

**Sacred Peace Walk – Day One - Palm Sunday 2016**  
**Las Vegas, NV**

The dark quiet has fallen over Francis and Clare House now in Las Vegas, except for a bamboo wind chime playing its monotonous two note song over and over in the rising breeze. Today's 14 mile walk through the Strip and into the poor part of town was harder on the emotions than on the knees. It began early this morning in the National Atomic Testing Museum where we were blessed in several traditions. I counted about 40 strong, including the media. Overhead the planes roared up from the nearby airport about every minute. We started walking with much cheering and holding aloft of many colorful signs, flags and banners and at least four drums. It was hard not to dance.



Willie smudging us

Let the Walk begin! Robbie on left



The walk took us down the Strip, past many hotels each more ostentatious than the last, casinos, wedding chapels (including a drive-through), and souvenir stores. I wondered what in this city was real. When at last we came into the western part of the city and the walkway was lined with homeless persons, I knew I had found what was real. We had been given a windfall of bananas and gave them out to people as we went. It was very hot and several of our people poured water from their bottles in the bottles of the homeless people.

By mid afternoon when we stopped for lunch we numbered 40 strong. I had noticed a young man tagging along and struck up a conversation with him. He was staying out of the cameras and did not want to carry a sign. First he told me he was on vacation from his home state and liked our cause and just wanted to "walk with us a little ways." Later he confided to me he had

blown the whistle on some human traffickers and didn't dare go home. We talked the rest of the afternoon, and as I write this late evening he is still with us.



At the National Security Technologies government building we stopped. This is where decisions are made carried out at the Nevada Test Site, where we will be on Friday. We had alerted all the Powers that Be where we will be and when, and they had armed guards posted with bullet proof vests in front of the facility. We were not to pass the rope they had strung up there. Also the city police showed up at the same time. We had friendly enough conversation and kept respectfully within their boundaries. Our leader Robbie had led us in a pledge of nonviolence in orientation yesterday, and I saw a new wisdom in that as all my angry arguments rose in me. I led the group in a silent prayer as close to the forbidden line as we could get without actually crossing it.

Leaving the area we walked to the MLK memorial, where we were challenged by a man who walked with us for a short ways. It was a little confusing as he had clearly been drinking, and his challenges made no sense. But we responded respectfully and after I led our final prayer at the Memorial, he left.

We walked back to the Francis and Clare House for a wonderful supper of vegan rice, beans and veggies under a glorious sunset. I am tired and sore but glad to be here. I washed dishes with a volunteer for a long time and saw my new young friend who joined us midday taken up with conversation with others. We all have found a temporary community in the shelter of each other's care.

### **Sacred Peace Walk – Day Two – Monday in Holy Week, 2016** **Las Vegas to Lee Canyon, NV**

Dear ones,

I write from our peace camp in Lee Canyon tonight. It was a long day of walking--15 miles along the interstate. The Porto-potty for Peace stopped every couple of miles with water and snacks. For most of the day the wind was to our backs, hazy skies and misty mountains. Mid afternoon the wind shifted and we pressed into it, flags flapping hard. It was a wonderful walk.

I like to walk with individuals, interspersed with solitude. Today I walked with Senji, a Japanese Buddhist who told me about his life as a monk. He and his friend Gilberto (probably the only Cuban Buddhist monk in the world) walk all over the world in the cause of peace. As they walk they drum and chant. Senji taught me a Japanese chant yesterday.



I also walked with Vera, a beautiful young black woman studying sociology and communication in college. But her passion is singing. As I type she is singing around the campfire. She taught me a Sanskrit chant today which we sang for many miles.

In the afternoon I walked with Eunie, a mid fifties woman married to Willie, a native elder. Eunie is white. It was amazing to hear her story and how she (a Canadian from British Columbia) bridges all these worlds.



Finally I walked with George, a retired man from Berkley who in his retirement loves to act in plays. He is about to star in a play called "Darwin in Malibu" where he plays Darwin who meets all his critics in Purgatory (including William Wilberforce) and what happens then. Later, after an hour's conversation, he confessed to me he was actually an ordained UCC minister and I reluctantly confessed I was actually an Episcopal priest and we both laughed very hard.

Johnnie Bobb and his family arrived today. He is the chief of the Western Shoshone on whose land we walk. He has been part of these peace walks for decades. When we got to the camp he drummed us in. I cried tears of happiness for that welcome. I danced to his drumming which was not easy considering there was a hard wind against me and a large, colorful flag twirling me around, and a mega blister on my right big toe.



The young man who joined us yesterday of whom I wrote is still with us. He is a loner, but seems to like being with us at the edges. I got him a tent and sleeping bag and I was glad to see he asked one of the young Native men to help set it up, and then worked hard gathering wood for the fire circle.

About five others have joined us also. We had many reactions from the road today--from getting the finger and rude horn blowing to little toot toots of support and friendly waves. The truckers are most friendly of all.

Now I'm ready for the night, tucked in my sleeping bag. The wind is blowing hard, straining at the tarp. The clouds were amazing tonight (see below) and I am ready for quiet. On my alone walks today I sang the psalms for Holy Week. Tomorrow we will get to Cactus Springs--- a mere 8 miles, and then back to the AFB to demonstrate against the drones. And some will risk arrest.

As I close I want to say how grateful I am for your notes of support and prayers. You are also working for peace in your own ways and I am so glad we are companions in the work of God's kingdom.



The view from my tent tonight



**Sacred Peace Walk – Day Three –Tuesday in Holy Week, 2016**  
**Lee Canyon to Cactus Springs, NV**

Hello friends.

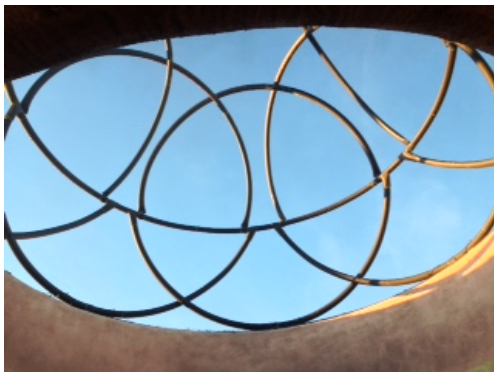
I write tonight from the Goddess Temple in Cactus Springs, a beautiful oasis in the desert where we are given hospitality on the (relatively) lush grounds and in the guest house. After the evening program I finally found my way back to my tent in the dark, after literally beating the bushes for a long time. Funny how nothing looks the same by moonlight. The wind is very strong but I pitched in a little copse so have a little shelter in all the howling.

This was a hard day for many reasons. I was wrong last night-- it was not 8 miles of walking today but 16 with fierce winds against us the whole time. Once I was actually lifted off the road. I gave up carrying a flag after lunch as it was too hard to wrestle with it. When 18 wheelers passed in the right lane it was hard to stay upright. I wore everything I had against the wind.

And I had a misunderstanding with a brother walker, who, while we were being warned by police to keep left. Just goes to show even peace activists can have conflict issues! I felt badly about it all day and wasn't able to connect with him until supper when I took his hand and asked how we could make peace. He looked at me and said we already were. That's all it took and we are fine again. But it was hard to walk with a heavy heart.

I feel more and more dread as we get closer to Creech. The drones were not flying this time, certainly because of the wind. But last time we were here they took off and landed about every 30 seconds. They are creepy things, like giant wasps. As I have researched them and have learned more about how the military is using them; it is so appalling that I feel the anger burning in me and I know I am not ready to really live non-violently. And we support this with our tax dollars. Yes, I know they can be used for good also. It is not drones per se that we protest, but the using them to wage our own war of terror.

The open roof in the Temple



The walk itself felt very long today. Don't need to say more about that. When I finally hobbled into the temple and everyone was there drumming me in and cheering, I burst into tears in gratitude. I was the last one in. You who know me well know I'm a good walker and in good shape, so you can fill in between the lines!

The high point of the day again was one-on-one conversations. I first walked with a beautiful African American brother, 24, who was being discharged from the military honorably. In his last couple of weeks as a soldier he was participating in this peace walk. So we had--uh--vigorous conversation about how we could best respond to terrorism. My Dad raised the same question with me. It's an important question, and I certainly don't know the best answer. I only know that continuing our present course of retaliation has clearly not worked for some 6000 years and perhaps it is time to try something different. I have more thoughts on that but not tonight.



Johnnie Bobb blessing the food



A beautiful lunch

I walked with two other people also, with amazing stories. I was especially intrigued by a young Western Shoshone man named Carl of about 20, who kept breaking into songs and chants as he walked and talked. He told me how we were righting the balance of the world by doing this. Another was a dear young woman named Sunnybelle. Her father was of Israeli and Palestinian descent (!) and her mother was German with British citizenship. She told me about growing up in Israel. She is passionate about building alternative housing that is oriented to community and ecologically sustainable.

The day started with Johnnie Bobb, chief of the Western Shoshones opening the day with a fire circle. We all danced around the fire and offered prayer with tobacco and water as the sun rose over the Sheep Mountains. Then came coffee. I've never been so glad for it. It was hot and strong and felt like food.

Finally, the day ended with a very intense conversation about the legalities of our demonstrating at Creech tomorrow morning and potential arrests. I got to ask my questions and voice my misgivings. I was very moved by the responses of the people who have been arrested numerous times. "I do it not because it will make a difference," said Gilberto, "but because opposing war the right thing to do." I saw it all differently after that. I still don't think I will risk it. But it changed my heart a bit. It was a wonderful conversation opening very deep issues and I am grateful to the leadership for offering it.

Now with wind blowing all around me I will tuck my frozen arms into the sleeping bag and be still. Most everyone else is inside tonight but I need solitude more than I need warmth! After the action at Creech tomorrow we will return here to rest for the day.

Thanks for reading all this. Peace to each of you and to this troubled world.

**Sacred Peace Walk – Day Four –Wednesday in Holy Week, 2016**  
**Cactus Springs, NV (Including Creech Air Force Base)**

Beloved,

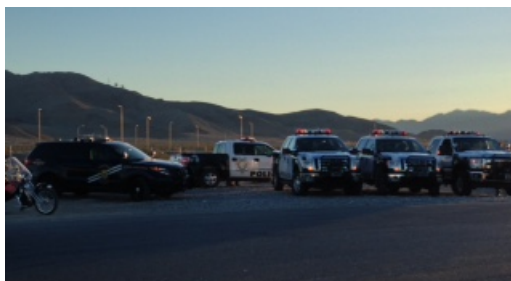
I am again ensconced in my precious sleeping bag turning my mind and heart to you. I wish we



were together for a conversation. Much there is to process about this day. I type under a full moon lighting the sky and shedding blue light over everything. Sigh.



We were up very early after a wakeful night praying about what I should do this day. After our conversation last night about legal ramifications about arrest I was really cloudy about what I was being asked to do, beyond walking and praying. After a quick coffee we loaded up the cars and drove the 3 miles back to Creech. I still had no answer.



An email had come in from my friend Nancy with a fabulous quote from John Dear about non-violence breaking the cycles of compulsive violence. We demonstrated for half an hour or so and then took down a part of the fence the police had put up to keep us out. It is a well rehearsed play. We had told them our plans, then they told us their plans, and we all acted according to our scripts. That included us moving out into the forbidden road and them giving us a 5 minute warning. It was in that 5 minutes that I chose to read Nancy's quote from the forbidden place, thinking I would be done in time to get back to safety. But when you read loudly you read slowly also. I realized I was cutting it close and wondered if I would be happier with myself at end of day if I had stayed or scuttled back to safety, and as I realized I would be happier if I took the stand against drone terrorism, the 5 minutes was up and I and 6 companions were under arrest. That's not exactly the vision of Isaiah but it's what happened.



Drones flew in about every minute

They (about 8 uniformed men) took us bodily behind some trailers and patted us down, took ID's and told us to sit down along the fence. We started to sing quite beautifully actually--3 part hymns and peace chants which we made up on the spot. We prayed, and I read the gospel for





Madre Del Mundo (Mother of the World) Statue

today. We held hands and tried to keep warm. Eventually they called us up one by one, gave us a citation for trespassing and a court date ([June 1](#)) and we all crossed the street again with Johnnie Bobb and the Buddhist monks drumming us in to the cheering of our friends. I did not feel like a hero (for “criminal trespass?” That was the charge!). I found myself quite emotional when it was all over and went apart and cried hard. This confrontation stuff is NOT fun.

Eventually we got back to the Goddess Temple and had breakfast. Our leader Robbie and a friend did a lovely ritual, and we had lunch. Mid afternoon we went back to Creech to demonstrate while the drone pilots changed shifts and we held our signs while they left the base. I took off my sunglasses to make direct eye contact with them, but few would look at us. I'm not surprised. I remember the guards in SC about to execute Andy. They couldn't look either.

Both morning and afternoon there was a counter-demonstration to ours. A single man on a red motorcycle with a side car held up his sign saying "thank you for keeping America free" and holding a big flag. He is only there when we are there. I watched him all afternoon (while blessing all the base workers going home--I do love being a priest!) and it came to me at the end of the time that it would be REALLY COOL if we could TRULY build a bridge even with motorcycle man. So I talked with Robbie and got his permission to gather us into a circle. Then I went over and asked motorcycle man if he would sing with us. He said no until I told him we were going to sing "America the Beautiful." He got excited and said he had it there on a CD and keyed it up. So we sang with him to his music! I'll bet it's one of the first times that two opposing protests ended up singing together! As we turned to leave I bowed to him and he gave me a little bow back from his motorcycle seat. That was the best part of the day for me. That scored a much bigger coup than getting arrested!

Back at the temple again we did a foot washing Ceremony. Four of us shared the leadership and we all washed each other's feet with water followed by oiled salt followed by essential oils and a massage. It was such a tender and intimate time especially after the same feet had walked so many miles.

During the ceremony we all heard large explosions about every three minutes. Turns out that the airbase was shooting missiles into the mountains around us. I truly do not think they were aiming at us, but it was frighteningly close. I was conscious that this is the sound that many people in the world live with frequently. We could see clouds of smoke rising in the barren mountains where the missiles had landed. Very sobering. This stuff is real.

After supper we attended a full moon Ceremony in the temple. About 40 people squeezed into the open space there, so full of strong feminine energy. The name of the priestess here is Candace and she did a beautiful job weaving together all the disparate people who were in attendance. Tomorrow we will move on to the Nevada Test Site, a walk of about 15 miles, all mostly uphill. My feet have about eight more hours to finish healing!

There is much to continue thinking about today. In silence. The Great Triduum (3 Days). The Solemnity of Holy Week has begun. May you be touched with the presence of our vulnerable, wounded Lord.



**Sacred Peace Walk – Day Five – Maundy Thursday in Holy Week, 2016**  
**Cactus Springs to Mercury (Nevada Nuclear Test Site)**

Friends,

Tonight I write from the Sacred Peace Camp directly across the highway from the Nevada nuclear test site. We've been told to pitch our tents as high as possible because radiation settles in the gullies. Already the military police are there waiting for us, red and blue lights flashing. I wonder if they will sit up all night watching for us. (We are so SCARY!!!!)

The coffee this morning was strong and hot and good. A good beginning! A young Filipino man made wonderful pancakes and burritos. (People have been known to gain weight on the peace walk! )

During the morning circle there was a Stealth Bomber gliding overhead-- one of those things that looks like a boomerang. I actually mistook it for a large bird of prey. Then it disappeared-- stealthily. When we shuttled cars to the peace camp site, we got separated from another car and so pulled over near the entrance to the test site to wait. Within 30 seconds a military vehicle was there with lights flashing wanting to know our business.

I walked with some fascinating people today. First it was Gilberto (pronounced "Hilberto") who told me the story of how he got from a Catholic Cuban family to being a Buddhist monk. It is a story to drop your jaw and scrape it on the ground--his long history in civil and human rights, his risks and his vision all the way along, and profound suffering which he tells without an ounce of bitterness or self-pity. If we lived more closely I would make it my life work to write his story for him. It is the kind of story that could heal the world.



Vera tending blisters

The next companions were both the people who most challenged me. I have felt only caution around them and so figured I most needed to walk with them and hear their story. The first was a dark young man who grew up in "the projects" and seems only interested in his creature comforts. He is 26 and a techie musician. It was an interesting walk and though I felt a little uncomfortable, we made progress. When I could see things through his eyes, my heart warmed to him.

Then I walked with a 26 year old white woman with long dreadlocks for hair. Turns out she was a professional fire-dancer (who knew???) who danced with fiery hoola hoops, flaming torches and did fire swallowing. She told me the secret of it all so now if I ever leave the CAC I know I could supplement my income swallowing fire also!

My final partner was a 77 year old woman, very tiny, who has been walking this March since 2009. We made a nice connection and were eventually joined by Carl, the young Shoshone man. We finished the last five mile or so leg of the walk together, the last to arrive at the Peace Camp. We held hands and just never let go. As we came up the last hill the whole group was waiting for us drumming, singing, cheering and clapping and waving flags, reaching out to embrace us and pull us in. I broke into tears (again!), dancing and felt so blessed, so welcomed. All my tiredness went away and we cried with joy. I felt like an Olympic marathoner who just crossed the finish line. It was a jubilant group of 42 or so who then walked arm in arm up to the top of the hill for the final circle of the day and supper. It was getting dark and windy so I pitched my tent before eating. I had to put heavy rocks inside my tent to hold it down because the ground is too rocky to

get a stake in. The stars are out over the glow of Las Vegas, now 65 miles away. The wind has lessened a bit. I am more than ready to push Send on this email and dissolve into sleep. Test Site after Eucharist in the morning. But first: grateful silence and luminous darkness.

**Sacred Peace Walk – Last Day – Good Friday, 2016**  
**Mercury (Nevada Nuclear Test Site)**

Beloved,

It is hard to comprehend the fullness of this day, the physical and emotional distance covered in 15 hours. I am in a real bed, half-listening to a Bernie Sanders speech from downstairs on the TV, and trying to hold it all together.

This day began at the Peace Camp when we were awakened by native drums calling us to consciousness and a vertical state for participation in the morning fire circle. Johnnie Bobb sang several songs about different things (they all sounded the same to me) while we danced sideways to the left. As the sun rose over the mountain we offered dried cedar to the fire and sprinklings of water. It was cold but no wind so it was not bad. As daylight rose the mountains seemed to come alive with vibrancy.



After breakfast about 20 of our group gathered with me for Eucharist. [Of course Good Friday is the only day of the year we do NOT celebrate Eucharist, but--oh well.] It was a non-traditional service with much participation. I was so moved when, hoping people would release whatever they needed to release before heading down to the Test Site, I invited them to think of any they had offended or





been offended by and silently name that of which they wished to be forgiven. For only the second time in my life as a priest, people actually began to speak those things aloud, publicly speaking their specific repentance. I was so moved by their vulnerability and raw honesty I could hardly speak the absolution. I gave a brief homily pulling together how crucifixion was Jesus' ultimate solidarity with human suffering and unity with all people including his executioners, and tied that in with our work of peace. Then we blessed the native fry bread that had been made onsite the night before, and the intense grape juice (12 step people in the community--I never want to make it hard for them) and we fed each other. Thus mutually blessed, we joined everyone else in procession down to the tunnels.



The tunnels are simply the large culverts running under the highway. Peace activists have used them for years covering the insides with peace graffiti. There we did the Stations of the Cross--with large B&W photographs of war. They are gripping images which really cry out the horrors of war and violence. The liturgy that accompanies them is well done so the whole experience hits me on every level.

We went through all 14 stations, different walkers taking turns reading. A woman played a flute throughout, while a man drummed in perfect accompaniment to the words. Between Stations we sang the chorus of

"Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.  
Where are you there when they crucified my Lord?"



The station which really hit me hard was the first, a photo of the electric chair. I had a visceral memory of running into the room with the electric chair in Columbia South Carolina after blessing the newly executed body of Andy Smith and trying to escape. It was a scene straight out of Kafka. I remembered that moment when I became paralyzed by horror in that place of death. Feeling the old horror as I stood in front of this image of human torture, I wept. A beautiful young woman came and embraced me and we walked together for a while. Several of the stations made me cry, including the one I have chosen in the above photos.

We walked down towards the Test Site and stopped about a 10th of the mile from the wide white line where the military officers and guards were all waiting for us (and had been for at least 24 hours). There we had another ceremonial circle where we were smudged and blessed by a young Shoshone man. I found it very grounding before meeting the police.

Ceremony completed, we walked as a single body down to the line led by the Shoshones. There were about five drummers all drumming, and our flags and banners were flying and it was a glorious sight. We felt strong and centered and knew the spirit of love was with us.



When we got to the line we stopped. Johnnie Bobb spoke eloquently about the history between his people and the test site and all the ways the U.S. government had failed the treaties. They understand that the land on which the test site sits was stolen from them. Yucca Mountain, their sacred burial land is now a proposed nuclear waste repository. The ground water is rising and has been found to be poisonous. Several other people spoke also.

And then our people started stepping over the white line. For me there was no decision to be made. I just knew I was going to join them. I turned around and handed my flag to a companion and found myself holding hands with a line of women. We all stepped across the line together and were immediately escorted down to a large holding pen where the men were separated from the women. The pen was about 50 paces by 40 paces in size, surrounded by a 12 foot high chain link fence which was then topped with rows of barbed wire tilted inward. Previous peace protesters had taken stones from the ground and arranged them into a giant peace sign. The police had been thoughtful enough to put a Porto-potty in the pen also, though I did not want to give them the satisfaction of watching me use it. We were stripped of all our possessions except sunscreen, and locked in. My companions immediately sat down in the shade of a building but I wanted to explore the pen. There were desert plants with vibrant yellow flowers on the far side, and little clusters of daisy-like flowers in impossibly dry dirt. I went to the farthest end of the pen which was closest to the bombed land and suddenly I knew what I had to do.

I went down on my knees in the hard gravel and prayed for the land, the workers, for the softening of the hearts of all who work in nuclear development, for those who think of us as enemies, for refugees and other victims of war, for those on every level who contribute to the possibility and maintenance of the war machines of the world. And then I stood up tall and stretched my arms as high as I could grabbing the chain link fence and I began to sing the Exsultet.

This ancient and beautiful piece of Christian liturgy is only sung at the Great Vigil of Easter, so it is probably anathema to sing it on Good Friday. But locked in their pen in that place of death and destruction, I knew the most subversive thing I could do would be to sing of the triumph of God over everything they stand for there. The Exsultet is imprinted on my DNA. It is the last thing I sang to my brother before he died. It is the last thing I want to hear before I die. I sang in full voice the entire Exsultet. Here's a wee sample:

*"Rejoice now heavenly hosts and choirs of angels,  
and let your trumpets shout salvation for the victory of our mighty King!  
Rejoice and sing now all the round earth, bright with a glorious splendour,  
for darkness has been vanquished by our eternal King."*

After about half an hour they started taking us out two by two to be processed. The charge was not as serious as at Creech and in 30 years they have never followed up on the citations they give us. Of course there is always the risk of the first time but that time will probably not be now so I think I'm in the clear with this arrest. Creech is another matter.

On my way out I stopped at each officer to shake his hand and look him in the eye and make real human contact. I thanked them for their hospitality. With the youngest man there I asked him his name. He gave me a snide look and responded "OFFICER!" "Well, OFFICER," I smiled, "I'm Carolyn" and clasped his hand in mine.

Back at the camp we took down the tents and drove back to the Goddess Temple for lunch. Goodbyes were said, hugs, contacts exchanged, and I drove three people back to Las Vegas and dropped them off at their homes.

Tonight I am back with my friends Buck and Connie Dee from Charleston days, both priests, who have invited me to sing the Exsultet at their church tomorrow night. I will sing it in both English and Spanish. I thought it a wonderful way to end the Peace March. Having spent the week confronting the "Powers and principalities which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God," I get to join Christians in this place and celebrate the crossing over from death into life.

So this is my last posting. I am deeply grateful for your walking it with me, your comments, encouragement, questions and quotes. I feel some significant things have changed for me because of this experience.

I met some extraordinary people who have enriched my life manifold. I absolutely fell in love with most of them. I have now been arrested. Twice! (Sorry, Momma!). This was the first group in which I was considered "an elder."

I am more committed to the cause of peace. It is not enough to just pray for it. It is not enough to just send money. We need to embody the words of St. Francis and give ourselves to being instruments of peace. In this nuclear age, our world depends on it.

**Alleluia!**

Carolyn Metzler  
Monday in Easter Week, 2016  
edited by NDE



The quote with which I was arrested: (with thanks to Nancy Elder-Wilfrid for sending it):

### **No Reason to Keep Fighting**

The cross of nonviolence breaks the cycle of violence through our insistence on the truth of justice and our refusal to strike back with further violence. Now, for the first time, people are freed from their slavery to the culture of violence and can reach out to one another with love and compassion. There is no reason to keep on fighting.... No matter how noble the cause or the fervor of the culture's patriotism, people of nonviolence refuse to support war. They insist on loving every human being on the planet, even those labeled enemies, and so they will refuse to kill or support the killing of anyone. The way of the cross, the way of nonviolence, wears us all down, so that one day we will look into one another's eyes and recognize ourselves as sisters and brothers, as equal children of the God of peace.

John Dear

Source: Transfiguration