For I was hungry and you gave me food ... I was a stranger and you welcomed me ... I was sick and you took care of me" (Mat 25:35-36)

Response (All): *'Lord, we take this bread and share it as a declaration of love'*

Sharing: - breaking and sharing the bread with one another and with others (Music / drums)

Focus: The Wine - 'life celebrated' -

Wine is a double symbol; it reminds us of death by violence and life wasted, but it also speaks of joy and life celebrated. God gives us this wine. The vine is indeed a 'Tree of Life'. We drink together joyfully, empowered to work towards that day when everyone will receive 'wine and not weapons'.

Reflection:

Voice 1: "If your enemies are thirsty, give them something to drink ... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom 12:20-21)

Voice 2: 'Jesus cried out, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me ... As the scripture has said, 'Out of their innermost being will flow rivers of living water'" (Jn 7:37-38)

Voice 1: Fr McGuckin, a priest with the 'Missionaries of Charity' in India, says, "It is our consecration to satiate the thirst of the poor"

Voice 2: 'Jesus said, "For I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink ... I was naked and you gave me clothing ... I was in prison and you visited me" (Mat 25:35-36)

Response (All): *'Lord, we take this wine and share it as a declaration of life'*

Sharing: - sharing the wine with one another and with others (Music / drums)

Final focus:

Hold hands with the people standing next to you as an act of commitment and solidarity. Pause for a silent moment to pray for them. Join in the words of the 'Shared blessing'.

Shared blessing (All): *'Go in peace to work for God's shalom'*