

# Pax Christi USA

NATIONAL CATHOLIC PEACE MOVEMENT



including possibilities of troop increases. We learned in September that General Stanley A. McChrystal, the top military commander in Afghanistan, warned in a classified assessment that the conflict "will likely result in failure" without additional troops. It is important, while this document and others are being reviewed, that we continue to contact our Congressional representatives and President Barack Obama, stating our opposition. Calls to oppose escalation are coming from many directions, including from conservative commentators, so it is all the more important to join this growing movement.

In the last newsletter, we asked you to save the date for our Pax Christi USA 2010 National Conference in Chicago. We have had to change the dates of the Conference and apologize for any inconvenience. The correct date is **June 25-27, 2010**. Please watch our Website and future newsletters to learn more.

At Pax Christi USA, preparations are underway for this Conference and other programs of prayer, study, and action for 2010. We are excited about the opportunities we as a movement have to foster peace, nonviolence, and reconciliation, but we cannot do it without you. We need your voices, your prayer, your commitment, and your financial support. Once again, I ask you to prayerfully consider an extra gift beyond your regular membership dues. Simply fill

out the enclosed Economic Justice for All Fund envelope and return it with your tax-deductible check to Pax Christi USA. You can also give securely at our Web site, either a one-time donation or as a member of Pax Christi USA's Sustainers' Circle for Peace (monthly, automatic contributions by credit card or electronic funds transfer from your bank account). I thank you for all you do to support the work of peace, justice, and nonviolence in so many ways.

Sometimes it seems as if whatever contributions we make are but a drop in the bucket. It may be difficult to not be discouraged when we see the divided nature of Iraq and Afghanistan, brother against sister, neighbor against neighbor, echoed in our own country and communities. Yet just as the Pax Christi International delegation to Iraq spent much time listening and learning, so we are called to listen to and learn from all of our sisters and brothers. We are called to carry out Jesus' message of nonviolence in our every-day lives, in all we do and say. As we continue to undertake this difficult, life-long calling, may we always remember that we do so in the company of peacemakers from all around the globe.

In peace,  
*Dave Robinson*

Dave Robinson, Executive Director, Pax Christi USA

### (Afghanistan, continued from p. 6)

As of mid-September, polls showed that 54% of the U.S. people believe the Afghanistan war is a mistake. October and November are critical months for people of conscience to act to ensure that neither a troop escalation in Afghanistan nor a deepening of the U.S. occupation happens. Pax Christi USA is asking members, local groups, campuses, regions, and parishes to consider the following actions:

- Circulate the petition from Tom Hayden included in this newsletter. Add your name online at <http://gopetition.com/online/30533.html>.
- Use the Pax Christi USA statement, "It is Time to End the Trail of Resentment and Hatred" (published in *America* in August) in education efforts at your church, school, or community. (See the Afghanistan resource page on the Pax Christi USA Website, [www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org).)
- Attend or sponsor the Pax Christi USA national speaking tour, "Turning the Page on the War on Terror: Alternative Approaches for Afghanistan, Paki-

stan, and Beyond" featuring author Tom Cordaro. Events are planned for October in California, North Dakota, and Illinois. (See the Afghanistan resource page on the Pax Christi USA Website.)

- October 7 marks the anniversary of the Bush Administration's bombing campaign in Afghanistan. Commemorate this anniversary with prayer, study, and action aimed at raising awareness, calling for NO troop escalation, and demanding an exit strategy. United for Peace and Justice, the anti-war coalition to which we belong, is asking people to tell the Obama Administration that "Change ≠ War."
- Throughout October and November, consider sponsoring teach-ins on the costs, human and economic, of the occupation and war in Afghanistan and impact on the region; vigils, pickets, and delegations to Congressional offices, as well as faxes, emails, and calls; rallies, demonstrations, vigils, and marches to bring the peace and justice message into the streets; creative actions to highlight the devastating effects of the Drone air strikes; and more (from United for Peace and Justice).

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### PEACEMAKING: Day by Day

War is an invention of the human mind. The human mind can invent peace with justice.  
- Norman Cousins

\* This quote and hundreds more are available in Pax Christi USA's *Peacemaking Day by Day*, Volume II. To order your copy, visit our Website, [www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org).

**G**reetings of peace. One of the sad realities of our work is that very rarely does real and lasting change happen overnight. Instead, we continue to push on, working and advocating, agitating and educating, many times on the same issues, and often for many years until we see the fruit of our efforts. A good case in point would be continuing military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan. But the situation is crucial, and we cannot let up. Inside you will find prayer, study, and action resources for dealing with these ongoing, unjust wars and occupations. As the reflection on prophets from our dear friend Jim McGinnis reminds us, we are all called to be prophets and to speak out against injustices. Even though Jim has passed on, his words continue to inspire us and to point the way forward.

Last month (September), an international Pax Christi delegation visited Iraq. On the trip, participants met with many bishops, religious leaders, and representatives from civil society groups in the north of Iraq. While the situation is very uncertain and more violence is expected prior to January's elections, the delegation also encountered many people working for human rights, peace, dialogue, understanding, and reconciliation along ethnic and religious lines.

The delegation reported, "*Christians and other minority groups continue to feel threatened in Iraq and to leave the country. This fact is of deep concern to many people the delegation met, who believe that reconciliation is the way forward and that the loss to Iraq of the Christian community, which was established there in the second century, would be a great tragedy. . . . Minority groups are faced with the choices to join the struggle for power, to remain neutral or to work for a society*

*where everybody has a place.*" In a world struggling with divisions of all kinds, what kind of peacemaking are we as Pax Christi called to? The Pax Christi International delegation proposed the following in relation to working for peace in Iraq:

*We urge our churches to:*

- *strengthen the church's role as a builder of bridges;*
- *send official delegations from Bishops conferences in other countries to Iraq to understand the reality better;*
- *promote reconciliation between the different Iraqi Christian churches;*
- *prevent and counter the growth of Christian extremism. . . .*

*We urge the international community to:*

- *support the reconstruction of Iraq;*
- *investigate and prosecute past and present war crimes and severe human rights violations on all sides;*
- *build trust again in the international community and re-establish international law;*
- *work cooperatively to develop a regional system of security and co-operation in the Middle East.*

The two U.S. participants, Bishop Thomas Gumbleton and Marie Dennis, will be speaking around the country in the coming months about what they heard and saw. We are also excited to announce that Marie Dennis will join me and many others—hopefully including you!—at the annual November Pax Christi USA gathering at the School of the Americas vigil in Columbus, Georgia. See page 7 for more information. Marie and I will offer analysis about what factors can lead to reconciliation and peace, rather than continuing war and violence, in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This is particularly important now as we are again hearing calls for escalating the war against Afghanistan,

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Visit [www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org) for more educational and spiritual resources for peace.

**PAX CHRISTI  
USA**

**PAX CHRISTI REGIONS EDUCATE ON  
NONVIOLENCE, PEACEMAKING, SUSTAINABILITY**

This fall, a number of Pax Christi USA regions have focused on various aspects of nonviolence and peacemaking for their regional assemblies. Pax Christi Western New York sponsored a gospel-nonviolence retreat with Fr. Charles McCarthy in early October. Pax Christi Florida brought members together in September to ask “How Shall I Live?” with presentations by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, Dr. Mary Carter Warren, Diane Lopez Hughes, and others. Pax Christi Southern California featured award-winning author Tom Cordaro, speaking on alternative approaches to combating terrorism. Pax Christi New Jersey will host a number of speakers around the theme “Renewing the Face of the Earth” in late October, and Pax Christi Minnesota hosted Fr. Michael Crosby on nonviolence and compassion in September. And Pax Christi New Mexico will feature Fr. Louie Vitale in mid-October. Look for these and other events on the Pax Christi USA homepage.

**PAX CHRISTI USA MOURNS THE LOSS  
OF SENATOR TED KENNEDY**

Pax Christi USA mourns the death of Senator Edward “Ted” Kennedy, who succumbed to brain cancer in late August. Senator Kennedy, who was diagnosed in May 2008, was seen as a champion of many issues important to Catholics concerned with social justice.

“Despite his own status as a person of privilege and power, Senator Kennedy’s legacy will be his work on behalf of the marginalized, the impoverished, and the most vulnerable,” stated Dave Robinson, Executive Director of Pax Christi USA. “He had a deep understanding of and appreciation for Catholic social teaching and its focus on the common good.”

As an effective lawmaker and one of the most powerful people in Washington, Kennedy exerted his influence to make government more responsive to the needs of seniors and children, communities of color, immigrants and workers, and many other “underdogs” looking for someone in power to give voice to their grievances and fight on their behalf.

**PAX CHRISTI USA BISHOP-PRESIDENT  
SIGNS LETTER ON HEALTH CARE REFORM**

In late July, Pax Christi USA Bishop President Gabino Zavala joined a diverse group of religious leaders in calling for significant health care reform.

“Our diverse communities of faith—Jewish, Christian and Muslim—are each shaped and guided by our respective sacred texts which compel us to speak out on behalf of the most vulnerable members of our society. Today that means making comprehensive and compassionate health care reform an urgent priority so that all of our neighbors, especially the people living in poverty, children, and the aged, can be assured of the fullness of life that is central to the holy vision of a beloved and peaceable community,” the letter stated.

Pax Christi USA members Marie Lucey, OSF, on behalf of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, and Russell Testa, Executive Director of the Franciscan Action Network, also signed onto the letter.

**PAX CHRISTI SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN  
HOSTS CANDLELIGHT VIGIL ON SEPTEMBER 11TH**

Pax Christi Southwest Michigan joined several other community groups in marking the eighth anniversary of 9/11 and remembering the victims of that day. PC Southwest Michigan hosted a candlelight vigil at Riverfront Park in downtown Niles, Michigan, including a brief period of prayer and song in remembrance of all victims of 9/11 violence as well as for the conversion of those who believe in terrorism and war. This anniversary of 9/11 was the first year the date was commemorated as a “National Day of Service and Remembrance.”

**PAX CHRISTI LOCAL & REGIONAL GROUPS CALL FOR  
AN END TO UNJUST IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT**

Local Pax Christi groups were among the 500 immigrant-rights and human-rights organizations that sent a letter to the Obama Administration demanding the immediate termination of the Department of Homeland Security’s 287(g) program that allows over 66 different local law enforcement agencies to act as immigration enforcement.

*(continued on p. 3)*



**Iraq and Afghanistan:  
From Violence and War  
to Reconstruction and Reconciliation**

**Friday evening, November 20, 2009  
6:15-8:15 PM in the Presidential Room at the Howard Johnson Inn,  
1011 Veterans’ Parkway, Columbus, GA  
with Marie Dennis, Co-President of Pax Christi International,  
and Dave Robinson, Executive Director of Pax Christi USA**

In late September, a delegation from Pax Christi International, including representatives from Pax Christi sections and affiliates in Italy, France, Germany, and the United States, visited Iraq. The delegation met with a number of in-country Catholic and Muslim religious leaders, faith-based organizations and NGOs, representatives of the nonviolence movement in Iraq, and refugees and displaced peoples.

Marie Dennis, Co-President of Pax Christi International and a Pax Christi USA Ambassador of Peace, led the delegation. The delegation’s purpose was to express solidarity to the numerous organizations on the ground in Iraq who are struggling to rebuild civil society and lift Iraq from the devastation of these past seven years of war and occupation. Since returning to their respective countries, delegation members have been sharing the stories of the people they met, raising awareness regarding the situation on the ground in Iraq, and asking what lessons we can learn from the failed U.S. policy toward Iraq and what it means for the war and occupation of Afghanistan.

Join Pax Christi USA on Friday evening at the 2009 School of the Americas Vigil and Action for an evening of prayer, study, and action. This will be the ninth year we have gathered for this pre-SOA event, highlighting issues that cry out for a strong and prophetic response from people of faith and conscience. We’ll feature music from SOAWatch musicians, prayer, reflection featuring Marie Dennis and Dave Robinson, and the chance to join together with hundreds of other activists arriving early for the SOA Vigil and Action. Seating is limited, so don’t be late!

For more information, check out the Pax Christi USA Website, [www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org).

Last month, Dave Robinson, Pax Christi USA Executive Director, joined other peace and justice leaders in signing a petition calling for an end to the U.S. military interventions in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq. Pax Christi USA is circulating the petition through our Website and email networks, encouraging members to use it as an organizing tool in working against any calls for a troop increase in Afghanistan or further delays in Iraq. The petition was published by Tom Hayden at <http://gopetition.com/online/30533.html> and is available below.

### End the wrongful and unnecessary occupations of Afghanistan, Pakistan & Iraq!

To President Obama, Speaker Pelosi, and Senate Majority Leader Reid:

*We, the undersigned peace and justice leaders, believe that the American military interventions in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq are deepening quagmires that threaten a Long War without end.*

*At the current rate of American deaths in Afghanistan, over 1,000 additional American soldiers will be killed in the next two years of "hard fighting" predicted by the Pentagon as the next phase of a ten year occupation. Another \$130 billion for Afghanistan and Iraq now is being rushed through a sleeping Congress. An escalation of even more troops is pending.*

*Now is the time for an exit strategy to end these wars. The government of warlords, drug lords, and landlords we prop up in Kabul is losing more legitimacy by the day. A majority of Americans—including 70 percent from the majority party—now consider Afghanistan a mistake. Leading national security experts even deny that it's a necessary war.*

*If we do not decide to disengage at once, our dreams of domestic reform will be squandered by years of war budgets. Our dreams of clean energy will be buried in wars over oil and pipelines. The global good will extended to our new President will be jeopardized.*

*We understand how difficult it is to reverse a mistaken course. But that is the leadership we need, not one that continually escalates in order not to lose. We have been there.*

□ *Our government should adopt an exit strategy from Afghanistan based on all-party talks, regional*

*diplomacy, unconditional humanitarian aid, and timelines for the near-term withdrawal of American and NATO combat troops.*

□ *The aerial bombardments of Afghan and Pakistan villages, like burning down haystacks to find terrorist needles, should end.*

□ *Military spending should be reversed in Afghanistan to focus on food, medicine, shelter, the socio-economic needs of the poor, and the dignity of women and children.*

□ *President Obama should keep his pledge to withdraw all troops from Iraq by 2011, and prevent American interference in the forthcoming Iraqi elections.*

□ *The President should oppose any Israeli attack on Iran, which will only inflame the regional and global conflict.*

*Much as we were inspired by Barack Obama's election, we will not be taken for granted by the President and the Congressional majority. The historic victories in 2006 and 2008 were fueled by popular enthusiasm and unprecedented voter turnouts that cannot be reignited by e-mail solicitations. A growing disenchantment with a costly quagmire will threaten all the hopes of 2008. Everything is related now: we cannot afford national health care, housing, and clean energy while spending billions on quagmires across several continents.*

*We are prepared to create a storm of protest in Congressional districts and close Senate races. We will form alliances with all those whose hope for health, energy and economic reform are diminished by these wars. We will defend dissent in the armed forces and protect our children from the snares of military recruiters. We will reach out to strengthen a global peace movement, especially in NATO countries.*

*History shows that terrorist threats can come from German cities, African villages, and even homegrown American cells, not simply the caves of Pakistan.*

*Our security needs cannot be served by provoking the growing hatred of America caused by repeated invasions of foreign lands. We are human beings who refuse to be defined in the world as mindless military drones and Predators.*

(for more on Afghanistan, see p. 8)

(continued from p. 2)

"We, the undersigned civil rights, community, and immigrant rights organizations, urge you to immediately terminate the 287(g) program operated by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The program has come under severe criticism this year because local law enforcement agencies that have been granted 287(g) powers are using the program to target communities of color, including disproportionate numbers of Latinos in particular places, for arrest," the letter reads. "Racial profiling and other civil rights abuses by the local law enforcement agencies that have sought out 287(g) powers have compromised public safety, while doing nothing to solve the immigration crisis."

Pax Christi USA; regions including Metro New York, New Jersey, and Texas; and local groups such as Metrowest (NY), Monmouth County (NJ), and Austin (TX) were all signatories.

### PAX CHRISTI REGIONS HOSTING KAIROS DAYS OF REFLECTION FOR STUDENTS/YOUNG ADULTS

Pax Christi Minnesota hosted a Kairos Day of Reflection for students at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul in late September, and Pax Christi New Jersey is hosting a Kairos Day for students and young adults following its state assembly the weekend of October 24-25. Kairos is a day of reflection aimed at deepening Christian discipleship, discerning the signs of the times, and building a united Catholic student-young adult movement for peace and justice. For more information on Kairos Days of Reflection, go to [www.paxchristiusa.org/about\\_us\\_young\\_org.asp](http://www.paxchristiusa.org/about_us_young_org.asp).



Kathy Kelly with Kairos Day, Chicago, July 2009  
photo by Johnny Zokovitch

Maybe For Us, Today, in This Country

Pax Christi USA Teacher of Peace (1995) Jim McGinnis co-founded the Parenting for Peace and Justice Network. He wrote and spoke prolifically on the role of nonviolence in our everyday lives, especially in our families. Along with his wife Kathy and others, Jim wrote many tools and curricula for families, parishes, and other communities seeking to bring peace to our world. Jim died suddenly on August 13th of this year. The following excerpt is an example of his prophetic work.

Reprinted with permission from "Teaching the Prophets—Living as Prophets" by James McGinnis, available online at www.ipj-ppj.org/PDF%20Files/Teaching%20the%20Prophets.pdf

I would like you to consider one of my own attempts to apply the words and images of the Hebrew prophets to our time and situation. These were written after weeks of careful reading of the prophets Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Hosea. They were written at a lake and the images refer to the spacious trees and summer storm I was experiencing at the time.

I gave you grain in abundance, fertile land, ample water and plenty of sun; but because you hoard your grain for profit, make it a political weapon, I will cover your grain with ash.

I have given you energy in abundance but because your oil and utility companies and your investment-minded people see energy as a source of huge profits, because you refuse to conserve your energy as a nation, therefore I will send you bitter winters and scorching summers. You will not have enough and you will pay a dear price until you learn to live on less, to chase not after wealth and consumption and convenience, but to chase after My ways.

I have given you technology and knowledge in abundance, but because you have converted these resources to producing weapons of death, others will make them too, and thus your resources will be further wasted and these weapons be turned against you.

I have given you land in abundance, but because you convert your food-producing resources into parking lots, shopping centers, and suburban tracts, you as well as the rest of the world will experience hunger.

I have blessed you with idealistic young people in abundance, but because you have sent them off to immoral wars or to protect your wealth, I will turn these same young people against you.

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I planted you as a multi-limbed tree to provide shade for all who come, but many of your branches never spread their leaves and lie half-formed and idle, deadwood, providing no relief to those who walk and work beneath.

I planted you as a multi-limbed tree to spread leaves in all directions, to reflect My light to all near and far. But many of your branches yielded not their leaves nor My light, and thus many, both near and far, know not the light of freedom that I want for all.

I planted you as a multi-colored tree to reflect the diversity and richness of My Being, to show forth the unity I desire and promise; yet your green leaves dominate; they cover over or destroy those that are darker.

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I have given you ingenuity in abundance, but because you have converted My gift into gadgets and profits, you will be envied and hated by the poor, mourned by your possessions, and buried with your stock certificates.

I have given you rights and laws in abundance, but because you have twisted those laws and have deprived your minorities of their rights and equal justice, these people will seek reprisal in the streets of your cities.

I have given you influence in abundance, but because you have used this influence too often to put into power or prop up dictators, in the name of political expediency and narrow national self-interest, their people will overthrow these dictators, turn on you, and take your people hostage.

I have given you wealth and land in abundance, but because you plan to tear up your land to plant shell-game missiles and waste precious dozens of billions of your wealth, you will be forced to tear up more land and spend more billions to keep ahead of your enemies whom you force to keep up with you.

I have given you leisure in abundance, but because you turn that leisure into license and idleness and luxuriousness, you will become a bored, soft and fat, directionless people, glued to your television sets and its unreality.

I have given you freedom in abundance, but because you have so often converted that freedom into free enterprise and refuse to change your

economic principles and structures and thereby consign the poor to their poverty and a mere trickle from your wealth, I will turn the poor of the world against you, they will outvote you in world assemblies and you will find yourselves isolated more and more.

“Why have you plowed iniquity, reaped injustice, and eaten the produce, lies? Because you have trusted in your chariots and in your host of warriors, turmoil is going to break out in your towns, and all your fortresses will be laid waste. . . . Turn again, then, to your God, hold fast to love and justice, and always put your trust in your God” (Hosea 10:13-14; 12:7).

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Therefore, I will send My storm to warn you and chastise you. My thunder will destroy your peace (or what you think of as peace); My winds will buffet your shores and shake your houses and tents and challenge your security; My rains will chase inside all your revelers on the beaches and scatter your skiers onto dry land; I will shake your trees violently, to dislodge the deadwood. I will prune your deadwood, though it be painful, though half your limbs be lost; but I mean to work My will. I mean to provide shade and light to all and want you to sprout new limbs that will hold not back their leaves but instead will yield them in plenty and yield them in the multitude of color that I desire.

Some Reflection Questions

1. Do you think this is an accurate reflection of the prophets' message? In what ways yes and in what ways no?

2. Do you think this is an accurate application of the prophets' message to U.S. society? In what ways yes and in what ways no?

3. What other applications/examples would you use?