

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE – 21st SEPTEMBER, 2020.

Dear friends,

Many thanks for your kind invitation to send a message of Peace on the International Day of Peace. I am sorry I cannot be with you in person as I would have liked to greet you all, but please know that I am with you in spirit, wherever you are today.



photo Roser Corbera ©Conflict Textiles archive 2017

The theme of the Peacebuilding day and Action week

‘Celebrating our journey – embracing our future’ (21st September – 2nd October, international day of Nonviolence) as declared by the United Nations, is important to us in Ireland as we journey from a very violent conflict, into a fragile peace. In order to make our peace concrete, we need to work really hard both individually and collectively to reject the bomb and bullet and all the techniques of violence both at home and internationally.

I believe, we, as the human family, are at a very important turning point in human history. We have a choice now to reject the use of the bomb and the bullet and all the techniques of violence declaring each of the lives of our brothers and sisters matter or to go down the road of violence, ethnic conflicts, militarism and war which of course will lead to all our destruction including our environment and Mother Earth.

This choice has been made even more evident by the arrival of the Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic (2019-20) which to date has spread rapidly throughout the world resulting in 914,000 thousand deaths. In an age of instant mass communication, the invisible virus has spread death, fear and anxiety, and reminded us of our vulnerability and above all our need for each other, and for our scientists, health care workers, etc., Many Governments have identified the need to deal with this Pandemic making it their top Policy priority. They are replacing competition with co-operation in an attempt to find a vaccine which can be available for everyone in the world.

However, humankind is suffering and dying in their millions every day, being killed by the virus of violence and instead of working to remove this virus of violence we are not only accepting violence, but with arms sales, wars, etc., we feed, pay for it with our taxes, glorifying it, and most often remaining ambivalent about it. Violence in our own hearts, between families, violence of poverty and starvation, against children and elderly, violence in our institutions, between communities, between countries, State violence of buying/selling armaments and war.

I believe we need to say very clearly violence, no matter where it comes from, is always wrong. Every act has its consequence, and if we feed anger, hatred, enmity and stoke the flames of this deadly disease then the Pandemic of violence and killing will destroy our souls, our countries, our world. But there is a cure to this Pandemic of violence, militarism, and war, and it is Love and Forgiveness.

Today’s philosophy driving our politics is unjust economics and the military industrial complex and the competition leading to war. We need to change our thinking and put people and their needs top of Policy agendas. Now, we need a world free of all weapons, and for us all to work on human security and peace building.

The model of Ireland, making its peace process work is important for the world. As we move from a violence ethnic political conflict into peacebuilding and nonviolence together, we must not give up on our absolute belief that Peace through dialogue and co-operation, built on trust and truth, is possible.

Indeed, we in Ireland, have the responsibility to be a light and model to the world and show Peace and total Disarmament, built on human rights and international law, are our true security and the only way that works.

Thank you all for your work for Peace and Nonviolence.

Mairead Maguire, Nobel Peace Laureate 1976. www.peacepeople.com (21.9.2020)