

BENEDICTINE PEACE STATEMENT 2005  
by  
American Benedictine Men and Women

In Fall 2002, Benedictine men and women in the United States presented a statement opposing the proposed and unprecedented pre-emptive attack against the people of Iraq. Today more than ever do we see that violence and war do not lead to peace. Thousands of vulnerable people in Iraq have died or been displaced from their homes, resulting in an increase in terrorism and a destabilization that threatens continued violence in this world.

As Benedictine men and women, we reverence the Gospel of Jesus Christ who is called the "Prince of Peace". Our Benedictine manner of following the gospel has continued for 1500 years through faithfulness to this gospel, which teaches us to be just to all, receiving all as Christ, and welcoming especially the poor, the sick and all who are needy.

We believe that violence does not yield peace. We are concerned about the military and political ethos of our own country where justice is defined on the basis of our self-interest rather than on a consciousness that we are part of a common humanity. We are deeply disturbed by

- policies of disinformation which create distrust of our nation;
- policies that incarcerate citizens, contrary to our Constitution;
- policies that incarcerate foreigners without regard to accepted rules of war;
- policies approving methods of interrogation contrary to the Geneva Conventions;
- policies that promote the use of brute force rather than negotiation;
- policies which indicate our unwillingness to consider the advantages of a world court where questions of fair treatment of vulnerable persons can be adjudicated.

As Christians and Benedictines we call for a return to the basic moral principles of our nation, principles of justice for all, hospitality to the oppressed and the immigrant, recognition and acceptance of legitimate differences, help for the poor, the deprived and the sick. We as a nation must know that the user of power is accountable to God, that might does not make right, that respect for all people is the duty of the civilized nations of this world.

As Christians and Benedictines we believe that "Those who say, 'I love God,' and hate their brothers or sisters; are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from [God] is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also" (1 John 4:20f).

Our brothers and sisters include all peoples, all races, all nations. If we are indeed pro-life, we must be for the lives of all the people of this earth. With Pope Paul VI in his address to the General Assembly of the United Nations, our cry from the heart is. "No more war. War never again."