

NONVIOLENCE, RESISTANCE AND COMMUNITY

are the pillars on which Jonah House is based. We have come to understand them as interdependent.

NONVIOLENCE

People at Jonah House are committed to making *nonviolence* a way of life. We agree that “Thou shalt not kill” has no exceptions: we believe that we are commanded by our faith not to kill and, beyond that, to resist killing in our name. More – we know that nonviolence involves the utmost respect for each other, for all people (individually and collectively), and for all creation.

RESISTANCE

Resistance implies actions in opposition to unjust practices, policies, institutions and systems. As a community, we commit to speaking out about the connection between warmaking and homelessness, hunger, despair and poverty. The particular focus of Jonah House has been acting, engaging in nonviolent civil resistance against war and for the abolition of all weapons of mass destruction.

COMMUNITY

We learned slowly and are still learning that *community* is vital to our nonviolence and resistance. The essence of community for us is breathing together on behalf of life (which is the meaning of conspiracy). Key to the Jonah House Community is a common purse and consistent resistance to the hierarchy and exchange values of the dominant culture. Decisions are made together. Work is shared in all its aspects. Study, prayer, writing, teaching and manual labor are all important components of our life.



FAITH

Jonah House is a faith-based community. While the majority of people at Jonah House have been Catholic with an emphasis on the anti-war social justice teachings of the church, people of all faiths are welcome. We pray together each weekday at 7 a.m. – reading and reflecting on the Scripture readings for the day. We host a house church with Scripture study and a simple Eucharist on Sundays at 10:00 a.m., open to the wider community, followed by brunch.

People at Jonah House are encouraged to take time each day in personal prayer; some pray while they work; others set aside a specific period of time for prayer. There are no hard and fast rules. We submit ourselves to the over-arching standard of nonviolence: love of enemies (Mt. 5:43), love for one another (Jn. 13:34), living by the truth (Jn. 3:21).



FOOD PANTRY

Each Tuesday about 100 people, who have been made poor or homeless, come to Jonah House to pick up bags of food. We gather the food from our garden (in season), from the local food bank, and from wherever we can. We give blankets and clothes when we have them. Each person who comes has a story that reveals more of the injustice system. They remind us of the ways the military budget (more than \$45,000 a second as of 2009) should be spent – for homes, jobs, education, food, clothing and health care.

SISTER COMMUNITIES

Jonah House is part of a network of individuals and communities along the east coast that calls itself “**The Atlantic Life Community.**” That community has waxed and waned over the years but there is a strong committed core of people who gather for retreat twice a year – over Mothers’ Day Weekend and Labor Day Weekend. People in the Atlantic Life Community also come together for acts of peace witness and personal support. The ties that bind us one to another are those of friendship and the values we have come to share deeply.

Jonah House and the **Dorothy Day Catholic Worker House in D.C** organize three *Faith and Resistance Retreats* each year: one during Holy Week, the second on the anniversaries of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the first week of August, and the third at the Feast of the Holy Innocents in December. These retreats operate on the praxis of reflection/action/reflection. Inspirational and informational presentations lead to public witness, prepared by the community that gathers, at the Pentagon, The White House and other sites in D.C.. Then the presentation and the action are evaluated and the community moves to the next stage of retreat.

PLOWSHARES

Plowshares actions take their name from Isaiah 2:4: *"They shall beat swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor shall they learn war any more."*

The first plowshares action was September 1980 at the General Electric plant in King of Prussia, PA. Eight people, including Philip Berrigan, hammered and poured their blood on the Mark 12A nuclear missile components. Since then there have been more than 80 plowshares actions which have included many people from Jonah House. Each action community, grounded in prayer, seeks to disarm a weapon or delivery system for a nuclear weapon or weapon of mass destruction.



Blood, poured in the sign of the cross, and hammers, often with a message imprinted on them, are elements of many plowshares.

VISITING & RETREATS AT JONAH HOUSE

People come to Jonah House for retreats. Student groups come for a week, working with us and reflecting with us on nonviolence and resistance. Some come for shorter or longer periods of time to experience community life.

Visitors are welcome for retreats, to explore community, or become acquainted with us. People are also welcome to come to the community on an internship basis for three months, six months, or a year.



GRATITUDE

Members of the present community are deeply grateful to all who built the community and the house in which it lives. to all who sustain the community with their work and joys, their tears and sufferings. to all who were ever part of Jonah House as well as all who support us in any way including those in resistance community, who have been and are enjoined in resistance to the empire and its violence and all who are part of the liturgy circle.

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JONAH HOUSE

... began as a community in 1973 with a group of people that included Philip Berrigan, a Catholic priest, and Elizabeth McAlister, formerly a Catholic nun. The community later called itself Jonah House. With the name, meanings accrued:

If God could use Jonah for the works of justice, there is hope for each of us.

Are we not all reluctant prophets?

From its inception, the community included religious and lay people, married and single people, children and adults, younger and older people.

The community lived in a row-house in west Baltimore for 23 years, and moved to St. Peter's Cemetery in 1996. The community lives in the 22 acre cemetery and cares for the grounds. The community maintains a vegetable garden and dozens of fruit trees, berry bushes, flowers and ornamentals.

Almost half of the cemetery has been cleared; the rest is woods overgrown with vines. In time, in order to deal with poison ivy and other invasive plants, the Cemetery Foundation brought in two llamas as guard animals for goats. Goats came, followed by guinea fowl (they eat ticks and mosquitoes) and two donkeys, symbols of nonviolence, that help trim the grass.

