

- An extraordinary multi-national dialogue was held this past Thanksgiving between scientists and theologians, convened by the International Council of Scientific Unions this prestigious circle formulated a common agenda for making our entire planet a nuclear free zone. There has been a rather remarkable convergence of studies over the past two years of the nuclear winter hypothesis by U.S. and Soviet scientists alike. Indeed there appears to be a robust solidarity developing among many enemies in this field. They are convinced that war with multiple nuclear explosions would set off devastating environmental disasters, as if radioactive debris, and the prospect of ozone depletion were not enough cold, and darkness caused by the intercontinental spread of smoke and dust in such a scenario is projected to destroy or impair life throughout the entire planet. What to make of this, on this day of epiphany? A chance within our own lifetime for encountering the ultimate darkness? An opportunity to pierce straight down the misfit's gun barrel, make that missile silo. Our own or anyone else's. It's certainly not a situation we'd like to think about for very long, it's too much like taking an endless journey into the darkness, yet as arms talks resume this week in Geneva, it seems that some brave soul has to think about it, or better yet, pray about it. For thus far very few seem able to even envision a way out of this mad race towards extinction. Meanwhile, we all go on living our lives almost naively under the shadow of the prospects of a darkness which shall cover the earth. One which surpasses even the prophet Isaiah's wildest imagination. Revelations don't often come easy, especially for those of us who don't venture very readily into strange places, yet as Christ himself has shown us, there is no epiphany without encountering the darkness head on. There is no starlight without the blackness of the sky which surrounds it. There is no prince of peace in a manger without a savior of the world on the cross, and that's the good news, that even death wasn't enough to overcome the light of the world, the best and the brightest of all. Let us then on this epiphany lay aside our fear of the darkness and venture forth with Christ into the dimly lit places in our lives, that there, we may truly receive the light, amen. (somber organ music) (chorus harmonizes with the music)

- Let us unite in this historic confession of the Christian faith. I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth and in Jesus Christ his only son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. The third day he rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty, from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting, amen. The Lord be with you.

- [Audience In Unison] And with you.

- Let us pray. Let us pray for the church and for the world. Grant almighty God that all who confess your name may be united in your truth live together in your love, and reveal your glory in all the world. Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer. Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations in the ways of justice and peace that we may honor one another and serve the common good. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Give us all a reverence for the earth, as your own creation that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others and to your honor and glory. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer. Bless all those whose lives are closely linked with ours, grant that we may serve Christ in them and love one another as he loves us. Lord in your mercy hear our prayer. Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind or spirit, give them courage, and hope in all their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation. Lord in your mercy hear our prayer, through Jesus Christ our Lord, amen, and now as an enlightened, as a forgiven and reconciled people let us offer ourselves and our gifts to God. (audience rustling quietly) (bright music) (inspiring organ music)

- Oh God because your light has (electronic screeching) into our darkness, we give you thanks. For the gifts which are ours in Jesus Christ we praise your name and your glory. Praying as we have been taught, our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven, give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespassed against us, and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen. (bright organ music) (chorus harmonizes)

- And now may the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and always, amen. (bright music) (music fades) (upbeat music) (audience applauds) (audience murmuring)