

Catholic Students for Peace and Justice

“Three Years in Iraq: “Peace is Our Solution”

We, Catholic Students for Peace and Justice agree with the Bishop Wenski’s statement, *Toward a Responsible Transition in Iraq*. In recognition of the third anniversary of the war in Iraq we feel it is important to make a statement on behalf of Catholic School Students to demonstrate that peace should always be our first choice. As students, we have been given the responsibility of becoming future political, religious and business leaders of our world. Because of this responsibility, it is especially important for us to emphasize peace above all things. Our youth, vigor, and determination can shine as beacons in an increasingly violent world.

Just the mention of war in Iraq can lead to polarization and cutting debate between friends. For many of us, this is exactly opposite of the desired effect. The focus should be on working together to peacefully solve the Iraq question. We understand we cannot change the past. We hope by voicing our concerns, we are helping to create a healthier and more cooperative world for the future.

Looking back on three years of war in Iraq, we are encouraged by the loss of a dictator and the start of the democratic process. However, we worry about the instability we brought to the region and, more recently, the move closer to a Sunni and Shiite civil war. **We especially mourn and share in the loss of the 2,200 plus United States military personal and countless Iraqi civilians that have died in Iraq.** We need to do everything we can to try to bring stability to the most dangerous place in the world. We suggest that our government and nation take seriously and pursue the suggestions laid out by our Catholic Bishops in “*Towards a Responsible Transition in Iraq*.” These suggestions are (1) achieving adequate levels of security, (2) establishing the rule of law, (3) Promoting economic reconstruction to help create reasonable levels of employment and economic opportunity, and (4) supporting the development of political structures to advance stability, political participation, and respect for religious freedom and basic human rights.

As Catholic School Students, we should make it our duty to support our troops and do our best to establish a peaceful, just, and fair democracy in Iraq, while believing that violence only breeds more violence and the only way towards a solution is through peace.