

**Articles from Desert Voices Vol 16, Number 2
May 2003**

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**"BUSH'S NUCLEAR ARMS UPDATE"
-San Francisco Chronicle, May 11, 2003**

HERE WE GO AGAIN!

Reflections from Louie Vitale, ofm

Ever since the first use of atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan in 1945 there has been a nonstop nuclear arms race. We have moved from Atomic bombs to Hydrogen bombs and from kilotons to megatons. Presently there exist some 30,000 nuclear warheads of various sizes and configurations. One Trident submarine carries enough nuclear missiles to wipe out the major sites of any enemy we can imagine.

It is said that every president has contemplated the use of nuclear weapons at some point. We understand that in both Iraqi "wars" tactical nuclear weapons were available and their use proposed under various scenarios. Fortunately no Iraqi "Weapons of Mass Destruction" showed up that might have called for the response of US "Weapons of Mass Destruction" that were readily available. Nevertheless the possible existence of such WMDs on the part of Iraq provided the opportunity for President Bush to articulate a clear policy that the US would not forswear "first use" of nuclear weapons. In fact the Bush administration articulated a posture of "preemptive strike" against anyone who might even be considering using such weapons against us, even if they might never have shown any posture suggesting a real threat to the United States.

The headline quoted as the title of this article reveals the Bush administration proposal to spend billions of dollars rebuilding the nuclear weapons system, including \$25 million to increase the readiness of the Nevada Test Site to resume testing, revoking a ban on testing enacted in 1992. Research is approved for \$15.5 million for research into bunker-busters known as the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator. These could have a warhead with approximately one-Megaton yield (about 100 times the Hiroshima bomb). There also are activities in congress sponsored by the White House to repeal a decade-old law

prohibiting the development of low yield nuclear weapons. This would pave the way for a massive proliferation of low yield nuclear weapons. Many nations under the threat of a U.S. preemptive strike would be encouraged to develop nuclear weapons themselves. These moves, plus many others under consideration, make it clear that the nuclear arms race is clearly not over. It will take all the fortitude of true democracy to stop it.

During all these years of nuclear madness, the arms race led from the physical destruction of a city to the projection of a “Nuclear Winter” (a phrase that noted scientist and author Carl Sagan has described as the results of an all-out exchange of nuclear weapons that would raise such a cloud of dust and fall-out that the heat of the sun would be eliminated and life as we know it would freeze).

Nevertheless during these years there have been non-stop efforts to bring about nuclear disarmament. There have been successes in the reduction or elimination of nuclear warheads, and as noted a ban on nuclear testing has been in place since 1992. Many commentators on society have noted that with the “end of the Cold War” nuclear forces are passé. They are no longer useful or necessary. In fact most are aware their use could be the greatest hazard to life and well being on this planet. Every president since World War II has pursued a policy of nuclear arms control, until now. President Bush and his advisors are out to convince us once again that there could be a “winnable nuclear war.”

Those of us who have been involved in the past decades in using every peaceable means possible to stop this arms madness are roused once again to resist the US nuclear policy and program. We are convinced that there is indeed a sea change going on. Worldwide opinion is clearly against these maverick wars and particularly repulsed by this latter day nuclear warfare revival. We indeed will take up the challenge and once again alert the people to the madness of this nuclear posture. We have done it before and we are confident we can do it again. We are reassured that the movement to stop the war was indeed immensely effective. The millions who rallied on the streets throughout the world, together with the resistance of the vast majority of the members of the United Nations to our armed intervention into Iraq convince us that a new era is being born. The debate at the UN shows us that there is a new consensus being formed against war as a means of resolving global conflicts. We are in a new era that says NO to war, and most notably NO to the enormous waste and destruction of this incredible planet. Yes we are willing to take up the gauntlet. We refuse to be led once again down the path to destruction. We will give ourselves to the pursuit of the way to peace beyond war!

Louie Vitale, ofm is Pastor of St Boniface Church in San Francisco and an NDE Board member

Lenten Desert Experience XXII
Celebrating 70 Years of the Catholic Worker Movement
Hope in Desert Places

by Carla Javier

The Lenten Desert Experience for 2003 was initiated with a joint retreat sponsored by the Las Vegas Catholic Worker and Nevada Desert Experience. The three-day event was held at University United Methodist Church in Las Vegas starting on Friday, March 14th and culminated in a time of prayer and witness at the Nevada Nuclear Test Site on Sunday, March 16th. The retreat brought together people from California and Nevada of various backgrounds and ages. Present were college students who were just beginning to explore the peace and justice movement as well as veteran peacemakers. NDE staffer Paul Colbert helped to organize the event, which was facilitated by Julia Ochiogrosso and Bonnie Pilcher from the Las Vegas Catholic Worker House and Stevie Carroll, a local activist and teacher.

The facilitators entered the event with a strong sensitivity to the “shock and awe” many in the peace movement were experiencing in the face of the invasion of Iraq by the United States. The war in Iraq provided a backdrop to the discussions held throughout the weekend as participants struggled with the political, military, economic and human implications of American policy. The irony that the US is upset with Iraq’s alleged possession of “weapons of mass destruction” while it has its own verifiable stockpile of such weapons (and a site for testing weapons 60 miles outside Las Vegas) was not lost on the retreat participants. The theme of the retreat “Hope in Desert Places” seemed particularly poignant and layered with meaning.

The retreat began with prayer and meditation on Friday evening. Time was provided for participants to share remembrances of the people and events that had shaped their own journeys on the nonviolent path. Participants developed personal timelines, which evoked

rich and multi-textured memories for all. The facilitators created a safe space for the sharing of these intimate and inspiring stories.

The theme for the Saturday sessions of the retreat moved from remembrance to restoration and reclamation. The focus of the morning was on preparing to join a silent vigil and march in opposition to the war, which was held in front of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas campus. The vigil was attended by members of other local peace groups and was a time to witness for compassion and deepening awareness of issues around the war.

Sunday morning the retreatants gathered at the gates of the Nevada Test Site on an unseasonably cold and rainy morning. The valley beyond the gates was shrouded in mist giving the Test Site a primordial and mystical quality. The group gathered in a prayer circle for a time of prayer and reflective reading which culminated in anointing with oil as a symbol of the sacredness of our journey together on the road to nuclear abolition and peace. Together, participants walked arm in arm across the threshold onto the Test Site while reciting the World Peace Prayer. The majority of participants committed civil disobedience and were arrested, then released.

As one who had been a long-time supporter of NDE but who had not participated in the Lenten Desert Experience for several years, participating in the retreat weekend felt like coming home. The contemplative mood established by the facilitators along with the unity of the group who gathered in Las Vegas brought me back to the roots of my own search for justice and peace both personally and politically. I was reminded of the impact that previous LDE events had on my life and of the amazing people I have had the privilege of meeting through NDE events in years past. The spirit of peace is genuinely embodied in the small, but powerful gathering of people at the gates of the Test Site. That place which has witnessed so much violence has also been a place of tremendous healing for many past NDE participants. For this I gratefully recommit to support NDE and its unique mission.

Carla Javier is a Las Vegas Resident. She and her husband are volunteers with Nevada Desert Experience.

United Methodist Weekend A Lenten Desert Experience

Continuing a Lenten tradition, a group of United Methodists gathered in the desert April 5th to raise our voices “In Defense of Creation”[1]. The beauty of the spring time desert against the backdrop of freshly snow dusted mountains stood in stark contrast to our government’s illegal and blasphemous use of Shoshone land. As we gathered the evening before for fellowship, worship, and information by the NDE staff, we celebrated the memory of Martin Luther King Jr. on the 35th anniversary of his assassination. A young black pastor said this was her “lunch counter” witness. There was passionate consensus that the Bush administration’s aggressive plan to build new nuclear weapons, to resume testing, and to preemptively use nuclear weapons in future conflicts presents a clarion call to action for people of faith.

Bishop Mary Ann Swenson led us in worship at the Test Site quoting from the Gospel of Luke “Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, ‘Teacher, order your disciples to stop’. He answered, ‘I tell you, if these were silent, even the stones would cry out.’” and “Jesus wept over Jerusalem saying, ‘If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace’”.

As I gathered my rock to add to the existing prayer rock pile, I knew in my heart that I had to cross the line this time. It was time for me to go beyond my fears of arrest and the long shadow of the Patriot Act and to follow my faith compass.

So, does it make any difference? Is anyone listening? Absolutely! Our voices are heard. All who demonstrate at the Test Site join the mighty cloud of witnesses standing up for peace with justice and the integrity of God’s creation. The outstanding difference for me is personal. Crossing the line was a deeply liberating and spiritual experience. My “pink slip” (notice to appear citation) hangs on my bulletin board next to the picture of my friends holding our banner “May Peace Prevail On Earth” and next to pictures of my

grandchildren as a constant reminder to walk in faith and peace build for the future. A rock sits on my desk reminding me that “silence is betrayal”

[1] In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and a Just Peace, 1986, reprinted 2002; Cokesbury; Nashville, Tennessee

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Editor's Note - The Following Article is the original unedited documented written by Mark Shumway. Brief extracts appeared in the Desert Voices.

Nevada Desert Experience Lenten Walk April 12-18, 2003

By Mark Shumway

“For every thousand hacking away at the branches and leaves of evil, there is one hacking away at the root of evil.”

Henry David Thoreau, Poet, Activist

“Our institutions are killing us.”

Noam Chomsky, Scholar, Activist

Day 1 Saturday, April 12

I left Georgetown driving my pick up truck in the rain with an anxious heart early in the morning. After sleeping poorly, I had a 12 hour drive in front of me and a lot of questions and worries. I had left work Friday on a bad note with my friend Roy. Roy is a Vietnam veteran who served over two tours in Vietnam in the Marines in a Force Recon Company. He was wounded in combat. In his company of 160 men, only 5 survived their tours of duty without serious wounds or death. Though he is in favor of the current war against Iraq, he will listen to pro peace arguments. I have hopes of changing his opinion. In the years I've known him he has said that if he knew what he now knows about the Vietnam

War then, he would have not served. I had urged him to read an article by Arundhati Roy about the world-wide negative political and moral consequences of the US war against Iraq. He started reading it and reacted strongly to a sentence in the first paragraph, saying that she had disrespected soldiers. My response was weak and placating and he never finished reading the article. During the drive I kept rerunning that episode in my mind.

I entertained doubts and fears, unsure if I was strong enough to walk the entire 64 miles from Las Vegas to the Nevada Test Site. I wasn't sure if I had enough equipment. The unsettled weather worried me. A weather forecast for the Las Vegas area predicted rain Monday and Tuesday and a UV index of 8 (out of 10). The miles flowed by my windshield splattered with a wide and colorful variety of bugs.

While the sun was setting behind me, I arrive at the lip of the basin where Las Vegas is located. It is surprising to come over the pass out of the spare desert lands and see Las Vegas spreading across this dry land in the dying light. The gaudy sprawl of Las Vegas seemed to infect the desert with vast blocks of cubes full of condos and towers of fantastic shapes like high rise temples of a neon and laser lit Babylon. I found the Franciscan Friary on the north edge of Las Vegas off Martin Luther King Drive. The Friary is in a poorer neighborhood of mostly African-Americans. The mix of fast food franchises, stores and houses made of bare cinderblock and fenced windblown vacant lots reminded me of the poorer sections of Santiago. The poor are alike whether they live in the lands of the conquered or the conqueror.

The Friary was easy to identify with its collection of cars and vans plastered with peace bumper stickers and signs. My truck fit right in. I met Brother David, the Franciscan who lives there, and David who runs the house for homeless men across the street. I was introduced to many of the walkers from the Bay Area who had arrived shortly before. These were Doug, Asha, Katie, Katy, Leslie, Jean, Allen, Leslie, Mark, Susan, Pat, Kelly and Richard all from the greater Bay Area. I also meant Liz and Stuart from Vancouver, Canada. Doug (a lean, extraverted man who has a vast fund of wit and knowledge) and I had a long talk about politics and the war. He is a building engineer and a musician and has a lot of experience backpacking. It is great to meet like minded people. I also talked with Mark, a slight, tanned man about my age. I learned that he has been homeless and walked across the US twice and attended various peace activities across our nation since the 1991 Gulf War. I was immediately impressed by Mark's spirit. Here is a man whose body and appetites are subordinate to his spirit. And Mark's commitment to peace was rock solid and measured in thousands of miles walked for peace. I dubbed him Mark the Greater. I met Norb who lives in his car parked out on the street. He is a grizzled WWII veteran and a founding member of Veterans for Peace. He is doing a vigil everyday at the federal building downtown until the war in Iraq ends. His commitment to peace activism spans 50 years. Here is another man great in spiritual stature.

Paul came to the Friary just before dinner. Paul, coordinator of the Nevada Desert Experience (NDE), wears cowboy boots, a cowboy hat bent in the Louisiana curl, a full beard and a southwestern style cowboy shirt. He is introverted, intense and very busy yet takes time to greet me and ask about the trip. He and I have emailed often and it is a pleasure to meet him. Before eating, we form a circle with everyone standing and holding

hands. Brother David discussed the sleeping arrangements, the women only area and the poverty of the neighborhood. He warned of a low level of gang activity and sometimes gunfire is heard. The friary, he explained, is left alone because everyone in the neighborhood knows that “we are some of the good guys”. We said grace and gave thanks.

We had a lovely dinner together of baked chicken, rolls and vegetable stew sitting around or nearby the large wooden table which dominates the common area of the Friary. As darkness fell and a few stars struggled to pierce the veil of neon haze over Las Vegas, we settled our sleeping arrangement. Doug and I set up sleeping bags outside. We were joined by Allen in his sleeping bag. Allen is 75 and a retired geologist. He has done this walk many times before. I find this good news indeed. I easily think of him as this group’s wise elder.

Sometime after I fell asleep with the south wind blowing steadily into my sleeping bag, another group arrived. This turned out to be a group of four all the way from Montana. I pop out of my sleeping bag and meet Norm, Emma, Larry and Becky who made the 1000 mile trip in one long day. Then I return to the fading warmth of my sleeping bag and go back to sleep in the light of the nearly full moon.

Day 2 Sunday, April 13, Palm Sunday

“And many spread their garments in the way: others cut down branches off the trees and spread them in his way. And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, “Hosanna in the highest, blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord.”

Mark 11: 8-9

I awakened before dawn and greeted the sun as I’ve been taught. I was thinking about Palm Sunday, Jesus arriving in Jerusalem and being adored just days before his trial and execution. I wondered if Jesus knew his fate. I believe that he did as he knew the forces arrayed against him, or the Powers, to use Walter Wink’s useful idea.

We had a breakfast of coffee and sweet rolls and made ready to start. We loaded into vans and went to the Department of Energy (DOE) Facility in Las Vegas. Brother David had his brown robe on. We met Norb there. We gathered in a circle in front of the security gate topped with barbed wire at the DOE. Corbett and his wife, Margaret, are Shoshone Indians and representatives of the Shoshone Nation. They were already present and they joined us. Corbett burned sage while walking around inside the circle and told us how important our walk is to the young people coming up. He told us to “walk in beauty and remember the seeds and waters waiting underground to reclaim the land once all these temporary things (buildings, streets, Las Vegas) are gone”. Then Margaret sang the People’s Song to us. It was haunting and beautiful. As she was singing, five pickup trucks hurried up on both sides. Very serious security guards in desert camouflage armed with side arms got out noisily and looked us over. Throughout the ceremony they continued to observe us and talk into their shoulder mounted radios. Corbett prayed for us, telling us in his mother tongue that we were to walk in beauty, and then we departed.

We walked north onto Cheyenne Blvd. Traffic was light. I had a sign which said "TRY TESTING PEACE" on one side. There was a banner carried in the front of our group declaring that this was the NDE Lenten Walk. Since we were walking against traffic, a pattern began to emerge. We could walk by pairs and as people adopted slightly different paces, we became paired up with different people. We began to talk as we walked. Over the next five days, all of us got to punctuate our walking by engaging in fascinating conversations as the miles slowly passed. On Sunday morning, I fell into a talk with Doug about music and with Norb about his experiences. I learned that Norm from Montana was also a Vietnam Veteran and had been a bombardier in the Air Force. Also, Paul in his pickup and Pat in his van would drive by and stop to offer water, support and blister treatment.

The people driving by going to church or other places by and large gave us little attention. About 20% reacted. Of those who reacted to our signs, about 2/3 were supportive, giving smiles, peace signs and even honking. One third were given to expressions of disagreement ranging from headshaking, giving thumbs down, flipping us off to the occasional shouting of crudities. Norb said that the people flipping us off were giving us half the peace sign. I thought that this was the greatest reframe I've ever heard and it lifted my heart for the remainder of the march.

Norb walked with a limp and stayed to the outside of the groups almost into the traffic. He had a way of throwing a peace sign in to his rolling stride like he was giving a blessing or benediction. It was a powerful gesture and gripped everyone's attention.

By lunchtime we had walked 6 miles and had arrived at the intersection of Rancho Dr. and Cheyenne Blvd. I had an idea what to write on the blank side of my sign. Asha loaned me a pen and I wrote, "KNOW JESUS. WORK FOR PEACE." as this was a pilgrimage. After circling up and giving thanks, we had a meal of sandwiches, baby carrots, celery and cookies. This was to be the standard NDE lunch on the road for the next four days.

In the afternoon, the wind died down and it became hotter as we marched north along Rancho Dr. past gas stations, stores, apartments and weedy trash strewn fields. Mark and I had a fascinating talk about Walter Wink (the theologian) and how it was to walk across the country twice for Mark. We took a complicated route over Highway 95 and ended the day's march at a baseball field and community park on the very northern edge of North Las Vegas. We had gone 14 miles. We had yet to leave the city.

Tired and a bit footsore we returned to the Friary aboard the two vans. While dinner was being delivered by Joan, an NDE supporter, Norb asked if we wanted to walk three blocks north to see the Dr. King memorial. So a group of seven of us followed Norb to the memorial site. The memorial has a large statue of Dr. King in robes holding a globe with Africa showing and a Bible in his left hand. His right hand is raised above his head and stretched out as if reaching for the Promised Land. He stands above a fountain and four low curved walls surround the fountain. Plaques of some of Dr. King's writings are on the walls. It is very impressive. Norb said that the statue of Dr. King in Las Vegas is

the largest in the world. There were benches near the low walls so one could sit and contemplate Dr. King's thoughts. I sat in front of one plaque and read:

"I am convinced that if we succumb to the temptation to use violence in our struggle for freedom, unborn generations will be the recipients of a long and desolate night of bitterness, and our chief legacy to them will be a never ending reign of chaos."

Just then I heard the unmistakable pop of small arms fire just south of our position. One shot rang out followed by two more shots. I stood up and ran to the street's edge. Doug was crouching behind a light pole. A silver SUV was speeding away southbound from a store called King's Market ½ block south of us and across the street. Three African-American teens were running north away from the market. I thought someone was laying on the median strip wounded or dying. I ran towards them and saw it wasn't a person but a run over and crumpled traffic cone which I had misidentified as a wounded person. As Doug and I approached the scene, two police cars arrived. The police interviewed us and several bystanders. No one had reported any injuries or harm done. Also no one reported any specific information. One man said that he was intimidated and wouldn't say more. It wasn't until I got back to the Friary and in the circle before dinner that I remembered to pray for the perpetrators and victims of this violence, this never ending reign of chaos.

After a great dinner of pasta with sauce, salad and bread we had more excellent conversation and retired early. I slept outside again under clear skies and a very nearly full moon. That night, our sleep was broken by a burst of five more shots within a block of the Friary. It seems we have strayed so very far from Dr. King's dream.

Day 3 Monday, April 15

"For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly places." Ephesians 6: 12

I awoke before dawn again and read more of Walter Wink's book, *Engaging the Powers*. He is theologian who presents some extremely useful concepts regarding our institutions. He writes that institutions have both external manifestations and an internal spirituality. He calls these institutions the Powers. For example, the Nevada Test Site has towers, instruments, guards, trucks and atomic weapons as its external manifestations. The internal spirituality of the Nevada Test Site is the worship of the god of national security. Great sacrifices are made to this god in our civilization. The nuclear infrastructure has first claim on all resources and only produces and perfects indiscriminate weapons of mass destruction while leaving poisoned lands, peoples and waters.

Wink identifies this as the cult of redemptive violence and names this cult as the main religion of America. He urges Christians to stand against this cult in all its forms. As the sun rose, I greeted it with a fervor I was unaware of possessing. An urgent love of our Earth gripped my heart.

After breakfast, my truck was loaded up with people's tents and luggage and some of us drove to the lunch stop site which was the smoke shop off the highway in the Piute Reservation. I rode back to the marchers and only missed the first 15 minutes of the march. Mark and I fell into a discussion of chaos theory. He is quite well read in chaos theory and even explained turbulence and period doubling (which produces predictable regions of chaos) to me. Jean and I discussed teaching in Special Education and its vicissitudes. She is a Special Education teacher too. Doug and I discussed if we should be carrying an American Flag. We are both ambivalent and conclude that as a tactic it would be a good idea to carry one.

Today a tall young woman named Autumn arrived and joined the march. She lives in a van and is accompanied by Andy and Daniel. She knows Mark and some others from an event called the Family Spirit walk which NDE sponsors. Autumn has a large, intense and friendly German Shepard named Freedom. She seems to be an anarchist and is a good drummer.

We got off the road using an off ramp and overpass onto the Piute smoke shop and enjoyed the NDE lunch of sandwiches, baby carrots, celery and cookies. These overpasses are very time consuming on foot. Some of us were beginning to develop some blisters. Jean has a set of blisters however she is very willing to continue. During lunch I talk to Paul about the possibility of getting an American flag to carry. He is about to be ordained as an Anglican Minister and has a very interesting argument for not carrying the flag. He believes that our walk is a religious demonstration; therefore the flag is suggestive of the worship of a false god (mammon). Doug and I agree with his reasoning.

After a break of about an hour we pack up and continue. It begins to get very cloudy and a strong wind picks up from the southwest. I hold my new sign with some difficulty even though the wind is at our backs mostly. We are deeper in the desert now and the jagged mountains remind me of the country around Tucson. The washes, the gravelly sand, the spare landscape are so beautiful, tough and bony. It is like seeing God's sinews, the ligaments of the Universe. I could better understand why the desert speaks to the prophets. Almost 15 years ago I was truly married in a desert like this.

The cool cloudy afternoon and the walking put me into a trance like prayer. I find myself especially praying for my children, my sister-in-law and for the safety of my former aide who is a Marine Corps officer and a former student who enlisted in the Marine Corps. I pray for my wife, Rachel, the love of my life and how much I miss her. I realize that I am afraid and have been for months and months. I let images of my fears surface. I am astonished at the depth of my fears and by my faithlessness. When we reach the turn off to the campsite, I rest and look at my sign I've made. I realize I've made it for me. Dinner was prepared by another NDE supporter (I did not learn her name) and is being brought to the campsite. While dinner is coming, we set up camp. The campground is on a hillock above a small sandy wash. Some creosote bushes and singular tufts of spiky grasses dot the yellowish sand and gravel landscape. Bathrooms are down the hill about 100 yards. There is no water. As the wind picks up, Mark assists me in setting up my tent. My tent is the tallest and the largest. We set the door to the north opposite the strong and gusting

south wind. We also get the waterproof tarp up over the tent with some difficulty. Other people come by and ask if there is room in the tent. I have room for 6 in a pinch and am glad to share it. I noticed that the tent still has sand in it from a beach trip I took many years ago with Summer and Chris, my children.

We are almost done setting up my tent when dinner is served. The wind really picks up and salads begin to blow away. Also the temperature drops quickly so that our dinner is a hasty and graceless meal. Just as we are finishing dinner, the wind shifted 180 degrees and blew even stronger from the north. The rain drops off my tarp into the doorway. The wind blew so strongly that rain was driven into the tent door at a 75 degree angle. I repositioned the tarp but the wind pushed it up against the tent and a small waterfall dropped water directly into the open door. The wind drove the puddle like a river to the back of the tent. I could not close the door with the zipper because the tent was too stretched in the wind. As I am struggling with these matters, word is passed that we are meeting in the big van to discuss whether we will stay or go back to the Friary for the night.

In the big van, some wanted to stay and most wanted to go. However it was important to reach a consensus. I said that my tent could not be used in these conditions and returned to take it down. A little while later, Mark helped me take down the tent, which was almost totally soaked. He told me that Allen had decided that we would all go back and insisted that all of us go together. We also took down several other tents and stored them in my truck bed. We were both too wet and cold to work so we waited a few minutes in the truck for others to finish. Then we all caravanned back to the Friary, a trip of about an hour in the rain. Mark and I drove back to the Friary in my truck. He was upset and seemed to feel that Allen was authoritarian. He wanted to stay. We discussed this and he concluded that unity was the rule now. This led to a discussion of the concepts of unity and community and which came first. Mark has a deep interest in the source and roots of words. We arrived about 8:50 p.m. Becky approached me and suggested that we have a meeting in the morning to process these events. I told her that I thought that it was a good idea to process this event. We all found places on the floor of the common area of the Friary to sleep.

Day 4 Tuesday, April 15

“And Jesus taught them saying, “Is it not written that in my house shall be called in all nations a house of prayer? But you have made it into a den of thieves.” And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy him...” Mark 11: 16-17

I woke before dawn on the Friary floor with two thoughts. I reflected on the sequence of Holy Week events and how the authorities, by the day after Jesus entered Jerusalem, must have already conspired, planned their strategy, come to an agreement with the Roman occupation authorities and put their plan into motion. I remembered a fragment of the Navy Hymn, “God save the lives of those at sea”. This hymn seemed to fit our nation’s situation. I greeted the sun through the clouds hanging like a lid over the Las Vegas basin with bits of crumbled bread.

We all gradually awoke to rainy weather and a quiet breakfast. Brother David announced that he would accompany us this morning only since he was leaving to visit his mother for Easter. She is fighting cancer and he asked us to pray for his mother, Doris. We prayed for her.

Becky facilitated the process meeting with skill and grace. Alan said that the peace movement was too fragmented and that is why we had to stick together. Leslie (Allen's daughter) said that he would worry about those apart from us. I said that Allen was a good father for us and I knew that because I have a good father. I also said that we should appreciate the incredible impact feminism has had on our culture. This impact was unimaginable in the 1950's. Mark and Doug (who wanted to stay at the campsite) both talked with Allen with deep appreciation. The rift had been healed.

We all left together to transport the tents and supplies to the next campsite on BLM land and set out tents to dry. Then we all went back to where we stopped yesterday at the turnoff for the rained out campsite and began the walk northwest along the endless highway. The skies cleared but the wind was very forceful from the west making it hard to talk and harder to hold signs.

As some people, almost always white men in SUV's or trucks, flipped us off, I noticed that I seemed to feel it in my belly. I was talking to Larry about this sensation and he said that it did not bother him. He is a Judo expert so defends himself easily and has great confidence. I learned that he has been on some Earth First actions which were confrontational with authorities. A friend of his had his car firebombed. I was impressed with his heroism and dedication. He is a warrior. I began to pray for those people and conduct my physical feeling into the earth to be made into a beautiful crystal vein. This seemed to help me a great deal. I hope and pray it helps them too.

After this I was walking by myself and praying when I noticed a single white male driving a purple pickup truck. He peered at my sign then swerved towards our group behind me. Along the highway are grooves to vibrate tires and let drivers know that they are drifting off the road. This truck came over those grooves and some of us had to step off the road. I was not scared. I felt deeply saddened at this violent act. I also thought how much the rest of the world endures to merely demonstrate their point of view. I heard that 150,000 women in Yemen dressed in black and stood in front of the government palace to protest the US invasion of Iraq. Such courage. Such an example for us who take lesser risks.

Allen found an American flag by the road and duct taped it to a stick, so we were now equipped with a flag. As it is a found object, I regard it as a symbolic communication from the Divine and therefore something we shall bear.

We arrived at the campsite on BLM land about 100 yards southwest of Highway 95 about 6 p. m. The tents were mostly dry. Mark and I set up my tent. He had found a piece of square steel bar and broke it in half to make two good tent stakes. I invited Mark to stay

the night in the tent and he agreed to try it but preferred sleeping outside. We had gone eight miles today. Mark told me that he averages 23 mile per day on his cross continent walks.

Dinner arrived and we ate companionably in the setting sun with beautiful clouds catching the red and golden light. After dinner we sang some rounds and Asha taught us how to sing Psalm 133 in Hebrew. Asha proved to be an excellent singer, music teacher and choral leader. She confessed to being a camp counselor. Her voice is sweet and very pure. Stuart lead us in a round of a song called Stand Firm. He sang with great conviction and passion. He seems a quiet and introverted man and has that quality of the surprising and deep passions of the very introverted, of still waters running deep. Asha lead us in singing Down to the River to Pray from Brother Where Art Thou. Doug accompanied us on a guitar, Larry on spoons and Mark on a steel cup with a spoon. I attempted some rhythms with two medium sized rocks. After we all sang, Doug sang several songs including one science fictional country song he had written about the future being very radioactive. It was the story of two friends living underground where there was a leak--so, "Your badge is glowing, your eyes have a gleam that wasn't there before". We also sang Dylan's Route 61 Revisited. I not only knew all the words, I was the only one in our group who knew exactly where Route 61 is (it connects Duluth to St. Paul). It was a wonderful evening.

I found that the music was very stirring and wanted to sing the Battle Hymn of the Republic, however it seemed too militant and harsh a song. As I went off to my tent, I realized that it is a really good marching song so perhaps I'll sing it to my self tomorrow. I am often surprised by my own fierceness.

The temperature had dropped quite quickly as it does after sunset in the desert and it grew colder. The moon, almost full, was beginning to rise, and shone brightly between bands of dark ropy clouds in the southeast sky.

Mark came into the tent later. He laid his belongings in a corner in the darkness and fished a half blanket out of a sack he carries. I asked if he needed a light and he said that he knows where everything is, "I've got it down to a science over the years". He curled up under this half blanket on the tent floor without a pad and immediately fell asleep. It took me quite a while to get comfortable enough to sleep. The cold and an occasional rock woke me frequently during the night. Mark slept on in much the same position under his half blanket. I put my coat over the sleeping bag and slept uncomfortably until the predawn light awoke me.

Day 5 Wednesday, April 16

"And when Herod had seized him [Peter], he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. So Peter was kept in prison; but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church."

Acts 12: 3-5

In the predawn light I dressed, rolled up my sleeping bag and mat and gathered my clothing and went out of the tent. I found a piece of bread from last night's dinner and walked to the east side of the camp. Richard, Norm, Kelly and Becky had strung 330 peace flags on some poles on this end of camp. Becky had these flags made by local teens in Missoula for the worldwide Peace demonstrations in January and February. She and these teens had made 1000 of these peace flags but Becky only brought these 330. They had messages and images of peace for the ever present desert wind to carry to the world. Among these flags dancing in the dawn's wind, I broke up the bread into grains and greeted the sun as I have been taught.

After breakfast, we gathered into a circle and asked blessings on this special day. During this part of the walk, veterans of the Lenten Peace walk wanted to remember Nick, who died this year. Our walk would take us to the road to the nearby Indian Springs State Penitentiary. Prayers at the prison were very meaningful to Nick. May Jesus grant him rest.

Mark and I walked together with Autumn. I listened closely as they talked of other events they had both attended. It seems that there is a sort of gypsy network of home free (not homeless) activists. This must have been how Harriet Tubman's Underground Railway to free escaped slaves worked--nothing in writing, informal contacts among a loose network of committed ex-slaves and abolitionists and discarded conduits of information and aid hidden in plain sight beneath the authority's surveillance and notice. Early Christians under the iron heel of the Empire must have operated in a similar manner. To witness this network gave me a profound feeling of comradeship with those who have resisted Empires across space and time.

Later, I asked Mark how he slept so comfortably and well. He looked at me sidelong and told me that he had practiced Yoga for many years. Most people's bodies, he explained, are like a washcloth and when you squeeze a washcloth out, it stays crumpled up. Mark has found that by living outdoors, his body has become something like a sponge. When squeezed a sponge regains its shape and has air pockets which trap heat. Mark explained that when he is cold, he contracts his muscles and releases them. He gets warmth in this manner. I listened to his description of how to find and preserve food, why you should use your shoes as pillows (raccoons often take one) and how he has observed styrofoam in the environment breaking up into increasingly smaller bits but not leaking toxins. Among other things, Mark is a keen observer of nature. He is living as a modern hunter-gatherer. He selects things which have been discarded and reuses them until they break, then recycles as a last resort. Mark has largely stopped participating in the consumer culture. He is a modern Yogi.

Late in the morning we arrived at the turnoff to nearby Indian Springs State Penitentiary. It is very visible from the road and its four towers loom grimly behind several fences topped with coils of barbed wire. We formed a circle holding each other's hands. Allen and Paul spoke movingly of the injustice of prisons and the death penalty. Becky and Asha prayed for the redemption and freedom for those imprisoned and facing death. Andy spoke of a brother in prison facing a sentence of over 200 years. We sang several

verses of We Shall Overcome to the sparse traffic, our spirits and the desert. It was very moving and lifted the heart connecting us with the brave people who have worked for peace and justice for the last 60 years. I thought of Rachel's experiences in jail for organizing the farm workers and how she understood how often the gospels were written in prisons.

Doug and I had a good talk about Walter Wink. Wink names the as dominant religion of America the cult of redemptive violence and traces it to the myth of Marduk betraying and slaying Tiamat, the mother of all gods and goddesses. Because violence is divinely prescribed, the rulers of earthly empires are in accord with the war in heaven. The lower classes identify with the rulers because this cult of redemptive violence offers salvation. This explains the intensity of the hostility directed against us. We are an affront to this religion of redemptive violence. This is why Jesus was instinctually known to be an enemy of the empire by the religious and occupying authorities of Israel. Perhaps my sign having the name of Jesus on it is provoking this response. Doug said something in response to this. He said that people act from their belief systems not their knowledge systems.

We stopped for lunch in a creek bed and culvert. Larry is making a video of this walk for a documentary. He interviewed me at the entrance into the culvert and several of us inside the culvert. I hope he makes this film. I would love to see us all.

The town of Indian Springs, Nevada has two gas stations, one casino, a local general store, one motel and a nearby Air Force base where US and NATO troops and pilots are trained in desert warfare. Before we got to the town, several training jets flew overhead as well as and two Apache attack helicopters. It was terrifying to be faced with the noise and appearance of such things even without them firing on us. Several of the troops driving by in hummers and trucks gave us peace signs and a few only gave us ½ the peace sign. One civilian in a truck yelled, "Get a job" which struck us as quite funny. A wave of laughter went down our line of marchers.

From town we rode 1.5 miles north to the Goddess Temple at Cactus Springs. The men would camp outside the temple precincts and the women would sleep tonight at the temple dorm. Some of us slept in one motel room NDE had rented for the night. We were all looking forward to showers and perhaps doing a little laundry as well. I had decided to sleep the night in the motel because I wanted to shower and shave so as to look good when Rachel arrives tomorrow. I was also out of clean socks.

Dinner was a pasta dish, bread, salad and cookies served inside the dorm. We were all grateful for the lovely food and to be out of the wind. Dinner was provided by Crone Witch Patricia, the woman who lives at the Goddess Temple. She is Wiccan. Crone Witch Patricia is an intense, highly energetic, extraverted brown eyed woman with dark long hair flowing to her waist. She is fond of dark clothing, silver jewelry and has a ready fund of humor and cheer. She told me that of all her titles, she is most proud of the title Crone Witch. The Goddess has a good representative in her.

After dinner all of the NDE walkers were invited to the Full Moon Circle ceremony at the temple. I was looking forward to this ceremony and wished Rachel could be part of it. Before the ceremony, about twenty-five NDE walkers and many local people gathered in an area in the desert just below the hillock the temple sat on. There were about thirty local people, mostly women of all ages, some men and a few small children. Crone Witch Patricia and her women assistants, dressed in long cloaks with silver jewelry, talked with many of us and the local people. Many of the women wore peace buttons. Waiting for the moon to go higher was like being at a party with a curious mixture of ceremony, solemnity and informality. People smoked, talked about work, gossiped and joked. It was a very human way to meet to worship and our ancestors and indigenous peoples must have met to worship in this manner across the ages. The assistants went uphill to the temple to prepare and Crone Witch Patricia gave us some instructions and orientation for the ceremony and Wicca religion. She said Wiccans do not worship the Devil in any form. She pointed out that though there are local differences between different groups of Wiccans, there is no Devil worship or use of weapons symbolic or otherwise in Wicca. In matrifocal societies, she stated, there is no war and the archeological record shows that these societies did not develop weapons or defenses. Patricia then told us that in Wicca there is only one law which is "Do what you will and cause no harm". She asked us to treat the desert with care and to take pictures only with explicit permission of the people in the photo. She warned that people have been harassed, lost jobs and lost child custody hearings because they worship at the Goddess Temple.

Then Crone Witch Patricia asked for volunteers to read one of the invocations to the directions, inviting the Goddesses to come. I read the invocation inviting Pele, Goddess of Fire and Passion to come from the south. Her color is red. Then Patricia invited us to cross a small gully and walk up the temple's hillock and enter through the east gate.

The Temple is a square beige building with four large pointed arches open to the cardinal directions. There are four rounded structures on each corner the color of red soil. The top of the temple is open and has a series of rusted steel rings intersecting to a hoop on top of them. There is a fire pit in the middle of the temple with iron circles showing four phases of the moon hung near the blazing fire within the pit illuminating statues and pictures of various Goddesses. The full and brilliant moon rose in the East shining between bands of clouds. The south wind picked up and was driving the smoke of the fire out the north arch toward snow covered and jagged mountains gleaming in the bright moonlight. Crone Witch Patricia said that the moon was at its brightest in many years. The full moon easily outshone the glow of Las Vegas.

The Goddesses were invoked and invited, first from the east then the south. The last phrase to say is "So mote it be" which is something like an Amen. As each was invited everyone faced that direction with their hands raised. Crone Witch Patricia then read the charge of the Goddess, telling us that we could call on her during the full moon and at eight other times a year. A libation was made to the Earth and Goddess. She and her assistant's drew a circle around the Temple outside. We introduced ourselves with any name we wanted to use and then the name was chanted 3 times. Then Crone Witch Patricia instructed us to make three wishes, the first one for ourselves, the second one for

another and the third one for the world. She explained that it is important to care for yourself so you can do the work for others and the world. We would all get a chance to say our wishes aloud. One little boy, about 3, couldn't wait to make his wishes and kept interrupting asking when it was wish time. Patricia would stop and talk to him like a grandmother to a special grandson.

My wishes were to recall my spirit, health and wellness for the Fitzgerald sisters and that the Divine give us the will to eliminate and never use these terrible and awful weapons of indiscriminate mass destruction we have made. After we made our wishes we tossed a piece of moonbread into the fire. I was surprised at my vehemence and passion, perhaps Pele was with me. The little boy wished for a new crayon of a different color when it was his turn. Everyone when "ahh".

Then we chanted faster and faster and directed our wishes and prayers out the roof opening of the temple as if they were being born and delivered. Patricia instructed us to touch the ground then to cackle. Cackling was very important she said and it was the most fun I've ever had at a worship service. We then thanked the various Goddesses in reverse order, Earth, Heavens, North, West, South and East. The ceremony ended with an invitation to eat drink and dance at the gathering site below the Temple. I did not stay for that part but returned with my friend Norm to the motel room in Indian Springs. Though I hated to wash off the smells of smoke and incense from the Temple, the shower did feel heavenly.

Day 6 Thursday April 17 Passover

"Moses said to the people, "Remember this day, on which you came out of Egypt, from the place of slavery, for by the strength of his hand, Yahweh brought you out of it."
Exodus 13: 3

Breakfast at the dorm of the Goddess temple was very cheerful. Mark and Doug reported having a good sleep in the desert nearby the dorms. I must say I enjoyed a very restful night. Hot water is a great blessing of civilization.

We gathered and continued our walk toward the Nevada Test Site. Norm and I talked about the motivations of people who fight in wars. He discussed his experiences as a bombardier and felt that it was just a job. Now he has deep regret for his part in war and killing and is with us for this reason. It gives me great comfort to walk with such a man, a man who can repent and feel his responsibilities and act on them. You cast your lot in with the greater part in this world, the human soul and the Divine. Norm has done this. I am proud to know him.

Becky, Larry and I discussed life in Montana and I learned about cold frames. These are insulated enclosures which keep your garden bed warm and extend the growing season a month or two. Larry also discussed his activism and Becky her work as a consultant to non-profits.

We had lunch by some eroded cliffs near a dry streambed. Crone Witch Patricia delivered lunch to us on the road. She had breads, cheeses and fresh eggs laid by the hens that lived near the Goddess Temple. While we ate she told us the history of the Goddess Temple of

Sekhmet at Cactus Springs. Genevieve Vaughan was a rich woman from Texas and she and her husband could not have children. In her travels, she encountered an ancient statue of the Egyptian Goddess Sekhmet. She developed a devotion to Sekhmet. Sekhmet is the lion-headed Egyptian Goddess of birth, fertility, and rage. Genevieve immediately conceived and had several daughters over the years. Genevieve Vaughan and her daughters wanted to make a place for worship and bought 22 acres of desert in Cactus Springs, Nevada. They gave the 20 acres of land back to the Western Shoshone to whom the land originally belonged. In 1992 Genevieve Vaughan and her daughters built a small temple on the remaining 2 acres using straw bales and stucco. This sacred place in the Nevada desert serves the peaceful and spiritual community as a place for centering and meditation for many local people. The Temple provides a calm space of refuge for opponents of nuclear weapons tests of any sort. The temple houses statues of Sekhmet and of Madre del Mundo, both created by indigenous sculptor Marsha Gomez. The Goddess is also represented in many other beautiful forms. The Temple itself was entirely constructed by women. Crone Witch Patricia is the third Keeper of the Temple. Patricia also discussed the three stages of a woman's life relative to blood. The Maiden sheds her blood for the Earth, the Mother uses her blood to create life and the Crone keeps her blood in order to develop wisdom. She told us that when the baby boom generation passes through menopause, the planet will change because it has never had so many crones. She predicts that this planetary change will happen around 2012.

After a rest break, with some of us napping in the sandy scree of the cliff's shade, we continued our walk for peace. I was very anxious because Paul had left to pick up Rachel at the airport back in Las Vegas. Paul's support vehicle duties were taken over by Susan and Pat in their motor home. At about 2:30 Paul's pickup went by and he turned around and pulled up. Rachel was with him. I ran up and hugged her to me. I do not like to be apart from her and to be reunited is heavenly. As I introduced Rachel, Norm asked her if it was true that she walked on water. I guess I told my friends that I missed her a bit too often. We walked and talked together across the Nevada desert, so much like the place we were married.

Along this stretch of highway, a man driving a large silver pickup truck swerved into our line. I was immediately very angry at his cowardly act and began praying for forgiveness for both of us. Rachel was a bit behind me talking with Mark. Mark became very protective. Doug told of a dear friend of his who marched with Dr. King during the 1960s. During one march, someone swerved into their line with their vehicle, and his friend threw a rock at the vehicle. Dr. King refused to let him march for months.

As the sun dipped into the west, we stopped at the campsite for the night on BLM land about ¼ mile off the highway. This site was on a gravel road and had several smooth areas for tenting. Mark, Allen, Rachel and I set up our tent and went searching for firewood. Rachel and I found a large dug out area used as a dump and it had several armfuls of usable wood. Dinner was served at sunset. Larry had harvested and brought some morel mushrooms from Montana and served them after lightly sautéing them in butter and they were wonderful. The wind had come up and clouds threatening rain were trailing in from the northwest. It made for an outstanding sunset.

After dinner and cleanup we all met around the fire to discuss the risks, procedures and consequences of crossing the line into the Nevada Test Site. A very lively discussion of the pros and cons of being arrested lead by Leslie, Asha and Allen followed. Allen, who

has been cited many times at the test site felt that despite the war against Iraq, the Nye County sheriffs would most likely cite us and not prosecute. This is due to two reasons. First, Nye County is poor and cannot afford to prosecute. Second is that we are supposed to have passes we have allowing us to enter the land issued by the Shoshone nation. This is a legal issue which the authorities do not want to bring to court. The Nevada Test Site is actually owned by the Western Shoshone nation under the Ruby Valley treaty of 1863. Article 5 defines the Shoshone nation's boundaries. Allen told us that the sheriffs treated us well in the past and were friendly about our civil disobedience. Larry asked about what was the point of being friendly with the authorities and what good would all this do for our cause. Allen answered honestly that this action probably did very little good for our cause, the abolition of nuclear arms. I thought about it a while and added that we are acting against the spirituality of the Nevada Test Site, Department of Energy and Bechtel Engineering (which operates the Nevada Test Site). I argued that they have all the arms, police, and money. The nuclear infrastructure is the spiritual center of our secular civilization and its god is our national security. We can attempt to persuade the workers and managers there. We can grapple with them on the spiritual and moral level. I gave examples in history of peoples walking away from immoral practices. Asha gave a great example of a people walking away from slavery and idolatry of all--the Jews leaving Egypt.

I returned to our tent and the wind began to gust very strongly. The tent began to bow to the wind gusts so much it actually pressed against our faces inside. It rained and there once was a burst of lightening above us followed by a very loud clap of thunder. Though a little water blew into the tent we slept well.

Day 7 Friday, April 18, Good Friday

“Dies irae, dies illa solvet saeculum in favilla, teste David cum Sibylla.

[Day of wrath, day that will dissolve the world into burning coals, as David bore witness with the Sibyll.]

Recordare, Iesu pie, quid sum causa tuae viae, ne me perdas illa die.

[Remember, faithful Jesus, because I am the cause of your journey: do not lose me on that day.]

Lacrimosa dies illa, qua resurget ex favilla iudicandus homo reus: huic ergo parce, Deus.

[That sorrowful day, on which will arise from the burning coals Man accused to be judged: therefore, O God, do Thou spare him.]”

Verses from Dies Irae, 13th Century

We woke just before dawn on Good Friday. We left the tent in the new light of the rising sun. The desert looked vibrant and clean, fresh as it must have looked on the day of creation. We were 5 miles from the Nevada Test Site, the most frequently atomic bombed place on Earth.

Before breakfast, all of us disassembled our camp and equipment, cleaned our areas and loaded up tents, sleeping bags and luggage into the waiting vehicles. After a quiet breakfast, we gathered in a circle. Becky had a crystalline rock she had found in Israel and wanted to leave at the Nevada Test Site. She passed it around the circle and as we

handled it we each spoke of the desires which brought us here. Allen, Paul and others wished to remember peacemakers who marched before us. One man, from Minnesota who had just joined us, wanted to remember Philip Berrigan and his wife, whom he knew. Also he invoked the Plowshares community and their long labor for peace and abolition of atomic weapons. A great light went out of our world and into the next one when Philip Berrigan passed on. I spoke of one of my heroes who died last year, Joe Strummer of the rock band The Clash. I quoted from one of my favorite Clash songs, "No one born with a living soul can be working for the clampdown, working for the clampdown, waiting to be melted down". Rachel remembered Paul Wellstone and Richard McSorely. Others of us spoke of wives, children, teachers and communities that they bring with them. Our circle was very personal, intimate and sacred at the same time. The rhythm of walking was familiar and lulling until the test site came into view after walking around a long bend to the north. I began to feel the same dread I felt when we were here in December of 1999, that there is a spirit of vast evil crouching over this land. I realized that what I was sensing is the inner spirituality of this Power or institution. Like us it is in need of salvation and unlike us its goals can do so much more harm. I thought of my many teachers who had brought me to this moment and I felt (and continue to feel) great gratitude. I remembered something Phillip K. Dick wrote in Valis, where he had a vision of the early Christians in white robes joyfully dancing around the black iron prison of the Empire and history and breaking it apart because in eternity good had already triumphed and the Empire's history vanished in the twinkling of an eye. I am so filled with gratitude for the greater spirit who goes before me and illuminates our walk with a golden and kindly light.

We arrived at the turnoff to the Nevada Test Site and gathered in a circle on a gravel parking lot on the west side of Highway 95. A warning sign was posted telling traffic to proceed at 25 MPH because protesters were present! The test site entrance is to the east beyond the underpass. Corbett, Margaret and Willie of the Western Shoshone nation were there to greet us. Again Corbett burned sage while walking around inside the circle and told us how important our walk is to the Shoshone people and the Earth. It's the same Earth for everyone, the mother to us all he told us. Then Margaret sang the People's Song to us to bless us. He asked for those to speak to speak now.

A woman who is an anti-nuclear activist spoke to us about the plans approved by the Bush administration to put highly radioactive waste in Yucca Mountain about 40 miles away. Apparently in the 2000 presidential campaign, Bush promised to carefully examine the proposal to store nuclear waste there. In 24 hours he reviewed the 80 pounds of documentation and agreed to the DOE proposal. The main problems with the Yucca Mountain disposal site are that it is on stolen Western Shoshone land and it would contaminate groundwater which could then endanger millions of people nearby it would. She warned us against drinking water from local wells. Another way this plan could endanger millions more people across the country is because the transporting of nuclear waste by truck or train will take it through more than 100 cities with population over 100,000 and within one-half mile of over 50 million people. The Yucca Mountain site is also an active earthquake zone, with 33 faults on site and three dormant volcanoes nearby. The original proposal called for 5% engineering and 95% containment by the mountain. The latest plan requires 95% of the containment be engineered. These serious

risks are the price of having our nuclear arms, our indiscriminate weapons of mass destruction. This seems the root of our nation's evil.

Very sobered, we proceeded down the entrance road underpass to the gate of the Nevada Test Site. Along the fence line leading to the gate was the 14 Nuclear Stations of the Cross. At each station, a volunteer held up a large photograph of people in wars or poverty and the women and men did alternate readings about the passion of Jesus and statements about our capacity to tolerate nuclear arms, our willingness to live in nuclear denial and our complicity in keeping peoples and nations in conditions of poverty and oppression in order to afford these weapons. This was a wrenching experience. Both Rachel and I were impressed how the Nuclear Stations of the Cross were treated respectfully by the three Jewish women of our group. Such compassion and mindfulness are the fruits of good religious practice.

As we approached the gate, the county sheriffs in desert camouflage uniforms began to move out of their vehicles toward the gate. Allen and Emma holding hands came up to the white line painted across the road demarcating the Nevada Test Site. Allen said, "We are the oldest and the youngest and first to cross the line". They stepped across the line joyfully. The sheriffs' deputies separated them and guided Allen to the first of two cyclone fence enclosures. Emma was guided to the second enclosure by two female deputies. One of the deputies said that we were in good hands.

Rachel and I stepped over the line together. Holding hands we were guided to the enclosures. We were thinking of many friends and family as we crossed the line. I remembered those who generously sponsored my walk. Before we were separated, I gave Rachel a kiss. I could hear our friends clapping. Then we were put into separate enclosures. I saw that Richard had been put in the enclosure and I gave him a hug. I suddenly felt a great burst of sadness, fear and shock and we held each other for a few seconds. The clouds, which had been gathering all morning, began to drop fat raindrops and the wind gusted strongly. I went to the corner of the enclosure deepest into the test site territory and began to pray for forgiveness and redemption of the terrible pride and sins of our nation's top priority, the design, production and perfecting of these atomic horrors.

Gradually, I felt peace come over me. I remembered a priest's comment that, "I do my best work while in prison". He said this when he was jailed for the seventh time for 6 months as a result of his acts of civil disobedience at the School of the Americas. I understood his remark better.

Seven men and 18 women went over the line. As I was being processed by a deputy, I told him that we are doing this because we love Jesus. He was a tough older veteran who earlier told me that he had been doing this too many years. He looked me in the face with a slightly startled look, blue eyes peering at me over the tops of his eyeglasses. Suddenly his face looked naked and boyish. "I know," he said.

"And he [the angel] said to them, Be not afraid. You seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified: he is risen ..."

Mark 16: 6