

Pentecost 20 – C
November 9, AD 2025

ELCIC Sermons by Email
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FOR THE REMEMBRANCE OF PEACE

On November 11th, in the year of Lord 1483, Martin Luther was baptized, one day after he was born. It was the festival day in remembrance of Saint Martin of Tours, a fourth century French bishop and committed pacifist, after whom Martin Luther was named. Four hundred and thirty-five years later, at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, the world gathered in a solemn Remembrance Day to mark the end of World War 1. That intersection (+) of Remembrance Day with the day of Martin Luther's baptism strikes me as a providential moment for Christians to remember our own baptisms, in conjunction (+) with the day we solemnly remember humanity's horrific history of war, and to reflect on our calling to follow our Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

My dear Christian Friends:

Not since Argentina and England engaged in the Falkland Islands War in A.D. 1982 have two nations within ostensibly Christian civilization, namely Russia and Ukraine, engaged in armed military conflict; and not since the end of World War 2 have weapons of mass destruction been unleashed on European soil! And, once again, the principal protagonist of these brutal crimes against humanity is a political tyrant in "pursuit of archaic national interests", according to the late Bishop of Rome, Pope Francis I. This war, like the war in Gaza, like all wars is a scandalous affront to God, and now seems to be increasingly beyond diplomatic resolution. Now the whole world lives under the threat of dire consequences if the sinister, and sinful, threat of nuclear weapons were to be carried out.

Meanwhile the entire world laments the cold-blooded killing of countless civilians, especially of innocent children. Well does the Psalmist lament: "Too long do I live among those who hate peace" (Ps. 120:6). The world today is dominated by ravening wolves in sheep's clothing who inflame anger and incite violence, yet call themselves "Christian". Government is indeed duty bound to defend and protect its people, but not to inflict suffering on other nations, and certainly not its own citizens, to serve its own political interests.

Therefore, we who by the grace of God live under the authority of the gospel, and know the truth, dare not ignore the beatitude of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9). This is the very heart of the Gospel message, the very meaning of baptism, the very calling of Christian faith and discipleship.

If I may invoke the late Pope Francis again: "War is folly and destruction. God is peace. God has no need to be defended by anyone, and does not want his name to be used to terrorize people. God pursues the purposes of his creation and invites us to assist in its fulfillment. The architects of war, the orchestrators of conflict, the manufacturers of weapons, corrupt and exploit. Even that which is most sacred. Even God! War destroys everything, even human beings, God's most precious creation. And the political leaders who cannot negotiate with the humility of those who are called to weave a fabric of civility will never be able to lead their people to peace, justice and prosperity ..." (*Hope*, pp. 27-29)

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Jesus calls us to be peacemakers. Let today's remembrance of the lunacy of war inspire us to repent and renew our trust in God, and call our political leaders to do the same. Peacemakers can no longer be warmakers! It is long overdue for a courageous head of government in western, ostensibly "Christian" civilization to publicly confess that the overwhelming evidence of history proves, beyond all reasonable doubt, that the *legacy* of war is an endless succession in the *escalation* of war; and that the time has come to reduce rather than *increase* spending on military alliances and weapons, and divert all those wasted trillions of dollars to provide food, clean water, housing, health care and education to nurture the dignity of every human being on this tiny blue planet.

Armed only with faith in the crucified and risen Jesus Christ, let us not grow weary in the gospel. Lest we forget, Jesus himself assures us: "In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33). Therefore, with joy and thanksgiving let us shine the light of God's love, in our prayers and in our deeds of kindness, on behalf of friend and foe alike. And let us invite others to join us in praising, glorifying, and following Jesus Christ, that their may be peace again in our time, for them as well as for us all.