

# Nuclear Weapons

## Replacing Trident - A Scottish Catholic Response



**Pope Benedict XVI**

*What can be said about those governments which count on nuclear arms as a means of ensuring the security of their countries? This point of view is not only baneful but also completely fallacious. In a nuclear war there would be no victors, only victims. The truth of peace requires that all agree to change their course by clear and firm decisions, and strive for a progressive and concerted nuclear disarmament.*

*(Message for World Day of Peace, January 1 2006)*

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It gives me great pleasure to introduce this much needed study guide on nuclear weapons. It has been prepared at my request for our Archdiocese, and any others who wish to use it, to allow for the fullest possible engagement in the debate on the future of nuclear weapons in our country.

Such a debate is very timely and presents a golden opportunity to consider afresh Britain's nuclear weapons policy. For the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century an elite few countries, ours included, have depended on nuclear weapons for their security. But now there is the real potential to rid ourselves of these terrible and unnecessary weapons. The world is no longer divided into blocks. There is no longer a division of peoples into friend or foe. We no longer have an 'enemy' against whom our nuclear weapons could possibly be a defence, if in fact they ever were.

With Trident coming up for replacement in the not too distant future, now is the ideal time to consider with fresh eyes, with eyes of a 21<sup>st</sup> century faith, what our country might be like without the shadow of nuclear weapons that hangs above us.

We will see in this booklet that Church teaching on the demand for nuclear disarmament is very clear and very strong. Yet the political will to make nuclear disarmament a reality is not strong. Therefore, the reflection and action

*In Holy Week 2006 The Scottish Bishops urged the Government not to replace Trident:*

"The Bishops of Scotland welcome the Prime Minister's recent comment that there should be the "fullest possible" public debate on the Trident nuclear missile system. The Catholic Church has clear and consistent teaching on nuclear weapons. The use of weapons of mass destruction would be a crime against God and against humanity: it must never happen.

The Church teaches that it is immoral to use weapons of mass destruction in an act of war: "Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or extensive areas along with their population is a crime against God and man himself. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation." (Gaudium et Spes)

Equally, storing and accumulating such weapons gives rise to strong moral reservations. "The arms race does not ensure peace. Far from eliminating the causes of war, it risks aggravating them." In a widely endorsed statement released

### Introduction From Cardinal O'Brien



Photo - © Paul McSherry Photography

boxes that appear throughout are especially welcome because they give practical ideas as to what we each can do, as individuals and as groups.

I am most grateful to the Justice and Peace Core Group of my Archdiocese for their work in preparing this study guide, and to the staff of the office of Justice and Peace Scotland for their help with parts of the writing and distribution. My thanks too to Mr Brian Quail and Ms Caitlin Brune, who provided very useful sections of the guide.

I am very happy to commend it to you, for study and prayer. May it lead more and more of us to become men and women who reflect on our faith and put it into action.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

+ Keith Patrick Cardinal O'Brien

in 1982 the Bishops of Scotland said; "We are convinced, however, that if it is immoral to use these weapons it is also immoral to threaten their use. Some argue that the threat can be justified as the lesser of two evils. The crux of the problem is whether in any foreseeable circumstances a policy of self defence based on the use or even the threat of use of these weapons of terrible destructiveness can ever be morally justified."

In January of this year, Pope Benedict XVI stated clearly, "In a nuclear war there would be no victors, only victims". He called on those countries in possession of nuclear weapons to "strive for a progressive and concerted nuclear disarmament."

In repeating our previous statement, and endorsing the statements from the Pope, we urge the Government of the United Kingdom not to invest in a replacement for the Trident system and to begin the process of decommissioning these weapons with the intention of diverting the sums spent on nuclear weaponry to programmes of aid and development."

## Speaking Of Peace - What Scripture Tells Us

The starting point for a Christian understanding of peace is the bible. This is a very small selection of peace texts.



Peace Monument 'Sadako' in Hiroshima, Japan.

**Sadako was two years old when the atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945. In 1953 she was diagnosed with Leukemia, known to the Japanese as "the atom bomb disease". She started to fold paper cranes, a Japanese symbol of life and longevity, and completed over 1000 before dying on October 25, 1955 aged twelve. Now people the world over fold paper cranes, known as 'tsuru', and send or take them to Hiroshima to be placed by Sadako's monument.**

**Action** - As a group or parish fold 1000 paper cranes and send them to the Peace Museum in Hiroshima with a message of peace. Find out how to fold cranes at [www.sadako.org](http://www.sadako.org)

**Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you"**

Numbers 6:24 -27

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

Psalms 120:6-7

Too long have I had my dwelling among those who hate peace. I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war.

Isaiah 32: 16-18

Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

Isaiah 59:8

The way of peace they do not know, and there is no justice in their paths. Their roads they have made crooked; no one who walks in them knows peace.

Ezekiel 13:10-11

Because, in truth, because they [false prophets] have misled my people, saying, "Peace," when there is no peace; and because, when the people build a wall, these prophets smear whitewash on it. Say to those who smear whitewash on it that it shall fall.

Micah 3:1-2, 5

And I said: Listen, you heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel! Should you not know justice? - you who hate the good and love the evil... Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who lead my people astray, who cry "Peace" when they have something to eat, but declare war against those who put nothing into their mouths.

Luke 1: 78-79

By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Luke 24:36

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

Ephesians 6:15

As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace.

James 2:15-16

If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?

Translation: NRSV

### Reflection and Action

Read each of these passages of scripture slowly and prayerfully, and follow each passage with a period of silence.

If you are in a group take turns to read each passage slowly, and again, follow each reading with a short time of silence.

Now reflect on these questions alone or in your group. If alone, write down your answers and then use them for your next time of reflection.

*How does the passage touch you?*

*How central is the message of peace for God's people?*

*How central should peace be in our lives?*

*Have nuclear weapons been effective in maintaining the peace that God desires?*

*Would you be more or less at peace if Britain were to give up its nuclear weapons?*

*Would our country be more or less at peace if we gave up our nuclear weapons?*

*Would the world be a safer or more dangerous place if Britain disarms?*

*Make a collection of peace texts in the bible.*

*Write to your MP stating your desire for peace based on your Christian faith.*

**As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace Ephesians 6:15**

## Answering The Call Of Peace - Cardinal O'Brien Urges Gospel Action

*On Easter Sunday, 2006, Cardinal O'Brien preached a powerful and impassioned homily on the essential link between Easter faith and the Gospel call to action. Here are some extracts:*

Our Easter faith is not to be kept to ourselves. If the first witnesses to the resurrection had kept it to themselves, then we would not know of it. No, far from keeping it to themselves, they proclaimed it every bit as fully as our Easter song of Exsultet proclaims it, and we, today and each day of Easter, and each day of our lives, must follow that example and speak of our faith, sharing it with others, allowing it to deepen and grow .... We must also learn from those of other denominations and other faiths what it really means to live in this 21<sup>st</sup> century as men and women of faith.

Much is demanded of us in the name of faith. We must be people of prayer, both liturgical prayer... and personal prayer... But alongside being people of prayer we must be people of action, people who put our faith into action.

When Jesus meets the frightened disciples his first resurrection words are 'peace be with you'. He is saying that fear and anxiety can be overcome, and they can be overcome by peace.

Last week the Bishops of Scotland reflected precisely on this matter – how we can be people of action and people of peace, and how we can encourage the people of Scotland in this. We welcome the invitation for public debate on this most vital issue at the heart of the pro-life tradition of the Church because it allows us to restate, clearly and unequivocally, the consistent teaching of the Catholic Church.

Nuclear weapons have an awesome power for destruction. The use of even one nuclear weapon would mean the death of thousands, even hundreds of thousands, of people, and we already have hundreds of such weapons, capable of total destruction of our planet many times over. Vatican Council II, in the document *Gaudium et Spes*, warned that the use of such weapons must never be contemplated: "every act of

war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God and man himself, which merits firm and unequivocal condemnation".

The Catechism of the Catholic Church repeats these words. Pope John Paul II described that Catechism as the "statement of the Church's faith" so we should be in no doubt about this issue being an issue of faith.

We here in Scotland have a duty to lead the way in campaigning for change, because we have the shameful task of housing these horrific weapons.

With the Trident nuclear weapon system fast becoming obsolete, and the debate concerning its replacement promised by our government, now is the time for all men and women of Easter faith, men and women of good will, men and women of peace, to raise our voices. Enter this debate and demand that these weapons of mass destruction be replaced, but not with more weapons. Rather, replace Trident, as the Holy Father has said, with projects that bring life to the poor.

### Reflection and Action

*Should the Churches speak out about nuclear weapons and the replacing of Trident?*

*Are the Cardinal and the bishops right to do so?*

*Use some of the quotes in this booklet in your parish bulletin to let people know what the Church teaches on the issue of nuclear weapons.*

*Can you organise a parish meeting to discuss what the Cardinal and the bishops have taught?*

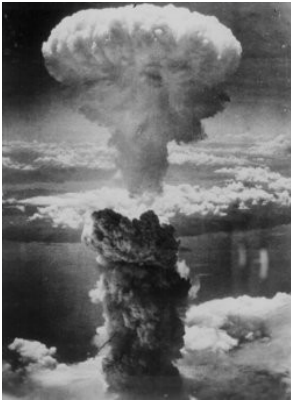
*The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, The Right Rev Alan McDonald, adds his signature to the Churches petition against the replacement of trident nuclear weapons. Cardinal O'Brien and Dr Richard McCready, National Secretary of Justice & Peace Scotland, look on.*



Photo - © Paul McSherry Photography

**"now is the time for all men and women of Easter faith, men and women of good will, men and women of peace, to raise our voices"**





The 'mushroom cloud' in the aftermath of the Nagasaki bombing, 9 August, 1945

**Only 8 countries in the world have nuclear weapons, which means that around 185 countries do not have them**

## Some Facts About Nuclear Weapons

Only 8 countries in the world have nuclear weapons, which means that around 185 countries do not have them. There is much talk about North Korea and Iran trying to develop them. Countries which have nuclear weapons are the USA, Russia, France, China, UK, India, Pakistan, and it is presumed Israel, though Israel has never declared itself.

*These first five countries all happen to be the permanent members of the UN Security Council but they are not so appointed because of having nuclear weapons, and possessing nuclear weapons is not a condition for continued membership.*

A number of European countries have US nuclear weapons on their soil, under US control: Belgium, Germany, Greece, Holland, Italy, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

*Many nuclear weapons, including all of the British arsenal, is submarine based so in reality nuclear weapons could be found anywhere, certainly anywhere in international waters, but also in territorial waters of any nation that allows nuclear submarines to enter.*

British Weapons are all submarine launched Trident Ballistic Missiles.

We have 4 Trident submarines all based at Faslane on the Clyde.

Each submarine has 16 nuclear missiles, and each missile can have up to 3 warheads.

Each submarine carries around 48 warheads.

*The number of nuclear warheads controlled by nuclear powers varies significantly:*

*Russia 16,000 warheads*

*USA 10,300 warheads*

*China 410 warheads*

*France 350 warheads*

*UK 200 warheads*

*Israel 100-170 warheads (estimate, as they are non-declared)*

*India 75-100 warheads*

*Pakistan 50-110 warheads*

*Total Warheads 27,500 or so*

*Each warhead has around 8 times the power of the bomb which destroyed Hiroshima*

## Reflection and Action

*Do any of these facts surprise you?*

*Should more than 8 countries from 193 have nuclear weapons? Should fewer countries have them?*

*How do you react knowing that all of the British nuclear weapons are based in Scotland?*

*If Britain gives up nuclear weapons will this make a difference to the policy of other countries with nuclear weapons?*

*What are the dangers of having nuclear weapons that depend so much on the cooperation of another country?*

*Try to imagine a nuclear explosion eight times that of the Hiroshima bomb, and imagine it happened in Scotland. Describe the impact on you and the people close to you.*

## British Independent Deterrent?

There is a strong case to make which says that the trident missile system on our submarines is neither British, nor independent, nor a deterrent.

They are not entirely British in as much as the trident missile system is an American one, dependent on a great deal of support from the United States, which is responsible for the maintenance and servicing of the missiles.

They are not independent, in as much as they depend on technology from the United States for firing them – the satellites, the tracking system, even the firing mechanism, all depend on very close cooperation from the United States. If this cooperation was withdrawn...?

They do not seem to have been a deterrent, given the number of wars that Britain has been involved in recently. They did not deter Iraq from invading Kuwait, for instance, nor did they deter the July 7th London suicide bombers.

Aldermaston in Berkshire, where British nuclear weapons are developed, is owned in large part by the Lockheed Martin Corporation of California, and this company provides technical engineering support for the Trident Missile Fleet under a contract awarded to them by the US Navy.

The nuclear submarine refit and maintenance yard in Devonport is owned by the Haliburton Corporation, also from the USA.



Tumour growing on a young victim of the Hiroshima atomic bomb.

## It Is Immoral To Use Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear weapons must never be used. This is clear teaching from Vatican II, from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, from the recent Popes, from the social teaching of the Church of Scotland, from the social teaching of the Catholic Bishops of Scotland, and many others.

The use of nuclear weapons would be a violation of all the rules of conduct in war, which give central place to the protection of the innocent, of non-combatants. Even combatants are to be free from 'cruel and inhuman' treatment, and exposure to radiation would certainly be cruel and inhuman. Use of a nuclear weapon would be a violation of our obligations under the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (see page 9)

So a first strike would be immoral, but so too would a retaliatory strike, because that would violate the principles of a Just War, especially the fourth principle (see box on right). So there are no grounds on which the use of a nuclear weapon would be moral.

### Just War Theory

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (2309) sets out the conditions that have to be met for a war to be considered a just war:

***The strict conditions for legitimate defence by military force require rigorous consideration. The gravity of such a decision makes it subject to rigorous conditions of moral legitimacy. At one and the same time:***

- ***the damage inflicted by the aggressor on the nation or community of nations must be lasting, grave, and certain;***
- ***all other means of putting an end to it must have been shown to be impractical or ineffective;***
- ***there must be serious prospects of success;***
- ***the use of arms must not produce evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated.***

## It is Immoral To Threaten to Use Nuclear Weapons

Deterrence is a word we use when we really mean threat. Nuclear deterrence is nuclear threat, or threatening behaviour. Whenever someone is threatened the natural instinct is to protect, and often that protection takes the form of attack, or at least of meeting force with like force. This is the rationale behind the nuclear arms race of the 60's, 70's and 80's.

A person or a nation changes their behaviour when they are threatened. There is no place in the Christian view of the world for threat, and the message of the gospel is a message of love and reconciliation, not a message of threat and vengeance. Threat, and therefore deterrence, is fundamentally un-Christian.

The policy of deterrence is based on a credible threat of use: our enemy must believe that we have the will to carry out our threat or it is no threat at all. But this fails the moral test. To attain security by threatening the mass killing of innocents and destruction of the earth is unacceptable.

### Reflection and Action

*Do you agree it is immoral to use, threaten to use, or possess nuclear weapons?*

*Are nuclear weapons a deterrent? Is deterrence really threatening behaviour? Is threatening behaviour 'fundamentally un-Christian'?*

*How do nuclear weapons relate to the Just War Theory? Would a nuclear strike meet all of the necessary conditions of just war, all at the same time, as is required?*

*Do you consider Trident to be a weapon of mass destruction?*

*Does humanity now have divine power? Should it?*

*Write down your reflections on the morality of nuclear weapons.*

*Plan meetings to discuss the morality of nuclear weapons.*



*HMS Vanguard, one of the four Faslane-based submarines which carry British nuclear weapons*

Photo - © Royal Navy

## It Is Immoral To Possess Nuclear Weapons

In 2003, in spite of the million or more people all over the UK who marched in opposition, the British government ordered the invasion of Iraq. The churches in Britain and the Holy Father opposed the invasion. It is clear, though, that all sides agreed on the core issue surrounding the decision to invade, namely, the moral principle that possession of weapons of mass destruction is unacceptable.

If it is wrong for any single country to have such weapons it is surely wrong for all countries to have them. Put another way, if it is acceptable for an elite of 8 countries to have

them why should it not be acceptable for the other 185 nations of the world? Or again, would an invasion of the UK by one of these 185 be justifiable, to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction? Such a scenario shows the moral folly of any nation which maintains a nuclear arsenal. Possession of nuclear weapons makes no moral or logical sense.

With these weapons we have quite literally given ourselves divine power. Only God should have the power to destroy the world, but now science has taken that divine power to itself. It is idolatry. 27,500 nuclear warheads is clearly an obscenity.

## Recent Teaching of The Catholic Church

*The Catholic Church has given very clear teaching over the past 40 years on the need for nuclear disarmament. In recent times this teaching has become more and more urgent and insistent. In this section we give a small selection of recent teaching from the Popes, Vatican II, the Holy See at the UN, and from some Bishops' Conferences.*

Justice, right reason and consideration for human dignity and life urgently demand that the arms race should cease; that the stockpiles which exist in various countries should be reduced equally and simultaneously by the parties concerned; that nuclear weapons should be banned; and finally that all come to an agreement on a fitting programme of disarmament, employing mutual and effective controls.

*Pope John XXIII, Pacem in Terris, 112 (1963)*

Peace must be born of mutual trust between nations rather than imposed on them through fear of one another's weapons. Hence everyone must labour to put an end at last to the arms race, and to make a true beginning of disarmament, not indeed a unilateral disarmament, but one proceeding at an equal pace according to agreement, and backed up by authentic and workable safeguards.

*Vatican Council II Gaudium et Spes, 82 (1965)*

### Reflection and Action

*Cardinal O'Brien speaks of 'clear and consistent teaching'. How consistent do you think the Church has been in its teaching on nuclear weapons? What authority does this teaching have?*

*Do you feel bound by the words written here? What status does this teaching have?*

*Can you organise a study evening in your parish to look at the teaching of the Church presented on these pages?*

*Write a summary paragraph for your parish newsletter on the essence of Catholic teaching on nuclear weapons.*

*How does this teaching appear to other Christians and people of other faiths?*

*Organise an ecumenical or inter faith exchange on peace.*

*Share this teaching with politicians.*

*Place a 'Peace Pole' in your church grounds, a local park, or your town centre. Contact: Jessica at the World Peace Prayer Society, Allanton Sanctuary, Auldirth, Dumfries, DG2 0RY Telephone 01387 740642*

If it is immoral to use these weapons it is also immoral to threaten their use. Some argue that the threat can be justified as the lesser of two evils. The crux of the problem is whether in any foreseeable circumstance a policy of self defence based on the use or even the threat of use of these weapons of terrible destructiveness can ever be morally justified.

*Scottish Bishops' Pastoral Letter, April 1982*

In current conditions "deterrence" based on balance, certainly not as an end in itself but as a step on the way toward a progressive disarmament, may still be judged morally acceptable. Nonetheless in order to ensure peace, it is indispensable not to be satisfied with this minimum which is always susceptible to the real danger of explosion.

*John Paul II, Message to the UN Special Session on Disarmament 1982, n 8.*

In the words of our Holy Father, we need a 'moral about-face'. The whole world must summon the moral courage and technical means to say 'no' to nuclear conflict; 'no' to weapons of mass destruction; 'no' to an arms race which robs the poor and the vulnerable; and 'no' to the moral danger of a nuclear age which places before humankind indefensible choices of constant terror or surrender.

Peacemaking is not an optional commitment. It is a requirement of our faith. We are called to be peacemakers, not by some movement of the moment, but by our Lord Jesus. The content and context of our peacemaking is set, not by some political agenda or ideological programme, but by the teaching of his Church.

*US Bishops, The Challenge of Peace, 1983, n333*

The work that this Committee has done in calling for negotiations leading to a Nuclear Weapons Convention must be increased. Those nuclear weapon states resisting such negotiations must be challenged, for, in clinging to their outmoded rationales for nuclear deterrence, they are denying the most ardent aspirations of humanity as well as the opinion of the highest legal authority in the world. The gravest consequences for mankind lie ahead if the world is to be ruled by the militarism represented by nuclear weapons rather than by the International Court of Justice.

*Archbishop Renato R. Martino, Permanent Representative of the Holy See to the United Nations, 29 October, 1997*

There can be no moral acceptance of military doctrines that embody the permanence of nuclear weapons. They are incompatible with the peace we seek for the 21st century; they cannot be justified. These weapons are instruments of death and destruction.

*Archbishop Renato R. Martino, 1 October, 2002*



*Peace Poles, found all over the world, are a silent prayer for peace, and a fervent hope that the nuclear bombings of 1945 never happen again.*

*On a visit to Hiroshima in 1981 Pope John Paul II spoke very movingly about the reality of what he saw and experienced in the Peace Museum*

*War is the work of man.  
War is destruction of human life.  
War is death.*

*To remember the past is to commit oneself to the future.*

*To remember Hiroshima is to abhor nuclear war,  
To remember Hiroshima is to commit oneself to peace.*



## Recent Teaching of The Catholic Church Continued

A so-called "peace" based on nuclear weapons cannot be the type of peace we seek for the 21<sup>st</sup> century! The present state of the non-proliferation regime and of nuclear disarmament indicates that many still believe in the use of force and rely on nuclear weapons. This means, unfortunately, that the force and the primacy of law, as well as trust in others and the will to dialogue, have not yet become priorities.

*Monsignor Pietro Parolin, undersecretary of the Vatican Secretariat of State, Sept 2003*

The time has gone for finding ways to a "balance in terror"; the time has come to re-examine the whole strategy of nuclear deterrence. When the Holy See expressed its limited acceptance of nuclear deterrence during the Cold War, it was with the clearly stated condition that deterrence was only a step on the way towards progressive nuclear disarmament. The Holy See has never countenanced nuclear deterrence as a permanent measure, nor does it today when it is evident that nuclear deterrence drives the development of ever newer nuclear arms, thus preventing genuine nuclear disarmament. The Holy See again emphasises that the peace we seek in the 21<sup>st</sup> century cannot be attained by relying on nuclear weapons.

*Archbishop Celestino Migliore, permanent observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, 4 May, 2005.*

How can there ever be a future of peace when investments are still made in the production of arms and in research aimed at developing new ones? It can only be hoped that the international community will find the wisdom and courage to take up once more, jointly and with renewed conviction, the process of disarmament, and thus concretely ensure the right to peace enjoyed by every individual and every people.

*Pope Benedict XVI, Message for World Day for Peace 2006*



*The effect of the nuclear blast on a house during weapons testing in the desert*

### Reflection and Action On Vatican II

*One of the strongest condemnations of nuclear war came from Vatican II in 1965:*

"If the kind of instruments which can now be found in the armouries of the great nations were to be employed to their fullest, an almost total and altogether reciprocal slaughter of each side by the other would follow, not to mention the widespread devastation that would take place in the world and the deadly after effects that would be spawned by the use of weapons of this kind.

All these considerations compel us to undertake an evaluation of war with an entirely new attitude. The men of our time must realise that they will have to give a sombre reckoning of their deeds of war for the course of the future will depend greatly on the decisions they make today.

With these truths in mind, this most holy synod makes its own the condemnations of total war already pronounced by recent popes, and issues the following declaration.

Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or of extensive areas along with their population is a crime against God and man himself. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation. The unique hazard of modern warfare consists in this: it provides those who possess modern scientific weapons with a kind of occasion for perpetrating just such abominations; moreover, through a certain inexorable chain of events, it can catapult men into the most atrocious decisions."

*Gaudium et Spes 80*

*Read this section of Vatican II slowly and prayerfully.*

*Write a short reflection on peace in the light of what it says.*

*Though it was written in 1965 is it still relevant today?*

*Have you been aware of this teaching before now?*

*Are you aware of any modern examples of the "atrocious decisions" that can be taken in modern war?*

*Is it true that firing any nuclear weapon would cause indiscriminate destruction?*

*Would a nuclear strike really be a crime against God and humanity?*

*Do you think that Britain is entitled to threaten first strike of a nuclear weapon?*

*What action does this study of Vatican II now lead you to?*

*Organise a peace event in your church or parish.*

*Organise a peace poetry competition.*

*Invite people to draw or paint images of war and peace and hold an exhibition in your parish or town hall.*

## Answers To Ten Objections - Suggestions For Keeping Nuclear Weapons

***In this section we take ten of the most common arguments used to support the possession of nuclear weapons and respond to them.***

### 1 YOU CAN'T DISINVENT THE BOMB

True, and you can't disinvent torture racks or gas chambers either. But you can dismantle them, recognise that they are totally immoral, and refuse to make or use them. We control technology, technology does not dictate to us. Nor does it determine our morality. The fact that we could make something the size of a grapefruit that is capable of destroying a continent, does not mean we have the moral right to go ahead and make such a monstrous device.

### 2 THE BOMB HAS GIVEN US 60 YEARS OF PEACE

From Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, since World War II there have been 172 armed conflicts, and 12 major wars. Millions have died. Indeed, the overall number of wars today remains much higher than it was half a century ago, or during most of the 1960s and 1970s. The fact there has been no war between European states has arisen as a result of the political and economic integration of Europe, not possession of atomic bombs.



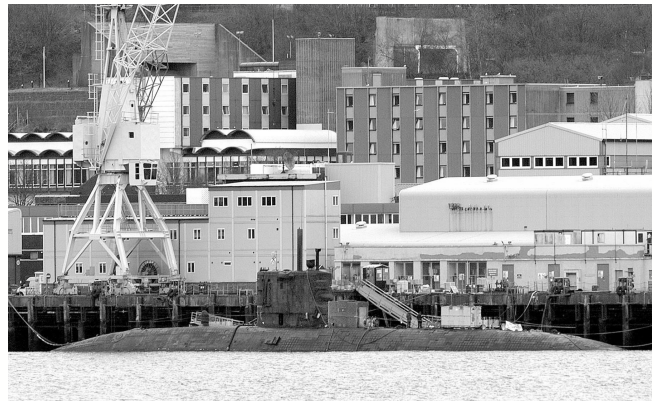
*Pope John Paul II in Hiroshima, 25 February 1981*

### 3 IF WE HAVE NO ATOM BOMBS, IT WOULD LEAVE US OPEN TO THREAT AND ATTACK BY A NUCLEAR ENEMY

Every country in the world could make this claim, and thereby demand the right to possess nuclear weapons. This means that every country in the world could have a nuclear arsenal - an insane proposal. The only answer to the possibility of a nuclear bully making threats is to eliminate all nuclear weapons by strictly observed internationally enforceable agreement, which Britain has been bound to by Treaty since 1970. This may be a challenge, but it is the only way forward. What we can not do is continue saying that these are essential for our defence, but are forbidden to other states.

### 4. WHAT ABOUT THE LOSS OF JOBS IF WE GOT RID OF THEM?

All defence spending is extremely capital intensive. That means it entails huge expense for each job provided. Socially useful production is labour intensive. That means the same amount of money we spend on defence would give us many more jobs if spent on useful production. However, the economic argument ignores the overwhelming moral consideration. Thousands of jobs were provided by Belsen, Dachau and the other concentration camps in Germany. That did not make us hesitate in closing these places down. The skills and technology that go into making and maintaining nuclear weapons are 'transferable' skills, which can be put to good use or to bad use. Those with a nuclear 'skill' would still be skilled for many types of life-giving work.



*Faslane Nuclear Submarine Base*

Photo - © Paul McSherry Photography

### 5. HAVING THE BOMB GIVES US A PERMANENT SEAT ON THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

If this justifies our having the bomb then the lesson to the rest of the world is clear. If you want to join the Big Boys Club - go nuclear. This is the frightening conclusion that nations may draw. But in fact, possession of nuclear weapons is not what determines permanent membership of the Security Council. The permanent members are the victorious allies after World War II.

### 6 IF HITLER HAD HAD THE BOMB, HE WOULD HAVE USED IT ON US

Yes, he would have. This proves that nuclear deterrence does not work. The theory of nuclear deterrence assumes that our enemy will always act in a rational manner. Perversely, it is based on trusting our enemy. But an insane dictator, especially one cornered in a bunker, will not necessarily behave in a rational manner. He is quite likely to use any weapons he has. The only answer to this problem is to have a world-wide ban on all WMD.

### 7. WE NEED THEM TO PREVENT A ROGUE STATE GETTING HOLD OF THEM

Our possession of nuclear weapons is an open charter for all other countries to do the same. In fact, the nuclear powers are themselves the "rogue states"; they defy international humanitarian law which forbids the deployment of WMD. If the bomb is a legitimate and essential means of defence for us, it must also be a legitimate and essential means of defence for each and every other country in the world. And we can not complain if they do as we do.



## Answers To Ten Objections Continued

### 8. THEY ARE JUST A DETERRENT - THEY ARE NOT THERE TO BE USED

It is not possible to believe in nuclear deterrence without being committed to using the bomb, if the deterrence situation should break down. People who subscribe to this theory have therefore already conditionally committed themselves to using the bomb. A conditional intention to massacre and deform innocent lives is no less decisively wicked for being conditional. Murderous threats are murderous threats; whatever their ultimate consequences, they already heinously devastate human limits. These threats are already atrocities. There is no hope for humanity that does not start with this recognition.

### 9. REFUSAL TO CONSIDER NUCLEAR WEAPONS IS NO BETTER THAN APPEASEMENT

Appeasement was the policy of the right wing conservatives, not the peace movement, or the churches. The real appeasement is the political decision making that follows the lead of other nuclear powers rather than making our own moral choice for disarmament. In doing so we would have the force of international law behind us. The Geneva and Hague Conventions outlaw nuclear weapons as being essentially indiscriminate and therefore incapable of being used in conformity to the rules of war.

### 10. HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI SHORTENED THE WAR AND SAVED THOUSANDS OF LIVES.

This is a historical myth. Far from saving the lives of allied soldiers, the determination to use the bomb necessitated postponing surrender until the bomb was ready to be used, and most likely cost allied lives. After the surrender of Nazi Germany in May, Japan was isolated and doomed. The country was facing certain defeat; surrender was inevitable, and known to be so. The Japanese Foreign Office officially notified Moscow on May 13th that "The Emperor is

desirous of peace". US intelligence knew of these approaches. Work on the Manhattan Project was speeded up in fear that Japan might surrender before the bomb could be used. The Hiroshima bomb was dropped on August 6th, and the Nagasaki bomb on August 9th. As agreed at Yalta, on August 8th the Soviet Union declared war on Japan, and invaded Manchuria, inflicting a crushing defeat on the million strong Japanese army. A Soviet invasion of mainland Japan was now a distinct possibility. This would have meant a joint occupation, as in Germany. It was the determination to prevent this that caused the Americans to accept the continuance of the Emperor as Head of State, and induced the Japanese to accept the humiliation of formal unconditional surrender.



Hiroshima Genbaku Dome

### Reflection and Action

*How compelling are these questions? How compelling are the answers?*

*Are there arguments in favour of nuclear weapons that have not been included here?*

*Does what you have read so far convince you of the demand of the Scottish Bishops that Trident should not be replaced?*

*Offer your local paper a short article based on the answers to these ten objections.*

*Look at the quote from Sir Winston Churchill on the right. If this is true, why did he agree to the dropping of the atom bomb?*

*Could you organise a debate where someone might be prepared to support these ten objections and others answer them?*

*Look at the Articles below from the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty. Britain signed up to these in 1968. Has it taken any of them seriously? If we replace Trident would it be a violation of our Treaty obligations? Does it matter if we do not meet our obligations?*

**"Japan's defeat  
was certain  
before the first  
bomb fell and  
was brought  
about by  
overwhelming  
maritime  
power"  
(Sir Winston  
Churchill in his  
History of  
WWII)**

## Selected Articles From The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

**Article I** Each nuclear-weapons state (NWS) undertakes not to transfer, to any recipient, nuclear weapons, or other nuclear explosive devices, and not to assist any non-nuclear weapon state to manufacture or acquire such weapons or devices.

**Article II** Each non-NWS party undertakes not to receive, from any

source, nuclear weapons, or other nuclear explosive devices; not to manufacture or acquire such weapons or devices; and not to receive any assistance in their manufacture.

**Article IV** Nothing in this Treaty shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all the Parties to

the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I and II of this Treaty

**Article VI** The states undertake to negotiate toward general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

## Prayer And Action

In his Easter Sunday Homily Cardinal O'Brien insisted that people with an Easter faith must be both people of prayer and people of action. Prayer takes many forms, liturgical and personal as well as communal, ecumenical, and interfaith. The following prayers and intercession can be used in our churches and interfaith gatherings.



Photo - © Paul McSherry Photography

### Reflection and Action

*Organise an interfaith gathering to show that peace is central to all religions.*

*Find out what people of other faiths think of nuclear weapons.*

*Organise an interfaith pilgrimage and visit one another's places of worship.*

*Print these prayers for peace in your parish newsletter.*

## Prayers For Peace From The Worlds Religions

***In 1986 Pope John Paul II invited religious leaders from many of the major faith traditions of the world to join him in Assisi, in Italy, to pray for peace, the first in a series of such meetings. At that first gathering the following prayers for peace were offered.***

### A Baha'i Prayer for Peace

Be generous in prosperity and thankful in adversity. Be fair in thy judgment and guarded in thy speech. Be a lamp unto those who walk in darkness and a home to the stranger. Be eyes to the blind and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring. Be a breath of life to the body of humankind, a dew to the soil of the human heart, and a fruit upon the tree of humility.



### A Buddhist Prayer for Peace

May all beings everywhere plagued with sufferings of body and mind quickly be freed from their illnesses. May those frightened cease to be afraid, and may those bound be free. May the powerless find power and may people think of befriending one another. May those who find themselves in trackless, fearful wildernesses—the children, the aged, the unprotected—be guarded by beneficent celestials, and may they swiftly attain Buddhahood.

### A Christian Prayer for Peace

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

"But I say to you that hear, love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you; pray for those who abuse you. To those who strike you on the cheek,

offer the other also; and from those who take away your cloak, do not withhold your coat as well. Give to everyone who begs from you, and of those who take away your goods, do not ask for them again. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them."

### A Hindu Prayer for Peace

Oh God, lead us from the unreal to the Real. Oh God, lead us from darkness to light. Oh God, lead us from death to immortality. Shanti, Shanti, Shanti unto all. Oh Lord God almighty, may there be peace in celestial regions. May there be peace on earth. May the waters be appeasing. May herbs be wholesome, and may trees and plants bring peace to all. May all beneficent beings bring peace to us. May the Vedic Law propagate peace all through the world. May all things be a source of peace to us. And may thy peace itself bestow peace on all and may that peace come to me also.

### An Islamic Prayer for Peace

In the Name of Allah, the beneficent, the merciful: Praise be to the Lord of the Universe who has created us and made us into tribes and nations that we may know each other, not that we may despise each other. If the enemy incline towards peace, do thou also incline towards peace, and trust in God, for the Lord is one that hears and knows all things. And the servants of God Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when we address them, we say, "Peace."

### A Jewish Prayer for Peace

Come, let us go to the mountain of the Lord, that we may walk the paths of the Most High. And we shall beat our swords into ploughshares and our spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more. And none shall be afraid, for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts has spoken.

### A Sikh Prayer for Peace

God judges us according to our deeds, not the coat that we wear. Truth is above everything, but higher still is truthful living. Know that we attain God when we love, and only that victory endures in consequence of which no one is defeated.

## Ecumenical Partners

The Catholic Church is working very closely with other churches in Scotland on the issue of Trident. The petition, featured on pages 1, 3 and 10, is a joint initiative of the Catholic Church, The Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church. **Please consider signing this petition**, which will be current until it is handed in to Westminster on St Andrew's Day, 30 November, 2006. The petition can be found in most churches, or on the web site of Justice and Peace Scotland, given below.

That web site, along with many others, provides very useful links for taking some of these prayer and action ideas forward. If you have access to the internet, or someone in your group does, please visit some of these sites for further action ideas.

Justice and Peace Scotland  
[www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk](http://www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk)

Church of Scotland, Church & Society Office  
[www.churchofscotland.org.uk/society](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/society)

Scottish Episcopal Church, Justice, Peace & Creation Network  
[www.jpc-sec.org.uk](http://www.jpc-sec.org.uk)

Scottish Quakers  
[www.quaker.org.uk](http://www.quaker.org.uk)

### Action

*Sign the petition to oppose the replacement of Trident - it has been sent to your Church and copies are also available from Justice and Peace Scotland, details on page 12.*

## Prayers From Pax Christi

### Pax Christi Prayer for Peace and Forgiveness

We confess that in our lives we do not  
Always choose the way of peace.  
We spread gossip which fans the flame of hatred.  
We are ready to make any sacrifices when  
Caesar demands -  
but few when God invites.  
We worship the false god of security and  
nationalism.  
We hold out our hand in friendship -  
But keep a weapon in the other behind our back.  
We have divided your body of people  
Into those we trust and those we do not.  
Huge problems challenge us in the world -  
But our greed, fear and selfishness prevent  
us from uniting to solve them.  
Lord, we pray for your help,  
Your forgiveness and your  
Reconciling power in our lives.

## Reflection and Action

### More Things To Do

*Make a pilgrimage of peace - a short or a long journey from one point to another point, visiting places of worship, or defence installations, or like-minded others.*

*Fast for peace. Fasting is one of the oldest and most common religious actions. Fast from food for one meal or one day.*

*Pray for peace. In your daily prayer always include a prayer for peace - the Pax Christi prayers below are good ones to use.*

*Be peaceful. Always speak and act in ways that witness to peace.*

*Create an environment of peace. Try to avoid anything that promotes violence and anger over peace and love. Turn off the TV when violence is shown in the name of entertainment.*

*Promote international peace and development. Support the work of SCIAF and other organisations which help peoples of the world develop.*

### Action

*Consider joining Pax Christi:*

*Pax Christi*

*St Joseph's, Watford Way  
Hendon, London, NW4 4TY  
020 8203 4884*

*info@paxchristi.org.uk  
www.paxchristi.org.uk*

### Pax Christi Daily Prayer

Thank you loving God  
For the gift of life  
For this wonderful world which  
we all share  
For the joy of love and friendship  
For the challenge of helping to build  
your kingdom.  
Teach me  
To share the gifts you have given me  
To speak out for the victims of injustice  
who have no voice  
To reject the violence which runs  
through much of our world today.  
Holy Spirit of God  
Renew my hope for a world free from the  
cruelty and evil of war so that we may all come  
to share in God's peace and justice. Amen



**“Holy Spirit  
of God,  
renew my  
hope for a  
world free  
from the  
cruelty and  
evil of war”**





## Political Action - Writing To Politicians

### Introduction

A core action to take is to write letters to your elected representatives. You should not be anxious about approaching your MP (for nuclear weapons the Westminster Parliament is responsible). It is your MP's job to listen to your concerns. S/he is not your delegate and does not have to do as you say, but s/he is your representative and should listen to you. It is unlikely that your MP is an expert who knows all about nuclear weapons and would probably welcome relevant facts and figures from you. You may wish to use details from this booklet. The nature of an MP's job means that they are usually a 'Jack of all trades' so help them with details if you can.

As mentioned, on the issue of nuclear weapons the Westminster Parliament has responsibility. However, Members of the Scottish Parliament and Members of the European Parliament and even local councillors will have a view on Trident and it may be beneficial from time to time to engage with them on this issue as well.

### Who is my MP?

First things first, find out who your MP is. Consult [www.locata.co.uk/commons](http://www.locata.co.uk/commons) on the internet or call the House of Commons Information Centre on 020 7219 4272. Based on your postcode they will tell you your MP's name. You can then write to them at **The House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA**. You can use email but letters are better at getting a response. You should always firstly write to your MP on an issue rather than to a department or to any Minister. On Trident you can write to the Secretary of State for Defence or the Prime Minister but you would only be guaranteed a response from your own constituency MP.

### How should I approach my MP?

The best way is to write. There is a draft letter below but it is better to try and make your point in your own words. Politicians will often give you a standard response, and we cannot complain about receiving a standard response if we have sent a standard letter.

If you write to your MP you should

- Identify yourself as a constituent
- Keep the letter brief but enclose relevant documents
- Be clear about what you are asking your MP to do
- Request a reply

You could also seek to have a meeting with your MP. It is best to make an appointment rather than to turn up at an MP's surgery. You might want to meet your MP with others from your Justice and Peace group or from your parish. You should ensure that there are at least two of you at such a meeting; one person should take notes so that you can follow up any action points with your MP at a later date.

### Draft Letter

Dear *Name* MP

I am writing to you as a constituent to raise my concerns about the future of the Trident Nuclear Missile System. I welcome the Prime Minister's recent statement that there should be the 'fullest possible' public debate on any replacement of the Trident nuclear system and the recent promise of a parliamentary vote. I hope that you will play your part in ensuring that there is the fullest possible debate both inside and outside of parliament.

I support the recent statement of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Scotland which called on the Government not to invest in a replacement for the Trident system and to begin the process of decommissioning these weapons with the intention of diverting the sums spent on nuclear weaponry to programmes of aid and development. I would be grateful if you would please pass on my concerns to the Defence Secretary. I look forward to receiving your response to my concerns.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and I look forward to receiving your reply.

Yours sincerely



HMS Victorious on the Clyde Photo - © Royal Navy

For more information on anything in this booklet, or for more copies, please contact:

Justice and Peace Scotland, 65 Bath Street, Glasgow, G2 2BX, 0141 333 0238, [office@justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk](mailto:office@justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk)