PAX CHRISTI NEW YORK STATE
ANNUAL 40-DAY FAST FOR NONVIOLENCE
JULY 1ST – AUGUST 9TH

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE
Jesus and the early church stated clearly that violence is not the Christian way, that violence is not the Apostolic way, that violence is not the way of God. Yet, since the Third Century, most Christians have not proclaimed this message. Today, tensions between the U.S. and Russia, the U.S. and China, on-going wars and violent conflicts in Africa and across the globe are epidemic. While claiming no money for universal health care, living wages, affordable housing, free higher education, and other life-sustaining needs, the U.S. is pouring billions into wars in Ukraine and Gaza. Gun rights surpass human rights for those who make the laws and those who oppose even modest gun control. The environment is subject to attack, along with anyone who looks different, sounds different, believes different, or lives different from the mainstream. The list could go on and on. In addition, our media, entertainment, and language are filled with violence; and our country would rather retain the capability to annihilate millions of years of evolution and thousands of years of history with nuclear weapons than sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

It is because of this tragic and shameful reality that this 40-Day Fast is being undertaken. It is a call to the individual Christian--and nonChristians in solidarity with us--to repent and return to the truth that violence is not the way to resolve our conflicts.

BACKGROUND ON THE FAST:
The annual 40-Day Fast was begun by the Agape Community in Massachusetts several years ago. Individuals and communities from all over the country now participate in it.

The Fast begins on July 1st and ends on August 9th. On August 9th, 1942, St. Teresa Benedicta (Edith Stein) was killed at Auschwitz; on August 9th, 1943, Blessed Franz Jaegerstatter was beheaded for refusing to serve in Hitler’s army (the army of a “Christian” nation); and on August 9th, 1945, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Nagasaki, Japan, destroying the largest and oldest Christian community in that country, and killing 140,000 people.

TWO WAYS TO APPROACH THE FAST:
Individuals are invited to fast in whatever way they choose. Some possibilities are choosing one day a week for the 40-Day period, choosing one single day, or choosing a block of days. Groups are invited to take one day of the week, e.g. Mondays. One member of the group will then fast on each of the Mondays (or whichever other day of the week your group chooses) during the 40-day period. Others can also fast, of course, but this insures that at least one member will be fasting each day.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUR FAST DAY:
- This fast is, traditionally, a fast from all solid foods from the time you get up until the time you retire in the evening. It is recommended that you drink fruit or vegetable juices. Drinking caffeinated beverages is not recommended.
If the traditional fast is not feasible for you, you can replace one, two, or all three meals with bread and water. If you are unable to fast from food for health reasons, consider fasting from social media, texting, e-mail, television, or some other “addiction” that will be a sacrifice for you.

- Try to attend Mass, a religious service of your faith if not Catholic, or some other communal gathering at which you can share your hopes and prayers for and commitment to a more nonviolent world, especially a world free of nuclear weapons.
- A common bond in all faiths is belief in the power of nonviolent love. If you are a person of faith, pray that people of faith might re-commit themselves to the lesson of love taught in their faith.
- Seek forgiveness for your own violent tendencies.
- As much as possible, occupy yourself with works of mercy.

An excellent book on fasting is *Fasting Rediscovered* by Thomas Ryan, published by Paulist Press. A very good article is available here:


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