

FAITH IN THE WORLD- 6

Welcome to this resource for reflection and discussion. You can share this with your friends, (bearing in mind the current restrictions, this might need to be online) or you can share it with your family or you may choose to reflect alone.

Every fortnight, there will be an opportunity to explore different aspects of our world and to consider how the Christian faith can inform and challenge us as we live in the world. There will be some links to click on for videos and worship songs, and some prayer or meditation resources.



Many people become refugees as a result of war inflicted upon them and, Liz Vice in her song "Away From a Manger" considers Jesus and his family as refugees, fleeing to Egypt to seek safety.

<https://youtu.be/ThaVvxuFCP8>



THE IMPACT OF WAR

Guernica (above) is a world-famous painting by Pablo Picasso and is one of the world's greatest anti-war paintings, which shows the bombing of the Spanish town of Guernica in 1937 during the Spanish Civil War.

The Spanish Republican government asked Pablo Picasso to paint a large mural for an art exhibition in Paris. It shows how people, as well as animals, all suffer because of the tragedies of war. The painting soon became so famous that it was seen as a world symbol for peace and the fame of the painting helped to bring the Spanish Civil War to an end.

Guernica shows a large, open room with people and animals who are suffering. A bull stands over a woman crying over a dead child in her arms. A horse falls in terrible pain as it dies after being run through with a spear. A dead soldier lies under the horse, his arm has been chopped off, but the hand grasps a shattered sword from which a flower grows. A light bulb shines strongly like an evil eye (the Spanish word for "lightbulb" is "bombilla" which sounds like "bomb"). A female figure floats in, holding a lamp which is a symbol of hope.

There is a replica of the original image that hangs in the United Nations building in New York, but United Nations officials covered it up during US Secretary of State Colin Powell's February 5 2003 presentation of the American case for war against Iraq. In defiance the Australian representative Laurie Brereton said

" We may well live in the age of the so-called 'smart bomb', but the horror on the ground will be just the same as that visited upon the villagers of Guernica, and it won't be possible to pull a curtain over that."

- How do you respond to the painting?
- What words might you use to describe it?
- How do you think it might have been used to bring the Spanish Civil war to an end?
- Was it acceptable to cover up the image when the American official came to the United Nations to justify war?
- Was Laurie Brereton right for saying what she did?

On the 20th March 2003 the United States invaded Iraq backed by the United Kingdom and a small group of other countries. Their aim was to overthrow the despotic Saddam Hussein. One of the main motivations was the claim that Hussein was harbouring deadly weapons of mass destruction. British Intelligence claimed that the weapons could have been readied within 45 mins,.

In April the major strongholds were captured and Hussein went into hiding.

By the 1st May, major combat operations were declared and the invasion of Iraq became an occupation. Fighting continued for many years, and well over a million people were killed.

Before the invasion had even taken place, many British people were clear that they did not want this to go ahead and STOP THE WAR demonstrations took place in Britain, and right around the world, involving millions of people. Needless to say that despite the public opposition, the Prime Minister of the time took the country to war anyway, and no weapons of mass destruction were ever found.

Do you think that governments involved would have made the same choice had they known in advance what the impact would have been?

How do you think that leaders justified their decisions to ignore the protest?

How does this make you view protesting?

Is there anything you would protest about or speak out for?

Can war be justified?

What should the aims of a "good" force, in a war?

Are peace campaigners naïve?



REFLECTING ON SCRIPTURE

What is the perception around the Old Testament of God's view of war?

What does God's word to David reveal about his true view of war?

What does God only want a man of peace to build his temple?

Do these verses surprise you in any way?

Scripture reading - 1 Chronicles 22 v 5-10

David said, "My son Solomon is still young and inexperienced. And since the Temple to be built for the Lord must be a magnificent structure, famous and glorious throughout the world, I will begin making preparations for it now." So David collected vast amounts of building materials before his death.

Then David sent for his son Solomon and instructed him to build a Temple for the Lord, the God of Israel. "My son, I wanted to build a Temple to honour the name of the Lord my God," David told him.

"But the Lord said to me, 'You have killed many men in the battles you have fought. And since you have shed so much blood in my sight, you will not be the one to build a Temple to honour my name. But you will have a son who will be a man of peace. I will give him peace with his enemies in all the surrounding lands. His name will be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel during his reign. He is the one who will build a Temple to honour my name. He will be my son, and I will be his father. And I will secure the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.'