

Union of Saints

Reconciling with the War, Within and Without

War does not end when troops return home. Its echoes reverberate within our minds, our bodies, and our communities. The battlefields overseas leave their mark in our memories, while the conflicts here—political, social, cultural, and even within our own families—create wars of their own.

Psychological wellbeing is strained when we are asked to carry both: the memory of violence abroad and the turmoil of discord here. The nervous system learns to live on edge, scanning for danger, bracing against harm. Sometimes, even in peace, the war within us continues.

To reconcile with the war is not to pretend it never happened, nor to deny its impact. Reconciliation begins with *acknowledgment*: naming what was lost, what was broken, what remains unresolved. From there, we practice gentleness with ourselves and one another. We find spaces of safety and rituals of grounding—breathing deeply, listening deeply, learning to trust that not every sound is a threat.

Moving forward does not mean forgetting. It means choosing life, even in the shadow of loss. It means allowing ourselves to find beauty again, to connect again, to laugh, to weep, to remember without being destroyed by the remembering.

We move forward best when we walk together—veterans and civilians, families and strangers, those who carry visible scars and those who carry hidden ones. Healing is communal as much as it is individual. By tending to each other with compassion, by honoring both the resilience and the fragility of our spirits, we lay down the weapons we hold inside.

The war may never fully leave us, but we can choose to walk toward peace—one step, one breath, one shared story at a time.