

Holy Name
Province

Franciscan Friars
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Dear Brothers,

It has been one week since the beginning of this sad war with Iraq. Any American who strives to follow the way of St. Francis must be torn by the violence of this conflict and the sight of our fellow citizen soldiers caught in harms way. I have, and remain fundamentally opposed to this preemptive war but I find it difficult to reconcile my ideological concerns with the human suffering now occurring on both sides of this conflict. I write you not with answers but with a plea that we pray for and advocate for, whenever and wherever possible, a speedy and just end to this war. Whatever the goals that brought us to this tragic state, nothing warrants the unnecessary lose of human life on either side of the war.

As Franciscans, we are brothers to all. We are compelled, in season and out, to speak of peace to a world always torn by conflict. Let us pray for the American and allied soldiers facing battle. Let us pray for the Iraqi soldiers as well, just as beloved of God. Above all, let us pray for the innocent ones caught in the middle of this war. It is easy to demonize the enemy. It is not so easy to remind all that we are, first of all, brothers and sisters to one another. Our common humanity demands no less of us.

May God, who alone can turn hearts toward peace, bring a just end to this conflict and may we, called to be instruments of peace, be faithful witnesses to our Franciscan vocation.

Much peace and good.

Fraternally,

Fr. John M. Felice, OFM
Provincial Minister