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Pax Christi USA strives to create a world that reflects the Peace of Christ by exploring, articulating and witnessing to the call of Christian nonviolence. This work begins in personal life and extends to communities of reflection and action to transform structures of society. Pax Christi USA rejects war, preparations for war, and every form of violence and domination. It advocates primacy of conscience, economic and social justice, and respect for creation.

Pax Christi USA commits itself to peace education and, with the help of its bishop members, promotes the gospel imperative of peacemaking as a priority in the Catholic Church in the United States. Through the efforts of all its members and in cooperation with other groups, Pax Christi USA works toward a more peaceful, just and sustainable world.

I support Pax Christi USA Statement of Purpose and wish to become a member.

Name _____

Address _____

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State _____ Zip _____

Enclosed is my membership donation of
\$ _____ . _____\$35 ___\$40 ___\$50 ___\$100

At this time I can only contribute \$ _____

Payment:

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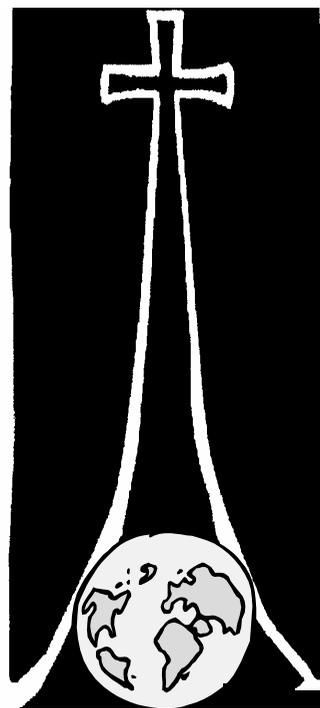
- ___ Information about joining a local group
- ___ Parish Sponsor Program information
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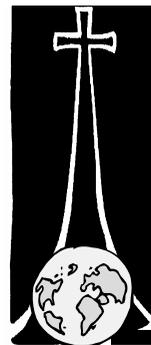
Peaceweavings

Keeping Vigil

*Amidst the darkness of these times,
the words of Jesus cry out to us
with the urgent desire that resonated
in his voice that long-ago night.
“Remain here, and watch with me.”*



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Keeping Vigil through the Dark Night

Lately I've found myself remembering the all-night peace vigils that I used to attend at my church. Twice a year, a group of us would gather together in our cavernous church to pray for peace throughout the night. Peace-

making activities of all kinds enlivened these nights, each one offered in a spirit of prayer. These vigils were humble attempts to illumine the night's darkness with the determined light of peace. As one sacred hour passed into the next, I would reflect upon how fitting it was to pray for peace from dark until dawn. These vigils were an icon depicting our belief that the work of peacemaking does not end when the sun goes down. It continues throughout the dark night, hastening the dawn of a brighter day.

For those of us engaged in peacemaking amidst the current sociopolitical climate, it seems as if we are keeping vigil throughout a particularly long and dark night of the soul. Under the veil of darkness, violence is breeding, injustice is proliferating, and our world is increasingly imperiled. As one dark moment creeps into the next, the issues calling us to arise and take action mount. We barely set to work on one urgent issue when another equally important demands our attention.

The heaviness of this long night weighs

upon us, and sleep entices our weary souls to submit to its stupor. The seductive lullaby of this night lures us to rest from our peaceful endeavors, to slumber with eyes tightly closed to the malevolent deeds being done by the mighty under the cover of darkness. In our weary state, temptation begs us to fall in step with a sleepwalking society, going about our daily lives oblivious to the ominous future that our nation's leaders are forging.

During a long-ago night deep with foreboding, Jesus begged his disciples not to give in to slumber's serenity. After sharing together in their final meal, Jesus and his disciples went to the garden of Gethsemane. Before Jesus enters into prayer to prepare himself for the agony of this night, he instructs the disciples to stay awake, saying, "Remain here, and watch with me." (Mt. 26:38). Several times during the night, Jesus goes to his disciples deeply desiring their companionship, only to find them desiring sleep instead. In the hours when he most needs his disciples to remain vigilant with him, they slumber. He alone is keeping vigil throughout the darkest night of his life. He alone is attuned to the forces of darkness that are closing in upon him.

Amidst the darkness of these times, the words of Jesus cry out to us with the urgent desire that resonated in his voice that long-ago night. "Remain here, and watch with me." Will the response that we offer differ from that of the weary disciples who succumbed to sleep? Will we find in ourselves the resolve and resiliency to companion

Jesus through
this dark night?
Or will he once
again be left to
face the darkness
alone?



The impassioned plea of Jesus bids us not to succumb to our weariness or allow ourselves to be overcome by despair. We are to remain vigilant throughout this night, keeping watch with the Purveyor of Peace whose light illumined the darkest of nights. We are to remain steadfast in faith and strong in spirit, remembering that the work of peacemaking does not end when day fades into night. It does not cease when better times give way to bitter times. It plunges into the depths of darkness, illumining the night's despondence with the determined light of peace.

This is a night for peace-waging disciples to stay wide-awake, as hard as it may be. We are to stoke the fire of peace, strengthening it to fend off the darkness seeking to swallow it up. We are to open our ears to listen for the spirit's whisper and open wide our eyes to behold the sinister deeds being done amidst the cloak of darkness. This night calls us to be sentinels announcing from the rooftops what we see while others sleep. We are to companion God and one another as one darkened hour slips into the next. We are to keep watch for glimpses of God's

grace igniting sparks of hope in the darkness, fanning each spark that we discover into full-fledged flame. We are to fix our eyes upon the glow of God's promise brightening the far-off horizon. We are to pray without ceasing.

During this dark night, God beckons us to be disciples of the dawn, steadfast in our vigilance, unwavering in our valor, undaunted in our peacemaking. We are to be God's luminaries, lightening the darkness through our discipleship, hastening the dawn of a brighter day.

Nancy Small is a Pax Christi USA Ambassador of Peace and past national coordinator of Pax Christi USA. Nancy lives in Massachusetts, where she is currently writing a book on the Spirituality of Nonviolence.

Prayer

*Mary, Queen of Peace,
We entrust our lives to you.
Shelter us from war, hatred
and oppression.*

*Teach us
to live in peace,
to educate ourselves for peace.*

*Inspire us to act justly,
to revere all God has made.*

*Root peace firmly in our hearts
and in our world. Amen.*

Pope John Paul II

Prayer Reflections

Monday: "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will, but as you will."
—Mt 26:39

Tuesday: Economist Xabier Grostiaga talks about the "champagne glass effect" describing the distribution of the world's wealth. The richest 20% own 83% of the wealth while 60% of the world's poorest people must survive on only 6% of the wealth. These huge numbers of people are considered disposable because they are not needed for production or consumption. A United Nations Development Report recently stated, "Global inequalities in income and living standards have reached grotesque proportions."

Wednesday: "The concept of preventive war does not appear in the Catechism of the Catholic Church."
—Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI)

Thursday: "I do not believe that sheer suffering teaches. If suffering alone taught, all the world would be wise, since everyone suffers. To suffering must be added mourning, understanding, patience, love, openness and the willingness to remain vulnerable." —Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Friday: Let nothing disturb thee; Let nothing frighten thee; Everything is changing; God alone is changeless; Patience attains the goal; One who has God lacks nothing; God alone fills all our needs.
—St. Teresa of Avila

Saturday: If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ... But love your enemies, do good and lend, expecting nothing in return.
—Luke 6:32-35

Sunday: "When war, as in these days in Iraq, threatens the fate of humanity, it is ever more urgent to proclaim, with a strong and decisive voice, that only peace is the road to follow to construct a

more just and united society. Violence and arms can never resolve the problems of man."

—Pope John Paul II

Action Suggestions

1. Make the daily prayer reflections in this brochure part of your daily prayer practice. Concentrate on Jesus' words, "Remain here and watch with me."
2. Make copies of this brochure and place them in the information area of your local parish.
3. Gather a group of friends together to study a book on peace or one of the resource packets that Pax Christi USA publishes (globalization, the death penalty, etc.).

Resources

- *The Powers that Be: Theology for a New Millennium* by Walter Wink. Wink's book is a challenge for Christians to wake up and become dangerously different, by objecting to the Darwinian games of domination that prevail in many of our governments, corporations, and churches.
- JustFaith is a program aimed at empowering and expanding your church's social ministry. Visit www.justfaith.org for more information.
- "Hotel Rwanda" is an excellent movie which looks at the Rwandan genocide. Don Cheadle stars in the true-life story of Paul Rusesabagina, a hotel manager who housed over a thousand Tutsi refugees during their struggle against the Hutu militia in Rwanda. Available at your local video rental store.
- *The Questions of Jesus* by Fr. John Dear, SJ. Why a renewed commitment to Jesus' message of nonviolence is essential to healing a world torn by war. Available from Pax Christi USA, www.paxchristiusa.org.