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Letter from Pax Christi USA

Dear Pax Christi USA Member,

Greetings of peace! In this newsletter you'll see a number of resources we hope you'll find conducive to your work on behalf of peace and justice in the world, including a reflection for Lent by Pax Christi USA 2011 Teacher of Peace Colleen Kelly, information on the new Just Peacemaking initiative from JustFaith Ministries in collaboration with Pax Christi USA, a profile of member Susan Kerin, the exciting announcement about regional meetings taking place in 2012, and much more. I want to remind you, though, that the content of this newsletter includes only a small sampling of the work that is being done throughout our nation by our national staff, National Council members, Ambassadors of Peace, regional and local group leaders, the Pax Christi Anti-Racism Team, and members like yourself.

If you haven't already made it a part of your regular routine, I encourage you to bookmark the Pax Christi USA website, www.paxchristiusa.org, and to regularly check out the news stories, reflections, resources and other information we're regularly posting to the site. A typical week will feature between 10-15 new posts which we think will inspire and mobilize our movement for gospel-based peacemaking.

Additionally, if you're not a member of our email network, I hope you'll consider joining. We provide a free email service with regular electronic resources sent directly to your inbox: Prayer-Study-Action e-bulletins on the important issues and events of our time; reflections and suggestions for action for Advent and Lent; special alerts requiring your urgent action; and a monthly digest that links to all the resources you may have missed

over the past month. We pride ourselves on offering a wide variety of resources for you to pray, study and act for justice in the world. You can join the e-network by going to our website and clicking on the tab at the top which reads, "e-Network".

And if you're a fan of social media, it's easy to "like" us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. We have over 3,100 people participating in the conversation on our Facebook page and nearly 1,300 followers on Twitter!

Pax Christi USA was one of the first Catholic organizations to seriously explore and undertake the work of anti-racism. The work of our Brothers and Sisters All initiative, to cultivate for Pax Christi USA an anti-racist, multicultural Catholic identity, is led by members of the Pax Christi Anti-Racism Team (PCART). The team is currently looking for new members and we hope that some of you will consider applying to join them. Information on PCART and the team application are available on the website on the Brothers and Sisters All program page. Deadline to apply is May 2012.

As we look to the future and undertake new directions for Pax Christi USA, we also hope that you'll prayerfully consider sending a special gift to Pax Christi USA today. You can make a donation quick and easy through our secure website or send a check into the National Office (address on p. 2). We hope that you will respond generously and help us build a strong foundation for tomorrow by sending a generous gift today.

Thank you so much for all you do to be the "peace of Christ" in the world. We are grateful and humbled by your witness and commitment.

In peace,

Johnny Zokovitch
Editor, The Peace Current

Regional Meetings Planned for 2012, National Conference in 2013

By Sr. Josie Chrosniak, National Chair
and Sr. Patricia Chappell, Executive Director



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study-action. Subscribe at
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Visit
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for more educational
and spiritual resources
for peace.

As many of you already know, we had planned to have our 2012 National Conference in Washington, D.C. this coming July, at the Catholic University of America. At our recent National Council meeting, we revisited this decision in light of the changes which have taken place over the course of the last few months, especially the completion of the move of our national office to Washington, D.C. and the hiring of a new Executive Director. Our discussion led us to decide on a different strategy for this coming year—a strategy which we think embodies bold, new directions for Pax Christi USA and accomplishes some of the most important tasks we see before us as we enter into a new moment for the organization.



New Pax Christi USA Executive Director Sr. Patricia Chappell, SNDdeN, with Rev. Jim Hug, SJ, Director of the Center of Concern and Marie Dennis, co-president of Pax Christi International. The 2012 regional meetings will give membership a chance to meet Sr. Chappell. (Photo by John Zokovitch)

As we move forward, there is a sense that a new direction is called for in these times—a direction which raises up a new generation of leaders throughout our organization, which authentically embraces communities of color, which attends to and cultivates the gifts and experiences of members working for peace and justice in cities and towns throughout our nation, and which binds all of us together more strongly so that we can speak with one voice on the issues about which we are passionate and present a unified witness to the values we all share as gospel-based peacemakers.

While this past year was a time of transition, we want this next year to be a year of building up. We have decided to move the 2012 National Conference from the beginning of our 40th anniversary year to the end of that year instead—the summer of 2013—and to host the National Conference in Washington, D.C. During 2012 the national staff in collaboration with the national council members will participate in a series of regional meetings building up to the 2013 National Conference. We invite our Pax Christi regional and local leaders, Pax Christi USA Anti-Racism team, Pax Christi USA Ambassadors of Peace and individual members – to meet with, listen to, and dream with Pax Christi USA members throughout the nation at a variety of locations.

As regions are approached to participate in this dialog, it is our desired hope that this effort will be widely embraced. We believe that this outreach to the regions can be effective and cut down on expenses during these difficult financial times. This will also offer an opportunity for many of you to meet with Sr. Patricia Chappell, SNDdeN, our new Executive Director.

The broad strokes of these meetings would include the participation of Sr. Patty and a national leadership delegation formed from among national staff and the national council members. These meetings would adhere to a general template crafted by the national staff based on a reflection, action, reflection process to fit regional realities and needs. And the insights and ideas which come out of these regional meetings will be incorporated into the planning of the 2013 National Conference and our organizational plan for the years to come.

Now is the time for us to hearken to one another's voices and experiences, to draw on the love and hope each one of us have for Pax Christi USA. Let us throw open wide the doors and windows and invite everyone to the table. And let us plan together how to take Pax Christi USA forward into the future, in thanksgiving for all those who brought us to this place, inviting us into and challenging us to be the "peace of Christ" for the world.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about hosting a regional meeting in 2012, please contact Johnny Zokovitch at 352-219-8419 or johnnypcusa@yahoo.com.

Faith Journey in Progress: From Nonbeliever to Pax Christi Catholic

Susan Kerin was raised on Gandhi and King by progressive, atheist parents who were angry at the hypocrisy of the churches. She married a college friend—a secular Palestinian—raised a son, and developed a career as a project officer for various federal social service agencies. Her call to activism came in October 2001, when teenage Johnny Thalijeh was shot outside the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. He was one of 23 Palestinians killed by Israeli Defense Forces during a nine-day period in retaliation for shots fired at a nearby Israeli settlement.

Moved and challenged, Susan began to work with activist groups online as well as the Palestinian community in the Washington, D.C. area. In 2004 she was helping a Christian girlfriend from Nazareth with academic research that involved the Gospels, and what she read surprised her. “Jesus and his disciples: They’re even better than Gandhi and King!” she recalls thinking. “I want to live the way the apostles did.”

She kept reading the Gospels, and she started showing up at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic church in Derwood, MD. When the celebrant led prayers for the success of the U.S. military, Susan confronted him outside after Mass. “I’m happy to pray for the soldiers but I can’t pray for their mission,” she told him. “Isn’t Christianity nonviolent?”

“In wartime, refusing to kill would be a sin,” the priest responded.

Somehow, even though she felt out of place there now, Susan kept going to church. Two years later she met Charles McCarthy and other members of the parish Pax Christi group that she now co-chairs. Charles, his father Rev. Emmanuel Charles McCarthy, and

other models of Christian nonviolence became her personal evangelists. In 2006, after learning about Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) from Kim Lamberty and the coverage of Tom Fox’s kidnapping and death in Iraq, she joined a CPT delegation and visited Hebron.

“Do you remember that old movie, *Rebel without a Cause*?” Susan asked.

“Well I’m a non-rebel with a cause. Three of them, actually. I’m still advocating for justice for Palestinians. From 2008-2010, I was a Land Coordinator for Free Gaza, from their first successful voyage until the one where passengers were killed on the Mavi Marmara,” she said.

“I’m also working to end military recruitment in our schools and doing prison ministry. I write to five or six prisoners, including one on death row, and I mentor returnees. Our prisoners are a despised people, like the Palestinians. I’m not a rabble-rouser, really. It’s about the relationships. It’s about finding a way to love.”

Mary Liepold is the secretary of the Pax Christi Metro D.C.-Baltimore regional council.



Susan Kerin, center, at Representative Brad Sherman’s office. Also pictured, from left to right are Medea Benjamin (Code Pink), Ann Wright (Free Gaza), Susan, Tighe Barry (Code Pink) and Ramzi Kysia. (Photo courtesy of EPA)

*The following reflection is from this year's Lent reflection booklet, *From Ashes to Resurrection, Dust to New Life: Reflections for Lent 2012*. The booklet was co-authored by Colleen Kelly, Pax Christi USA's 2012 Teacher of Peace Award recipient, and her daughter, Bronagh Kelly Jones.*

Mark 11:1-10 or John 12:12-16

Isaiah 50:4-7

Philippians 2:6-11

Mark 14:1-15:47 or 15:1-3

***"Abba, all things are possible to you.
Take this cup away from me" (Mark 14:36).***

Two months after September 11th, another plane went down in New York City. Traveling to the Dominican Republic, the aircraft crashed shortly after take-off from J. F. Kennedy Airport on November 12th, 2001. All 260 people on board were killed, as well as five others on the ground. Given the enormity of 9-11



"Every living being suffers... It is a universal experience from which no one is exempt, much like death." (Photo by John Zokovitch)

and its far-reaching implications, this second disaster received little attention in comparison. But for the residents of Belle Harbor, NY, already mourning the loss of scores of their own that fall, this tragedy added a second layer of grief. Monsignor Geraghty, pastor of St. Francis de Sales in Belle Harbor, sagely stated when asked about the inability to explain why his parish was facing yet another round of funerals: "You can deconstruct everything except suffering."

We human beings can't explain away suffering, and that's bothersome to us. Even the suffering we can explain bristles our conscience. An ongoing conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has killed millions. We may know the general cause of the suffering of the Congolese, but are at a loss as to how to address it (that's the prickly nettle). A friend may have cancer and be suffering deeply. We don't know the cause, but we recognize the very human pain.

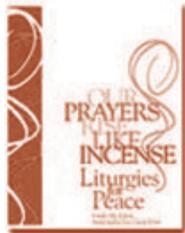
Every living being suffers. Everyone. It is a universal experience from which no one is exempt, much like death. When suffering can be alleviated, we join as a community of brothers and sisters who care for one another and work to put an end to the suffering. There are also times when there is nothing one can "do," in the sense that we as doers, fixers, and controllers "do." When a parent loses a child, when a friend reveals a history of abuse, when someone you love has a life-threatening illness, when the cup cannot be taken away . . . what can one do then? Listen, accompany, pray, love.

***Listen, accompany, pray, love.
What else helps lead to resurrection and new life?***

Colleen Kelly is co-founder of September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, an organization dedicated to turning grief into action for peace. She is a family nurse practitioner in a large Bronx high school clinic and loves her job. She received PCUSA's Teacher of Peace award in 2011.

For more resources for prayer, study and action during Lent, visit the Pax Christi USA website, www.pax-christiusa.org, or sign-up for our "Seasonal Reflections" thru PCUSA's free email service. Throughout the Lenten season we will post reflections written by PCUSA Teachers of Peace, Ambassadors of Peace & others, as well as suggestions for actions you can take as an individual or group during Lent.

Be sure to also check out the Pax Christi USA Store online for items like *Our Prayers Rise Like Incense: Liturgies for Peace*, which includes a number of Lenten-themed prayer services.

From the Pax Christi USA Store...**Our Prayers Rise Like Incense: Liturgies for Peace**

Looking for ideas for your Lenten gatherings – consider the Stations of the Cross section of this amazing resource. This book offers a variety of liturgies, some of which include Eucharist, to be used when people of faith gather together. They are compiled from many places and for many occasions and include readings, song suggestions, rituals, and more. The book offers 27 liturgies for anniversaries of sacred dates and 25 liturgies addressing critical issues such as the death penalty, gun violence, education, and more.

To receive an e-mail copy of the Table of Contents for this amazing resource, e-mail a request to sales@paxchristiusa.org. Paperback (8.5x11 inches), 234 pages. \$18 + s/h

Go Into All the World - Proclaim the Good News with this colorful greeting card.

We send cards at Christmas – why not for Easter too! Full-color artwork of the beauty of God's creation. Inside verse includes Jesus's words after his resurrection: "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. (Mark 16:15) Alleluia! May the peace of the risen Christ fill our hearts and world." \$10/pk of 10 + s/h

**A Prayer to Abolish the Death Penalty**

Jesus was a victim of the death penalty! Written by one of the nation's most well-known teachers on abolishing the death penalty, this compassionate prayer by Helen Prejean, CSJ, calls us to expand and deepen our hearts so that we may love as Jesus loves all - even those among us who have caused the greatest pain by taking life. \$10/pk of 100 + s/h

Also consider, **Sentenced to Die, Still Children of God**, an excellent brochure with background information on the death penalty and 10 action suggestions to help mobilize against the death penalty. \$10/100 + s/h

Place your order on our website at www.paxchristiusa.org or by calling our Resource Office at 814-520-6245. You can prepay using cash, check, money order, credit card or PayPal. Contact Lori via email for a quote today – sales@paxchristiusa.org

New from JustFaith Ministries & Pax Christi USA!**Just Peacemaking Initiative****The Challenge & Promise of Nonviolence for Our Time**

The challenge and promise of nonviolence is embodied and entrusted with the peacemakers of the planet. **Will you be a peacemaker?**

This JustFaith Ministries JustMatters module was created as a resource for small groups to deepen their understanding and practice of peacemaking. Woven together by Pax Christi USA National Council member Scott Wright in collaboration with a number of people, the core of the module is the intentional building of relationships at every level of society: relationships that are dedicated to nonviolent transformation of conflict, the pursuit of social justice, and the creation of cultures of sustainable peace.

The module will explore the challenges and promises of justice-based peacemaking through a series of 12 sessions, carefully constructed to combine prayer and ritual, readings and discussion, a strong spirit of group dialog and interaction, and immersion activities based on local resources.

Pax Christi local groups will receive a \$50 discount on the module through June 30, 2012. Contact David Horvath at david@justfaith.org or more information is available online at http://justfaith.org/programs/justmatters-m_justpeacemaking.html

**GOOD FRIDAY
WAY OF THE CROSS**

Traditionally, many Pax Christi USA local groups plan & stage a "Way of the Cross" event on Good Friday, connecting the sufferings of Christ during his passion with the suffering of our brothers & sisters at the hands of violence, greed, poverty, sickness & war. We'll be posting resources for groups who want to undertake a Way of the Cross on Good Friday (or at another time during Lent) on the website. Please let us know what your group has planned and we'll post information for your event on the site.

Pax Christi USA statement on Bishop Zavala's resignation

(Note: This letter was posted to the website and sent to members of the email network on January 5th from National Council Chair Sr. Josie Chrosniak, HM and PCUSA Executive Director SR. Patricia Chappell, SNDdeN.) It is with great sadness that we write to you today about the resignation of Bishop Gabino Zavala. Pax Christi USA learned of Bishop Zavala's resignation yesterday. In a letter addressed to Catholics in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (where Bishop Zavala was an auxiliary bishop), Archbishop Jose Gomez stated that Bishop Zavala's letter of resignation was accepted by the Vatican after he had disclosed that he is "the father of two minor teenage children who live with their mother in another state."

Bishop Zavala had served as bishop-president of Pax Christi USA for the past 9 years and had been a bishop member for many years prior to his time in leadership. We are grateful for his past leadership and for his long-time witness to peace and justice as a member of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Bishop Zavala consistently brought the power of the gospel to bear on issues like immigration, worker rights, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and nuclear disarmament.

This past year saw the completion of Bishop Zavala's third term as bishop-president of Pax Christi USA. The search for his replacement was already underway and will continue. We hope to announce the selection of a new bishop-president in the coming weeks.



David Atwood of Pax Christi Texas speaks at a press conference in Houston for the Campaign to Promote Permanent Residency for Temporary Protective Status Beneficiaries from Central America. (Photo courtesy of PC-Texas)

During this time of personal hardship, we offer our prayers for Bishop Zavala, his family, and all those affected by this news. We pray that the privacy of all those impacted will be respected and that all will experience God's mercy and compassion during this difficult time.

Pax Christi at the UN: Delegate Cheryl Morrissey

Members of the Pax Christi International delegation at the United Nations include Madeline Labriola (head delegate), Elizabeth Begley (head delegate-elect), Mary McDonald, Cheryl Morrissey and Patrick Ryan. Each delegate travels into UN headquarters about once a week for various committee meetings or to attend Thursday briefings or special events. In upcoming issues of *The Peace Current*, we'll feature short updates on each of the delegate's work. This issue's focus is on Cheryl Morrissey.

Morrissey has been a member of the team for one year. She is on the Financing for Development Committee and was elected as a member at large of the Executive Committee. This committee serves as a watchdog for the G-20 to hold them accountable. She has visited the mission of Norway to discuss the Millennium Development Goals and the social protection floor. She is also interested in the human rights committee since she studied international law in Dublin, Ireland and has an advanced degree in human rights law. She plans on attending the Commission on Social Development conference in February and the Commission on the Status of Women in the Spring.

Pax Christi Metro New York launches new website

PC Metro New York launched a new website earlier this year. The new website recently featured their newsletter, *Kerux*; a Reflection/Prayer/Action for the Christmas season; and a link to the Holy Innocents Prayer Service on Currents, the cable TV program of the Brooklyn Diocese. You can view the new website at www.nypaxchristi.org.

Haiti film events with Pax Christi Michigan, Just Peace Club

As part of promoting the new film on Haiti, *Cite Soleil: Sun, Dust, and Hope*, and the work of Pax Christi Port-au-Prince, Amy Watts and Manuel Padilla of PCUSA were invited in November to Michigan by PC Michigan members Kim Redigan and Therese Terns. At St. Joseph's Parish Center in Dearborn, Amy and Manuel shared the background of *Cite Soleil*, where Pax Christi's work is being done, and about how history, economy, stigma, and violence often work together to create seemingly impossible situations of conflict and oppression. The 20 minute film was shown to an audience for the first time and was received with enthusiasm. The peace education work of PC Port-au-Prince inspired the audience to reflect on parallels in inner-city Detroit and how the program in Haiti could impact local initiatives by the peace community.

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National, Regional and Local Updates

continued from p. 6...

Amy and Manuel also showed the film and spoke to classes at the University of Detroit Jesuit High School where Kim teaches. After school, the Just Peace club hosted a coffee-house during which the intersection between sweatshop labor, human trafficking, economic systems, and violence, and how these have, historically, found deep roots in Cite Soleil. The event ended with brainstorming on ways Just Peace can connect with the kids in the SAKALA program.

The film is available for purchase on the PCUSA website. If you are planning to show the film and would like to explore bringing Amy and Manuel to speak, you can contact them at Manuel@paxchristiusa.org and Amy@paxchristiusa.org.

PCUSA, Metro D.C.-Baltimore participate in Gitmo event

"More men have died at Gitmo than have received a trial." At the National Press Club on Jan. 11, retired Colonel Morris Davis cited this grave statistic: 8 have died, 6 have been tried. Davis, an Air Force lawyer who was appointed Chief Prosecutor of Guantanamo military commissions in 2005, resigned this post after 2 years, in protest of the mockery of justice that this legal monster represents.

January 11th marked Gitmo's 10th year in existence, and objectors had no choice but to shame each of the three branches of government for abandoning the 171 men detained at Guantanamo without charge or trial. Of approximately 1,000 who rallied this day, 171 marched at the lead dressed in orange jumpsuits and black hoods, from the White House, past the Department of Justice and the Capitol, ending at the Supreme Court. Pax Christi members were among those in and out of costume. PCUSA Executive Director Sr. Patricia Chappell, SNDdeN was one of the featured speakers in the interfaith service which marked the anniversary.

PC NE Florida joins Black Catholic Commission for MLK event

The Catholic Diocese of St. Augustine hosted the Second Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Interfaith Prayer Service in Jacksonville, on Sunday, January 15th. Participating this year were Rev. David Holladay of the Riverside Baptist Church; Rev. James Boddie of St. Catherine's Catholic Church; Rev. D. L. Sconiers, Chaplain of Edward Waters College; Imam Joe Bradford of the Islamic Center of Northeast Florida; and Rabbi Joshua Lief of the Jewish Federation of Jacksonville. Catholic Bishop Felipe Estevez gave the keynote address and music was led by the Edward Waters College Concert Choir. The prayer service was open to all faiths and was attended by over 300 people. It was sponsored by the Diocesan Black Catholic Commission, the Justice and Peace Commission, and Pax Christi Northeast Florida.

New groups starting around the nation

Organizing toolgroups for new groups have been sent out to and new groups have begun at Lewis University in Romeville,

In early January, Pax Christi USA staff member Luciana Kane and her husband David welcomed a little boy into their family. Welcome Nathan Francis Kane! We wish mom, dad and son many blessings! (Photo by David Kane)



Illinois; Laguna Beach, CA; Tampa, FL; Cleveland, OH; Western Massachusetts; Alexandria and Shreveport, Louisiana; Padua Academy in Wilmington, DE; Manteca, CA; Cincinnati, OH; St. Louis, MO; and Watertown, SD. If you're interested in starting a local group, please contact the national office for resources and to register.

Upcoming regional events

Pax Christi Michigan's 31st annual state conference, "power: Who Lies, Who Dies, Who Pays, Who Profits," with speakers Tom Cordaro and Sr. Patricia Chappell, SNDdeN will take place April 21st in Troy, Michigan. Visit <http://www.paxchristimi.org/> for more information.

Pax Christi Florida will hold their spring retreat with Sr. Paula Gonzalez on April 14-15 in Parrish, FL. Visit their site at www.paxchristiflorida.org for more information.

Pax Christi Metro NY will host its spring retreat, "Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Healing" with Judith Schiavo in Brentwood, Long Island, March 9-11. For more info, visit www.nypaxchristi.org.

PC-University of Dayton sends gifts to refugees in Jordan

The University of Dayton's Pax Christi group hosted its second annual Christmas gift holiday drive to send donations to Christians in Jordan. Students participated in the program by choosing one of hundreds of ornaments from a bulletin board located in the back of the Immaculate Conception Chapel. Each ornament has details on a specific gift for people to purchase. Pax Christi co-chair Lindsey Cummings had traveled to Amman, Jordan to do research for her honors thesis paper, which focuses on Iraqi refugees living in Jordan. She interviewed Iraqi families and also people for some of the organizations who will be receiving the gifts from this year's drive.

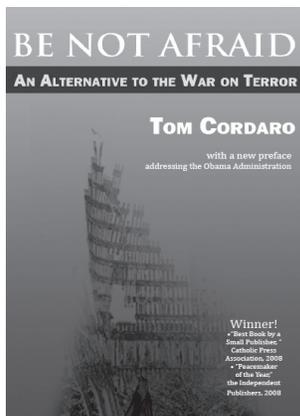


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BE NOT AFRAID: AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE WAR ON TERROR, written by Tom Cordaro

What if the fear-based story—the narrative—we are asked to believe is not the only alternative?



“Best Book by a Small Publisher” in 2008 by the Catholic Press Association and “Peacemaker of the Year” award from the Independent Publishers!

Updated and reissued last year with a new preface on the Obama Administration! This book invites us to overcome the narrative of fear in our country. It invites us instead to embrace a narrative of hope and to play an active role, as individuals and as members of a community, in reclaiming our U.S. story from those who would seek to delete it. \$17.00 plus s/h

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Peacemaking Quote

“We will go before God to be judged, and God will ask us, ‘Where are your wounds?’ And we will say, ‘We have no wounds.’ And God will ask, ‘Was nothing worth fighting for?’”

- Rev. Allan Boesak