

Report of the Trident Ploughshares Hiroshima to Nagasaki Fast in Knighton

written by Angie Zelter on 11th August 2018



I decided that this year I would not go to London, Paris or another location but would fast in my home town of Knighton in the Welsh borders and invite local people to take part. I asked the local vicar if she would let me fast day and night in her church even though I was not a church goer and she said 'Of course, the church is for everyone! What a wonderful response.

I could not find anyone to fast for the whole time with me but several people volunteered to fast for a day and then accompany me at night sleeping in the church. Several people helped to hang the banners and the church looked wonderful.



The opening ceremony was very moving with George playing 'Agnus Dei' on the organ, local bell ringers playing 'Cantique de Jean Racine', readings from Hiroshima survivors and Roger tolling the bell at the time of the Hiroshima bomb. People attending the ceremony (about 30) found it all very moving and then spent time looking at the exhibition of peace banners and literature that ranged from books and pictures from Hibakusha, to impacts of the nuclear testing and mining, to related issues like the arms trade, drones and weapons in space, refugees, forest protection,



destruction wreaked by mega dams, climate change and of course information about the UN Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons.

People also started writing comments in the book which became a record of the fast.



Later that day the Pales Peace Choir traveled from afar to perform some lovely peace songs for us.

Over the next few days, people popped in for an hour or two to make cranes or join the discussions that included explorations of collateral damage, what ‘security’ means to different people and nations, and what ‘peace’ is made up of. We also held a ‘listening circle’ where people expressed their own fears, hopes and feelings about peace and security in themselves, their homes, in Knighton and in the world.



The discussions were interesting and useful for exploring in more depth the issues surrounding the military-industrial complex.

George, the fantastic local organist, treated us to two 40 minute organ recitals as well as, once more, finding really moving and atmospheric music for the closing Nagasaki ceremony, which left several of us in tears.

Although the fast was small, more than 60 different locals attended one event or another and quite a few tourists visting the church engaged with us. One person joined our local affinity group and one woman changed her mind about relying on nuclear deterrence when she read about the effects of testing and mining in the south seas.

Several people asked if I would hold it again next year but I said only if others came forward to help organise it and if we could have enough people to hold some of the events in the town centre outside. If anyone is interested please contact me at reforest@gn.apc.org.

Many thanks to Melia Cope for allowing us to use the church, Bernard Jeffries and Olive Bennewith for the photos, George Baker for playing the organ, the Clock Tower Bells Group, Roger Thomas for tolling the bell, the Pales Peace Choir, Penny Nicholson and Kevin Dare for leading two of the workshops, Camilla for singing the last song in her 'Trident Oratorio', Tod, Leya, Rolly, Richard, Jules, Jed, Jim and Bernard for helping put the banners up, to Constance, Anne Mary and Nicola for doing night accompaniments and to all those who supported the fast in so many ways.