Campus postal safety alert issued

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Members of the Holy Cross community gathered in the Mary Chapel for a Vigil for Peace and Remembrance on Oct. 11, one month long after the tragedies in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania. Organized and facilitated by members of Holy Cross Pax Christi, the vigil served to encourage a nonviolent response to the terrorist attacks, as well as to remember the thousands of innocent lives that were senselessly cut short.

The various elements of the vigil - songs, words, and reflection - summoned members of the community to join together during these times of strife in order to work for peace. “All Are Welcome,” the gathering hymn, invited all people “to build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live.” This opening desire for peace through unity was further reflected in Pax Christi’s choice to read a selection from the Koran in addition to a reading from the Bible.

In the wake of the terrorist attacks, the religion of Islam has unjustly received criticism for instigating acts of violence, and through a reading from the holy book of the Islamic faith Pax Christi reminded all present that the Islamic faith was not responsible for the events of Sept. 11.

Chapter 93, “The Morning Hours,” was read by Patrick Tigue ’04: “Thy Lord hath not forsaken thee nor doth he hate thee.” Kelly Sweeney ’02 then shared the peaceful message from Luke 6:27-38: “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.” In addition to demonstrating the similar morals shared by the two religions, these two powerful readings also provided a sense of peace that is crucial in lessening our community’s confusion and anger.

Erica Buswell ’02 offered her own touching reflection of the recent disasters. She emphasized that despite our anger, hurt, and confusion, our ability to love will not waver, and that love will be victorious during this time of hate. Buswell’s hopeful message truly reflected Pax Christi’s belief “that violence ignites greater violence and that in the long line of history our only lasting legacy is love.”

The vigil then shifted its focus to the innocent lives that were tragically lost on Sept. 11. Katleen Ruyak ’03 invited those present to “come forward to light a candle in honor of those who lost their lives so unexpectedly.” For some of us, it gives us the chance to properly say ‘I love you’ and ‘goodbye.’” One by one, those gathered at the vigil approached the altar to light a candle in memory of a family member, a friend, and members of the Holy Cross community who perished on that day.

Whitney Smith ’03 lost a close friend in the World Trade Center. She said that this part of the vigil “gave me the opportunity to put closure to my friend’s death.” Many other students present shared in this same sentiment.

The Closing Prayer read by Nancy Ryan ’04, moderator of the vigil, desired that we “may believe in this light, take comfort and strength from it and each other, rejoicing in God’s faithfulness and ever-present love.” It was quite apparent that the lighting of the candles in remembrance fulfilled this purpose.

At the conclusion of the vigil, the poignant words of the song “Let There Be Peace on Earth” rang throughout the Mary Chapel. In a world that is now marked by violence and chaos, Pax Christi’s vigil provided a much-needed haven of peace and reminded many of their call as Christians to commit themselves to nonviolence as witnesses of God’s love.