

Creating a Culture of Peace

This is the third time that we have this little Remembrance Sunday ceremony here at our Peace Garden which was developed in the last few years. It is beautifully looked after. All the stones around the corner were prepared by the children of Christ the King school here and were cemented in by a parishioner. This beautiful Dove mosaic came from Mount Carmel School done by the senior students there. What we are trying to do every year is to remember those who died in war, not just the military but the civilians and not just our wars but everybody's wars, so that we really determine that the best way to honour the victims of war for the future is to work for a world without war.

The ceremony that we have each year around our Peace Garden has always been one to which we have invited Jews, Muslims and Janes to come and pray with us.

Thank you very much for inviting us, it is the third time that I am here. Jesus Christ, he is a universal prophet and he said I give you peace, not the peace that the world gives you, but peace that God gives you.

Almighty God in your mercy and your unfailing love you graciously allow us to be here today in this peace garden. We remember with thanksgiving and sorrow the victims of the wars.

We try to forget our differences and try to live together as one.

I think the idea of the walk is that it is not only just a nice day out but it is to show kids various monuments and places in London where peace things have happened or heroic people have been; peace people and it catches on. We have a little passport and they play little mystery games and things but the kids then begin to think about Gandhi or why Lord Mountbatten was against nuclear weapons.

We have been here looking at famous peacemakers in statues and finding clues about them.

It is educational, it is trying to build what I call (it sounds pretentious) a culture of peace.

We wanted to make a peace trail that people can follow because it gathers something about the history of peace in Britain and so we devised this peace trail with a puzzle book for children and it gives them questions, clues that they have got to follow like a treasure hunt and look for on the buildings and in the parks of London.

I think it is important that they realise the problems that the world has.

The purpose behind it apart from having a lot of fun is to try and give people an idea of what peace involves. The people celebrate the event, the kinds of things that are needed really to make a more peaceful world.

We are at the Imperial War Museum at the Educational Centre making paper cranes because I believe this is a symbol of good luck in Japan.

They were making origami peace cranes with the link to a very sad story of a little girl called Sadako Sasaki who was ten years old in the 1950s. She had contracted leukaemia as a consequence of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and she knew about a mythological story connected to death and the myth about the magic of the crane. Making paper origami shapes is a craft within the Japanese culture and there is a story that if you could fold a thousand of these paper cranes then you could ask the gods to grant you a wish and she obviously wanted to get better. Working with Bruce Kent and the International Peace Bureau and the Peace Trail having the Imperial War Museum as the last stop fits into the remit of what we do in our education work at the Museum. The Museum was set up in many ways to record the causes and the consequences of the wars and obviously war and peace go hand in hand. Anything that looks at the whole idea of why peace is important also links into the remit of what we do here because we hope that by visiting the Museum, young people, families, can see the dire consequences of conflicts that have shaped the 20th century and sadly still continue in the 21st century.

I think occasions that give young people a positive experience of what peace-making is about is really what today is about. Learning different positive stories of peacemakers through history and learning the path of peace that others have taken before. The community experience of working together co-operatively and building up stories of working alongside each other. It complements some of the work that we will be trying to

do in schools where we are working with teachers and creating materials for young people to help them see that there are positive approaches, that there are creative ways of coming at issues of violence and conflict, that there can be win win situations, that there can be things to celebrate about the story of peace-making and this is, in a way, a complementary activity to that. It is all part of trying to create a culture of peace in the school, in the home, in the family. It is a way of countering the culture of violence and the culture of fear that is really so strong in our society and doing that through an experiential day like this is really a very positive opportunity.