



Dear Pope Benedict XVI:

As a prominent defender of the sanctity of human life before birth, we are writing to you to ask that you be a prominent defender of human life also, on behalf of the thousands of lives being lost in the occupied land of Iraq.

Pope John Paul II was openly critical and took a strong stand against the invasion of Iraq by convening to the Vatican the leaders of most of the countries involved. Tragically, he did not succeed in convincing these world leaders to stop the invasion. However, the hearts of millions of people throughout the world were filled with his words that rang out against the devastation that such an act of arrogance and lack of compassion is causing.

Let Pope John Paul II's actions and words be of inspiration at this time of darkness and desperation, during this "war of the mighty against the weak."

Cindy Sheehan had chosen life for her son Casey, killed in Iraq. She has come to Rome frequently, welcomed by representatives of the Province and the City of Rome, including the Mayor. She has spoken on behalf of all the mothers and fathers whose children have been killed in Iraq, as well as innocent civilians. She has repeatedly asked President Bush to speak to her in person or answer her letters. He has always refused. Cindy Sheehan needs your help, Holy Father, in calling for an end of this war and occupation.

We, the U.S. Citizens for Peace & Justice of Rome, strongly believe that there is no "just" war. Any war is a failure of communicating through words, which is a gift only human beings are granted. But this is not simply an unjust war. This is a war of aggression and illegal occupation of a sovereign nation, one which happens to have the third largest source of oil in the world. The countries that form the coalition of the willing all have invested interests in securing the precious liquid. Most of the Bush family is notably tied to the oil industry, in various ways.

How "noble" is their cause? How "just" can this war ever be? Young soldiers, women and children are dying for oil the god of all gods, for those who profit from it. On the occasion of the funerals of the Italian soldiers killed in Iraq, your message said: "L'attacco a chi sosteneva un'azione di pace, è stato un gesto vile e ha riaperto in Italia nuove ferite. Ma ai genitori dei giovani uccisi, voglio esprimere gratitudine".

Like Cindy Sheehan, all those parents, too, had chosen life for their children, only to have them killed, not for a just war but because they were illegally occupying a foreign land. There can be no peace under occupation.

If convening to the Vatican the leaders of all nations involved in the occupation is not possible, we urge you to continue to make repeated strong clear public pronouncements against the continuation of the occupation. We hope that your words bring shame to the hearts and minds of these "mighty" people who cause so much suffering without ever expressing one word of repentance.

Sincerely and respectfully,
U.S. Citizens for Peace and Justice-Rome; Statunitensi per la Pace e la Giustizia
info@peaceandjustice.it , www.peaceandjustice.it