

THE ONLY SOLUTION IS LOVE

The following statement was written by the Los Angeles Catholic Worker Sister House Network at our annual retreat in response to the September 11, 2001 attack in New York City.

It remains just as, if not more, applicable today, 20 years later.

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Even after all this...

We are Catholic Workers, and we are still pacifists. We too are heartbroken over the events of September 11, 2001. We too grieve the horrific and untimely loss of thousands of lives. In further response, we turn to the nonviolent roots of our founders, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. We remind ourselves of their (and our) commitment to the Christ of Peace and to the creation of a new social order within the shell of the old. It is an order accomplished not with bombs, but with mercy; not with massive counter-attacks, but with restorative justice.

We are Catholic Workers, and we are still pacifists. Our grief will not be short-circuited with cries for vengeance nor with acts of retribution. We will not cooperate with incitements to become that which we most oppose, namely, perpetrators of violence. We will honor the deeper levels of grief, acknowledging the woundedness inflicted upon us and the woundedness that our nation has inflicted upon others.

We are Catholic Workers, and we are still pacifists. We will dare to ask the difficult questions: How is it that the United States was the focus of such an unspeakable attack? Could it be possible that most of us, as Americans, are ignorant of the injustices done to others in our name? Will we ever openly repent of misdeeds done to the peoples of our own land—Native Americans, African Americans, Japanese Americans, other immigrants, the homeless and the poor? Can we acknowledge the suffering and death we have imposed upon those who live in other lands—the citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the poor of Central and South America, the people of Iraq...and how many others?

We are Catholic Workers, and we are still pacifists. We too are afraid of the possibility of more terrorist actions in our own cities. We too are afraid for our children and their futures. We too have helped to bury the dead—the impoverished on our streets who die in obscurity, unloved and unremembered by society. We continue, therefore, even in the wake of our own fears and grief, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, and visit the sick and the imprisoned. We hope for the day when our nation provides adequate funding for these, the forgotten in our midst, rather than use our money for the proliferation of more and more weapons of mass destruction upon our earth and into the heavens.

We are Catholic Workers, and we are still pacifists. We dream impossible dreams, see unbelievable visions. We conjure up such hopeful images as U.S. planes dropping not bombs, but food bundles, and messages of hope to the long-suffering people of Afghanistan. We view this paradoxical moment in history as a pause wherein we—every one of us—can desire and work for the well-being of all. We pray for hearts to change: the hearts of our leadership, the hearts of our opponents, even our own hearts when we are tempted to incline toward self-righteousness or despair.

We invite you to participate with us in all of our wildest dreams and visions for peace. For now, we sadly know that our affluence, our power, our weapons, our possessions cannot serve as protection from harm. We invite you to clamber off the wheel of violence. It is the only worthy legacy we can offer to those who have died. We invite you to join us as we reexamine our consciences, our spiritual paths, our concepts of God, our commitment to a better world.

We are Catholic Workers, and we still believe...*the only solution is love.* Ω

Below are the signatories to this statement of conscience:

Los Angeles Catholic Worker, Las Vegas Catholic Worker, Santa Ana Catholic Worker, Beatitude House Catholic Worker, San Bruno

Catholic Worker, Fresno Catholic Worker, Peralta Street Catholic Worker, San Pedro Catholic Worker, Magdalene House Catholic Worker, House of Grace Catholic Worker, Norfolk Catholic Worker, The Open Door Community, Vera Cruz Mexico Catholic Worker, Viva House Catholic Worker, Des Moines Catholic Worker.

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