

FROM THE DESK OF MARY SHARON . . .

Peace—more than being nice

by Mary Sharon Moore

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What do we pray for when we pray for peace? In my own parish, and in parishes I visit, I hear people faithfully praying for peace in our world, peace in the Middle East, peace in Darfur, peace in all the troubled places.

When we pray for peace, what do we imagine? People putting down their guns? Nations abandoning their military option? Villages where women can freely come out to shop for life's necessities, where children come out to play? How does our world get to that place of peace, I wonder.

Increasingly I find myself praying for peacemakers. I wish peace would settle upon nations like a sweet dew, seeping into the drinking water. But peacemaking is hard work, and someone has to do it. The distortions of sin, greed, fear, and just plain evil are everywhere. The human family seems stubbornly to have decided, "No, we aren't going to get along." Being nice seems not to be a human value.

But being nice is not a particularly Christian value, either. The reign of God is not about niceness but about costly justice, costly

mercy, and yes, costly peace. Revealing the reign of God is hard work. Just ask Jesus.

So I pray for peacemakers. Some people are particularly called to this work, gifted with remarkable wisdom to see what's broken and ways to effectively repair it, gifted with remarkable courage to walk into the jaws of war and life-endangering conflict, and with remarkable trust that the Holy Spirit will lead them, give them the right words, and protect them from harm.

I pray for peacemakers—whether they are delegated to bring conflicting international leaders together, or to cool down leaders of rival gangs, or to facilitate listening and respect between warring spouses.

Please join me in praying for peacemakers, especially those in harm's way, that they will be protected and embolden by the Holy Spirit to bring the peace of Christ to our troubled world.

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