

All I Want for Christmas

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As the Advent reading proclaims: The days are surely coming when God will build a new covenant with the people. This word of life also encourages us to cultivate not only hope but also imagination -- the ability to see things as if they were otherwise. With that in mind, let us issue a call to arms for the Peace Race, embracing that which matters most.

Like it or not, the globe is sharing a pandemic. I invite you to join me in imagining that we earth citizens are on a spiritual pilgrimage. Together we expect a spiritual transformation of global understanding that we are all interconnected. Together we are in training to undo the great lie/sin of acting as though one people's well-being depends upon hurting other people who reside across arbitrary lines on maps. Picture a world in which everyone's health and flourishing is prioritized--not spending on military domination so that some can hoard wealth.

Today with pathetic irony, we see the mobilization of some, already overly deployed, National Guard troops to staff pandemic-overwhelmed nursing homes. Wouldn't it be better to invest in healing people instead of killing them? The world can learn this: we need each other to end the pandemic and to shift climate change.

Today the "saber rattling" between nuclear powers has increased the possibility of an accidental nuclear war. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, leaders Kennedy and Khrushchev recognized that both of their militaries were pushing for war. They succeeded in establishing a back channel of communication in which Kennedy asked Khrushchev for help with a secret deal. If Khrushchev would remove the threat in Cuba, Kennedy would remove missiles in Turkey --but quietly at a later date. We now know that Khrushchev told his foreign minister that they had to help Kennedy saying "We now have a common cause, to save the world from those pushing us toward war." Both leaders then went on to limit nuclear weapons with the goal of eliminating them until Kennedy was assassinated and Khrushchev was pushed out of power.

We the public must push for peace, unseating the idol of war which dominates our nation. During my childhood, US political candidates, trying to win elections, accused each other of permitting a missile gap, that the Soviets had more missiles than the US. This popular political charge weathered years of political campaigns. It lasted much longer than the internal revelation, during the Kennedy administration, that not only did the US have more world annihilating missiles than the Soviets, but that the US had 40 times more!

Even then, the missile pushers continued pushing for more. Today, the US is stimulating a new arms race, by "modernizing" the nuclear arsenal with "more useable" weapons. Let's remember that each nuclear arm means wrongful civilian death. Even without detonation, there are lethal consequences from the mining, production, testing and disposal -- for generations to come. Then there's the increased risk of accident with each device. But the massive immorality of nuclear weapons is the

siphoning of public funds made unavailable to prevent harm, like the food insecurity of one in six US children.

Meanwhile, the rest of the world knows their lives are at risk as nuclear guns are cocked on the Ukrainian border. Imagine Biden and Putin, both followers of the Prince of Peace, declaring for Christmas, “We have to stop this insanity and support the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons! Waging peace is our real security.” And may we the people of faith of the world push them to do so!