



# The World Community for Christian Meditation

Published on *The World Community for Christian Meditation* (<http://www.wccm.org>)

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## Veterans' Day 2011-- A note from Pax Christi USA

Greetings!

Most celebrate November 11th as Veteran's Day, but it is also the feast of St Martin of Tours. This fourth-century bishop is often touted as a patron of warriors, but his actions tell a different story. Two years after his baptism, Martin, a Roman cavalryman, had an epiphany before a battle: "I am a soldier of Christ," he said, "I cannot fight." He was jailed for his objection, even though he volunteered to go to the front lines naked to prove his devotion.

In many periods, this saint's history has been remolded to glorify the soldier's role in the Christian state, most prominently in France during 19th and 20th century Republican campaigns. But this Veteran's Day, Pax Christi USA points to Veterans for Peace and their much closer likeness to the conscientious, unpopular peace witness of St Martin.

The way to truly honor our veterans is not to pat them on the back and send them back out into unjust, horrifying campaigns with no end in sight, nor to leave them traumatized and poor in the streets of our hometowns. Rather, it is our responsibility to support conscientious objection and "make equitable provision for those who for reasons of conscience refuse to bear arms" (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2311), and to begin to heal the wounds of war at home and abroad. This means standing up for the rights of veterans - both the highly visible members like Scott Olsen, the recent victim of police brutality in Oakland, and the less visible, those impoverished and abandoned by their government despite serious physical and spiritual wounds.

In peace,

Taylor Reese

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[www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org)

[www.paxchristi.net](http://www.paxchristi.net)

PRAY: Preparations for Peace

Almighty God, you are the King of Creation. You created order out of chaos, and you call us to strive for the peace that is not like the peace empires bring. Teach us to drop the weapons we carry in our hands, in our hearts, and on our tongues. Enable us to be soldiers of yours who destroy the weapons of our oppressors with Your grace. Amen.

(Taken from Common Prayer: a Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals. [To visit the Common Prayer website, click here.](#))

Peace & Justice

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**Source URL:** <http://www.wccm.org/content/veterans-day-2011-note-pax-christi-usa>