

**PRAYER SERVICE FOR  
THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE WAR IN IRAQ  
Catholic Students for Peace and Justice  
March 19, 2006**

Opening Song – Prayer of St. Francis

**Leader:**

The LORD is king forever; the nations have vanished from  
God's land.

You listen, LORD, to the needs of the poor; you encourage  
them and hear their prayers. ~ Psalm 10: 16

**In the Name of the Father...**

First Reading: Bishops' Statement "Toward a Responsible  
Transition in Iraq"

Responsorial – Psalm 49

Please respond: "**Hear this, all you people; all who inhabit the  
world!**"

Second Reading: Statement by the Students

Making the Peace Cranes...

**Leader:** A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

Closing: Litany of Peacemakers

Please respond: **Pray for us**

**In the Name of the Father...**

A concise version of “Toward a Responsible Transition in Iraq”  
by Bishop Thomas G. Wenski of Orlando, chair of the Committee of International Policy of the  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) -1/13/06

*As we begin a new year and almost three years after the initiation of war, the situation in Iraq remains complex, uncertain, and dangerous. Our Conference of bishops mourns the deaths of more than 2,100 of our nation’s sons and daughters and of tens of thousands of Iraqis. We share the pain of the countless numbers of persons who have been injured and maimed and of those whose lives will never be the same.*

*While we recognize that people of goodwill may disagree with specific prudential judgments that we offer, our religious tradition calls us to shine the light of faith and the Church’s social teaching on the moral dimensions of the future choices that lie ahead. Today some see virtually no progress in Iraq and argue for rapid strategic withdrawal. Others see enormous progress and call for continued and steady engagement. Our Conference rejects any assessment of the reality that is either too pessimistic or too optimistic. Our nation cannot afford a shrill and shallow debate that distorts reality and reduces the options to “cut and run” versus “stay the course.”*

*We must look around and look ahead. Our nation’s military forces should remain in Iraq only as long as it takes for a responsible transition, leaving sooner rather than later. The intervention in Iraq has brought with it a new set of moral responsibilities. The central moral question is not just the timing of U.S. withdrawal, but rather the nature and extent of U.S. and international engagement that allows for a responsible transition to security and stability for the Iraqi people.*

*(We) believe that our nation and the Iraqi people face a number of particular challenges that arise from the complex, uncertain and dangerous situation in Iraq. These challenges include:  
- **terrorism and our response to it...** Our nation must guard against overly aggressive and unwise military responses that ... undermine the winning of hearts and minds in (Iraq and the world).*

*.- **the violation of the human rights of persons in the custody of U.S. and Iraqi forces;** violations of the human rights ... undermine both the struggle against terrorism and the prospects of a responsible transition in Iraq.*

*- **threats to religious liberty and religious minorities in Iraq;** (We) urge the active support of the U.S. to encourage clearer protection of religious freedom in both law and practice.*

*- **the plight of refugees** – (Our Conference) continues to believe that U.S. policy toward Iraqi refugees and asylum seekers is too restrictive.*

*- **meeting other responsibilities of our nation:** The very costly conflict in Iraq demands a major commitment of human and financial resources, but Iraq cannot become an excuse for ignoring other pressing needs at home and abroad.*

*Our nation must act with a constructive and informed realism that helps us to learn from the past and to move forward. (We) must engage in serious and civil dialogue in order to walk a difficult path toward a responsible transition that seeks to help Iraqis take responsibility for building a better future for themselves.*

Responsorial – Psalm 49

Please respond: **“Hear this, all you people; all who inhabit the world!”**

**“Hear this, all you people; all who inhabit the world!”**

Hear this, all you peoples! Give ear, all who inhabit the world,  
You of lowly birth or high estate, rich and poor alike.  
My mouth shall speak wisdom, my heart shall offer insight.

**“Hear this, all you people; all who inhabit the world!”**

I will turn my attention to a problem, expound my question to the music of a lyre.  
Why should I fear in evil days, when my wicked pursuers ring me round,  
Those trust in their wealth and boast of their abundant riches?

**“Hear this, all you people; all who inhabit the world!”**

One cannot redeem oneself, pay to God a ransom.  
Too high the price to redeem a life; one would never have enough  
To stay alive forever and never see the pit.

**“Hear this, all you people; all who inhabit the world!”**

But God will redeem my life,  
Will take me from the power of Sheol.  
Do not fear when others become rich  
When they die they will take nothing with them.

**“Hear this, all you people; all who inhabit the world!”**

Leader: A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

When he saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him.

He began to teach them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you (falsely) because of me.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Litany of Peacemakers

God, creator of the universe, author of our covenant of peace...

Mary, wellspring of reconciliation, mother of peacemakers...

Moses and Miriam, nonviolent liberators, architects and singers of the covenant of justice...

Isaiah, critic of militarism, prophet of peace...

Esther, intercessor for the powerless, emissary of peace...

Amos and Micah and Hosea, voices for the oppressed...

Magdalene, faithful witness of Christ's execution, first witness of his resurrection...

Peter and Paul, prisoners of conscience...

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, evangelists of the peaceable reign of God...

Martin of Tours, conscientious objector...

Francis of Assisi, lover of creation...

Simone Weil, patroness of solidarity with the oppressed, fasting unto death with the hungry...

Martin Luther King, Jr., prophet and dreamer of the Beloved Community...

Thomas Merton, contemplative critic, mentor of peacemakers...

St. Julie, protector of the powerless...

Paul VI, advocate for peace through justice...

Dorothy Day, lady poverty, mother of courage, witness to the radical gospel of peace...

Oscar Romero, shepherd of the poor, martyr for justice...

Dorothy, Ita, Maura and Jean martyrs for the poor, handmaids of justice...

Mother Teresa, saint of the gutters...

John Paul II, defender of life...

Dorothy Stang, martyr of the earth...

All you holy peacemakers, living and more living...

Jesus, Messiah, Prince of Peace...