

Christian CND Prayer Diary - August 2025



August Prayer Diary

Go forth into the world in peace.
Be of good courage.
Hold fast that which is good.
Render to no one evil for evil.
Strengthen the fainthearted.
Support the weak.
Help the afflicted.
Show love to everyone.
Love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always. Amen.

This month's prayer diary is taken from Christian CND Co-Chair Martin Tiller. This is part of what Martin said when he opened the From Despair to Hope Christian CND peace pilgrimage in May this year, standing with the pilgrims outside Sheffield Forgemasters' factory:



Forgemasters and its predecessor companies has a long history of innovative engineering, going back 200 years. They provide local employment. They work for many different sectors but one of the big ones is defence. It is involved with the production and refurbishment of parts for Britain's nuclear submarines, including the nuclear-armed Vanguard class. The people who work here at Forgemasters do, I am sure, believe that they are helping to make the world a safer place, and helping "good" countries like ours and the USA to contain actual or potential threats elsewhere.

But there is another way of looking at it. Ultimately, nuclear-armed submarines are part of a Weapon of Mass Destruction system. Of course, everyone hopes that it won't be used, but the threat of nuclear war is there, and is widely believed to be at unprecedentedly high levels right now. I wonder if you have

seen Threads, and if, unlike me, you managed to watch it right to the end. Back in 1984 this horrific and tragic film traced the lives of two families when their city is the victim of a nuclear attack. The film, which was recently rebroadcast for its 40th anniversary, struck many people with the reality of the Cold War's possible outcome on ordinary people and our whole civilisation. And the city where it was set was... Sheffield. How ironic, how sad, that this wonderful city, this City of Sanctuary, is also a place where parts are being made for those very nuclear weapon systems.

There is an account in all four gospels of the night when Jesus was arrested, leading to his trial and crucifixion. One of his followers draws a sword to try and resist arrest; he takes a swing at one of the arresting party, and cuts off his ear. Jesus says "No more of this!" and he miraculously heals the man's ear. He says "Put away your sword. For all who draw the sword will die by the sword". This is a classic text for Christian nonviolence, and Christian CND have often used it on placards. It just occurred to me recently that perhaps it is symbolic that it was the man's ear that was cut off. The ear is what we use to listen to each other. Was this a way of saying "there is no possibility of peaceful dialogue between opposing points of view?" If so, Jesus gently corrects us, and the ear is restored. We reject weapons, we lament, we protest, but we do not condemn. We believe that there is a way which leads to hope and we want dialogue and a recognition of common humanity in all, even those who work or put their faith in weapons. We are here to propose a better way, because that is what Jesus did. We want to talk as equals with those who might disagree with us, and we want our country to do this same with nations we might style as "enemies".

Lament and repentance

Eighty years ago, as Japan was preparing to surrender and end the Second World War, our allies detonated two innovative new devices – atom bombs – over the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Survivors described walking through the ruins of their city without a clear sense of where to go and encountering the cries of people trapped within crushed structures, or people with horrific burns. As the numerous small fires created by the blast began to grow, they merged into a firestorm that moved quickly throughout the ruins, killing many who had been trapped, and causing people to jump into the rivers in search of sanctuary. Many of them drowned.

This is what we are talking about. This is what nuclear weapons do.

We know the “deterrence theory”: because we have these weapons, we’ll never have to use them. What right do we have to take that gamble with God’s creation?

We repent on behalf of our nation for the violence and threats which we commit. We recognise that we too are part of the system. We are not here to cast the first stone but to seek a better way together.

Outside Forgemasters, the group stood for one minute’s silent solidarity, with linked arms.

They sang “The war machine rolls round” by Sue Gilmurray

**And the war machine rolls round and round,
and the poor and the weak get trampled on the ground
and from where we stand their cries are drowned
by the clink and the clank of the dollar and the pound,
as the war machine rolls round....**

Martin continued:

From Despair to Hope

Those who put their trust in nuclear weapons believe that this makes them strong. They believe that it puts them in control, and that they will use this power to keep the peace and maintain our freedom. But things are not always what they seem. There is a very moving chapter in John Bunyan's great allegorical classic, the Pilgrim's Progress, when the two characters, whose names are Christian and Hopeful, are following the good path (through life) but the way becomes hard and goes away from the refreshing river. They become discouraged and start to wish for an easier way. Sometimes the way of nonviolence is hard work. We hear the news and feel that we are on an uphill struggle, trying to persuade people that peace is the way to go. In the story, Christian and Hopeful spot an alluring looking alternative, through By-Path Meadow, and after some debate they decide to leave the main route and follow this instead. But night falls, and the meadow starts to flood and they are trapped. They can go neither backwards nor forwards so they lie down to sleep. There, they are caught by a giant, the owner of that land – his name is Giant Despair. He takes them to his castle – Castle Doubting – and throws them into a “very dark dungeon, nasty and stinking to their spirits.” Christian is tempted to give up but Hopeful keeps his spirits up. Christian and Hopeful spend their fourth night in the dungeon in prayer. Just before sunrise, Christian suddenly remembers something rather important:

“What a fool,” quoth he, “am I, thus to lie in a stinking dungeon when I may as well walk at liberty. I have a key in my bosom called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle....” Then Christian pulled it out of his bosom, and began to try at the dungeon door, whose bolt as he turned the key gave back, and the door flew open with ease, and Christian and Hopeful both came out”.

Nuclear deterrence is the logic of despair. It says that this is the best world we can now hope for; we can't trust our enemies, or make them into friends, so we must overwhelm them with our superior power. This is not the hopeful life God

promised us. As Christians we have a duty to stay hopeful. In the words of Martin Luther King, “Our generation will have to repent not only for the words and acts of the children of darkness, but also for the fears and apathy of the children of light.” We must not give in to the logic of Giant Despair. The bible is full of the Keys of Promise. One of the simplest is John 14:14, where Jesus tells his disciples “You may ask for anything in my name, and I will do it”. So today, we ask God for peace and an end to the arms trade, to nuclear weapons, and the threat of war. We ask for ourselves and our nation to be freed from Castle Doubting and Giant Despair, to walk on the right path to the end of all of our pilgrimages. Amen.



The Christian CND pilgrim group prayed the following prayer together, and you are invited to pray it now:

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Support the weak.

Help the afflicted.

Show love to everyone.

Love and serve the Lord,

rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;

and the blessing of almighty God,

the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

be among us and remain with us always. Amen.

During August, please also join us in this prayer

Lord of life, in this year, and month, of the 80th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we put our faith in you, not in threats of complete destruction. May our witness encourage Christians everywhere to stand against nuclear weapons in prayer and action. Amen

