

# Baltimore peace activist has no regrets

Susan Crane is no stranger to prisons.



The longtime anti-nuclear peace activist, a resident of the Jonah House community in West Baltimore, has already served five years for various peace actions – including a 1999 protest at the Warfield Air National Guard base in Middle River, where she and three others hammered and poured blood on two A-10 Warthog aircraft. The demonstrators tried to raise awareness that the planes had the capacity to fire depleted uranium.

Crane is at it again. One year ago on All Souls’ Day, she used a bolt cutter to rip open chain-link fences at a U.S. Navy nuclear weapons storage depot in Bangor, Wash.

Working with two Jesuit priests, a Sacred Heart Sister and another lay woman, Crane helped sprinkle blood on the property and symbolically hammered on roadways and fences. The Catholic peace activists unfurled a banner that declared Trident missiles to be “illegal” and “immoral.” They also scattered sunflower seeds – the international symbol of nonviolence.

Charged with conspiracy, trespass, destruction of property on a naval installation and degradation of government property, Crane and the others await the start of a Dec. 7 federal trial in Tacoma.

I had a chance to talk with Crane for a story in this week’s Catholic Review. She was as passionate as ever and not in the least bit remorseful for what she did. She knows she’s facing the possibility of a long prison sentence.

No matter what you think of her tactics or position on the issue, I’d encourage you to check out the story and consider her reasoning. She is convinced that her Catholic faith compels her to oppose nuclear weapons.

Here are some questions and answers that didn’t make it into the story:

**Matysek:** Have you given any thought to what you will do if you have to spend time in prison?

**Crane:** *I'm a special education teacher, so I would probably teach GED classes. The women are very interested in learning. There's no lack of work to do. I'd try to get a Bible study group going. The conditions in federal prisons aren't made to encourage people. They are made to degenerate people who are considered throw-aways in society.*

**Matysek:** How can you raise awareness about nuclear weapons if you are in prison?

**Crane:** *Certainly, inside the prison, there's a lot of work that can be done and a lot of listening that can happen. A lot of people have written to me and I'll be able to write to some of them.*

**Matysek:** Do you have any regrets for the actions you have taken?

**Crane:** *I don't have regret for going in and saying no to these weapons. I wonder if I can do enough. I do hope other people will think about these weapons and realize how devastating they are. Every president except Johnson has threatened to use weapons against another nation. That's staggering. We have to stop threatening to use them to get our way.*

**Matysek:** If you had not been stopped and arrested after you entered the naval property, what would you have done?

**Crane:** *Probably put up our banner and symbolically hammer on the bunker. It's a symbolic action, yet it's real. We are saying as clearly as we can we need to disarm these weapons.*