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A Christmas prayer for peace

John Dear | Dec. 24, 2013 On the Road to Peace

God of Peace,

Thank you for your Christmas gift of peace, for the birth and life of the nonviolent Jesus, and for all the blessings of peace, hope and love he offers.

Thank you for being a peaceful, nonviolent God. Thank you for blessing peacemakers, justice-seekers, the poor, the mournful, the meek, the pure of heart and children. Thank you for making the sun rise on the good and the bad and the rain to fall on the just and the unjust. Thank you for all the ways you work to end war, hunger, poverty and injustice. Thank you for all your hard work for the coming of peace on earth.

Thank you for showing us the way forward through the life, death and resurrection of the nonviolent Jesus. As we celebrate his birth and life, give us new grace, strength and energy to carry on his work of peace and nonviolence, that we might become his faithful disciples, apostles, companions and friends, that we might grow up and act like your beloved sons and daughters, that we might be your holy peacemakers.

This year, God of peace, help us to become more authentic people of Gospel nonviolence. Inspire millions of Christians around the world to reject violence and the just war theory once and for all and to understand and embrace the nonviolence of Jesus with a firm new commitment. May more and more of us take his nonviolence to heart and set about disarming ourselves, our church, our nations and our world.

May every Christian renounce violence, stop hurting others, get rid of their guns, quit the military, refuse to join the military, teach nonviolence, join the grassroots movements of nonviolence, work publicly for justice and disarmament, and make the nonviolence of Jesus central in our lives, as Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and Dorothy Day did.

Help us create new social movements of Gospel nonviolence to speed up the abolition of war, poverty, nuclear weapons and environmental destruction. Help bring your vision of a nonviolent world into the mainstream, that everyone may seek that higher way of life.

Bless our efforts through Campaign Nonviolence [1] to raise up nonviolence publicly, to promote disarmament and justice, and to help heal humanity. Inspire more and more people to discuss how they can become more nonviolent. Help us take to the streets to say a public nonviolent "No!" to gun violence, war, corporate greed, drones, killings, NSA surveillance, starvation, systemic injustice, nuclear weapons and catastrophic climate change, that we might promote real institutional, political change for disarmament and justice and end the violence.

Help us to take personally the prayer of Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, that we too might prepare a way for you: "You will be called 'prophet of the most high,' for you will go before the God of peace to prepare God's ways, to give God's people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God by which the daybreak from on high will visit us to shine on those who sit in darkness

and death's shadow, to guide our feet into the path of peace."

Through the example of the nonviolent Jesus, help us to walk the path of peace, proclaim your vision of peace and welcome your Christmas gift of peace on earth.

This Christmas, make us as nonviolent as Jesus.

We ask this in the name of the nonviolent Jesus. Amen.

[John Dear's new book, *The Nonviolent Life*, is available at paceebene.org [2] and Amazon.com [3]. To join his work with Campaign Nonviolence [4], contact the Franciscan-based peace group Pace e Bene [5]. On Feb. 1, after a trip to South Africa, John will undertake a four-month-long national speaking tour about *The Nonviolent Life* and Campaign Nonviolence. *Lazarus, Come Forth!* [6] and John's other recent books, including *Daniel Berrigan: Essential Writings* [7], *Put Down Your Sword* [8] and *A Persistent Peace* [9], are available from Amazon.com. For more information, go to John's website [10].]

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[1] http://paceebene.org/campaign-nonviolence
[2] http://paceebene.org/store/item/nonviolent-life
[3] http://www.amazon.com/The-Nonviolent-Life-John-Dear/dp/0966978323
[4] http://ncronline.org/blogs/road-peace/franciscan-based-peace-group-launches-campaign-nonviolence
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