1999 marked a low point in international efforts to address nuclear weapons and ushered in a period of expansion of the U.S. nuclear weapons complex. The United States now has since spent hundreds of billions of dollars to upgrade its weapons, develop new missions, and “conventionalize” the role of nuclear weapons. This must be reversed. President Obama’s commitment in nuclear arms-free zones is insufficient, is absolutely necessary to reverse the expansion of the U.S.’ and other nuclear weapons states’ programs and to reassure the rest of the world that the promise of the NPT—that those who have nuclear weapons do not seek advantage in the chaos. Pax Christi USA and others seeking to build and the peace of Christ. Over the past months Pax Christi USA has found it necessary to cut back our budget and downsize our efforts in line with the challenges to our resources precipitated by the economic collapse. Fortunately, not everyone is facing the same economic challenges, and Pax Christi USA continues to depend on those who are able to support our work. I ask you today to prayerfully consider an extra gift to Pax Christi USA, and provides a crucial means of ongoing support. I thank you for all you do to support Pax Christi USA, and I know we can count on you, as always!

With the war in Afghanistan expanding, the occupation of Iraq disintegrating, climate change accelerating, and unemployment soaring, the need for steady, thoughtful voices is essential to countering the shrill and opportunistic efforts of those who would seek advantage in the chaos. Pax Christi USA members like you, and countless others, bring the calm, loving, and effective voice of nonviolence to the challenges facing our communities each and every day. As we grapple with the wide range of issues and challenges facing us, let ours be a voice grounded in nonviolence, steadfastly committed to the wisdom of Catholic Social Teaching, and willing to be the peacemakers envisioned by St. Francis. Let us all make his prayer our prayer—to understand, to console, and to love. To be instruments of God’s peace, not our own. In this way we will be the Peace of Christ. In this way we will be known in our communities as peacemakers—the ones who transcend partisanship and agenda—and offer ourselves as witnesses to the true peace that is the fruit of justice and right relationship—the fruit of nonviolence.

In peace,

Dave Robinson

Executive Director, Pax Christi USA

Peace is not the product of the victory or a command. It has no finishing line, no fixed definition of achievement. Peace is a never-ending process, the work of many decisions.

- Oscar Arias
**PAX CHRISTI STUDENTS/YOUNG ADULTS GATHER PRIOR TO NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

Pax Christi USA students and young adults gathered for Kairos Chicago, a day of reflection on the intersection of faith and justice, just prior to this year’s national conference on peacemaking in July. Nobel Peace Prize nominee Kathy Kelly was the featured speaker for Kairos Chicago, and the day was facilitated by Pax Christi USA interns Patrick Cashio and Staci Streigel. Participants came from Florida, Minnesota, DC, Kentucky, Indiana, Wisconsin, New Mexico, Texas, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, Iowa, Maryland, California, Connecticut, and elsewhere. If you have interest in hosting a Kairos day of reflection at your school or in your area, contact Johnny Zokovitch at 352-219-8419 or johnnypcusa@yahoo.com.

**PAX CHRISTI USA SPONSORS NATIONAL SPEAKING TOUR WITH AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR**

Tom Cordaro, a Pax Christi USA Ambassador of Peace and author of *Be Not Afraid: An Alternative to the War on Terror*, has been speaking to churches, colleges, and community groups across the nation on the speaking tour, “Turning the Page on the War on Terror: Alternative Approaches for Afghanistan, Pakistan and Beyond.” Cordaro’s book, published by Pax Christi USA, has been recognized as an outstanding book of 2009 by the Independent Publishers of America and the Catholic Press Association. Cordaro examines the narrative structure and psychology of the “War on Terror,” how we can build a more genuine peace rooted in justice, and asks whether we will continue to be a nation motivated primarily by fear or will embrace an alternative rooted in freedom and hope. September tour stops include Michigan, Illinois, and Texas; October stops include California and more in Illinois. For more information on these dates or on hosting a tour stop, go to www.paxchristiusa.org/news_Events_more.asp?id=1540 or contact Mr. Cordaro directly at tomcordaro@juno.com.

**BELLINGHAM (WA) PAX CHRISTI GROUP ORGANIZES IMMIGRATION PILGRIMAGE**

In early August, a group of Bellingham Pax Christi folks undertook a two-week pilgrimage to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Detention Center in Tacoma, Washington. The group walked on average nine to ten miles per day, seeking hospitality from Catholic churches along the way and welcoming the participation of many people of faith concerned about the injustices being perpetrated against our nation’s immigrant people. Pax Christi member Mary Mele, the driving force behind the pilgrimage, started a blog to track the group’s reflections along their route and share other information: http://whatcomblogs.com/pilgrimage. The pilgrimage ended on August 15 with a prayer service at the ICE Detention Center.

**PAX CHRISTI TEXAS RALLIES AT THE HUTTO ICE DETENTION CENTER**

Members of various Pax Christi groups in Texas joined with other immigrants’ rights activists and advocates to protest outside the Hutto Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Detention Center in Taylor, Texas. David Atwood, Pax Christi Texas state coordinator with the National Catholic Partnership on Foreign Policy, led a group of Pax Christi Texas members in a pilgrimage to the ICE Detention Center, starting a blog to track their reflections along the route and share other information: http://whatcomblogs.com/pilgrimage. The pilgrimage ended on August 15 with a prayer service at the ICE Detention Center.

**Prayer Service For Nonviolence by John Dear, SJ**

*(Leader) Please respond,*

“God of Peace, hear our prayer.”

- That we might become people of Gospel nonviolence, who allow God to disarm our hearts of the violence within us, that we might be nonviolent to ourselves and to every person we meet for the rest of our lives, we pray: “God of Peace, hear our prayer.”

- That we might practice nonviolence as Jesus did, come to understand his creative nonviolence, and obey his commandments of nonviolence: “put down your sword,” “be as compassionate as God,” and “love your enemies,” we pray: “God of Peace, hear our prayer.”

- That we might come to know and worship God as a God of peace and nonviolence, who “makes the sun rise on the good and the bad, and causes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust,” that we might become peacemakers who help end war and create a culture of nonviolence, and so, fulfill our vocations to be the beloved sons and daughters of the God of peace, we pray: “God of Peace, hear our prayer.”

- For the church, that it might be a global community of Gospel nonviolence, that it might never bless violence or justify war again, that it might support and bless nonviolent campaigns for justice and peace, and that it might always teach, practice, and model the nonviolence of Jesus, we pray: “God of Peace, hear our prayer.”

- For the coming of a new generation of peacemakers, for new teachers, prophets, apostles, champions, and saints of Gospel nonviolence who will help the world turn from violence to nonviolence, who will lead us to reject war and nuclear weapons, reconcile with one another, and create a new culture of peace and nonviolence, we pray: “God of Peace, hear our prayer.”

*(Leader) God of peace, thank you for hearing our prayers, all the prayers in our hearts and all the prayers of the whole human race, and we offer them in the name of the nonviolent Jesus. Amen.*

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Excerpted from “Prayer Service for the International Day of Nonviolence, October 2nd, 2009” by Fr. John Dear, SJ.

Disseminated by the Conference of Superiors’ General, Commission on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation.

Also available at www.paxchristiusa.org

Use also on September 21st, the international day of prayer for peace.
Kairos Young Adult Day of Reflection

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. From the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq to the global war on terror, global climate change to corporate globalization, immigration to the collapse of our economy, these challenges have highlighted the need for a unified, visible response from Catholic student/young adult activists rooted in their faith, their deep discipleship to Jesus, and the teachings of the Church.

"Kairos" is an ancient Greek word meaning the right or opportune moment. The ancient Greeks had two words for time, chronos and kairos. While the former refers to chronological or sequential time, the latter signifies a time "in between," an undetermined period of time in which something special happens.

Pax Christi USA’s day of reflection is associated with “Kairos” in two capacities: 1) our faith and the signs of the times point to the possibility of something special happening at this moment in history; and 2) the time of life between our late-teens and our early-thirties is an “opportune” time for us to make decisions about who we are going to be, what we are going to do in this world, and what values and practices we are going to begin cultivating for our lives.

This day of reflection is open to Pax Christi regions and local groups, colleges and universities, campus Pax Christi or peace and justice groups, Pax Christi high school chapters, young adult groups, parishes, and others.

Each day of reflection includes a keynote speaker or facilitator who will provide some context—theological and politically—for the group to reflect on and to discern courses of action individually and as communities. Speakers are available through Pax Christi USA, including members of the Pax Christi USA national council, national staff, Ambassadors of Peace, and others, as well as speakers from Pax Christi USA partner organizations locally, nationally, and internationally.

Participants will also have time to network and share their experiences in campus and faith-based organizing and their work on specific issues. There will be opportunities for participants to hold caucuses or “roundtables” around specific themes, issues, concerns, etc. Individuals and groups are encouraged to bring any resources or information they would like to share with others.

The day of reflection weaves together time for prayer and reflection, study and discussion, organizing and action, and is typically limited to about twenty-five students/young adults, although other options can be negotiated.

Additionally, all hosting campuses, churches, or organizations receive a free organizing toolkit from Pax Christi USA, as well as speakers and staff, Ambassadors, regional council, national council, and Pax Christi USA, in bulk, and two free scholarships to Pax Christi USA’s annual summer Catholic conference on peacemaking.

Contact Johnny Zokovitch at johnnypcusa@yahoo.com or 352-219-8419 if you want to learn more or to schedule a Kairos in your area.

Go to www.paxchristiusa.org/about_us_young_org.asp for more information, to see photos from recent Kairos days in Chicago and Cincinnati, and to learn more about Pax Christi USA’s student and young adult organizing.

Regional Report, continued;
PCUSA at SOA: Save the Date

Save the Date:
Join Pax Christi USA at the SOA!

Friday evening, November 20, 2009 (tentative time is 6:30-9:30pm)

The Spirituality of Transformation: In the midst of economic collapse, political change, cultural chaos, and religious conflict, what are we being called to? What does the way forward look like?

Join us for an evening of music, prayer, and conversation, with speakers who will address issues we are facing and what real, deep, and lasting transformation may mean for us. We will gather as we have for the past eight years on the eve of the SOA Vigil and Action outside Ft. Benning in Columbus, Georgia. Plan on getting to Columbus early and being with us for this special event! In years past, we have featured Rev. Jon Sobrino, Kathy Kelly, Bishop Gabino Zavala, Rev. John Dear, Rev. Roy Bourgeois, Marie Dennis, and more. SAVE THE DATE and look for more information on this year’s program in the next newsletter and on Pax Christi USA’s Web site, www.paxchristiusa.org.
In 2003, to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of their landmark peace pastoral, The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response, the U.S. Bishops Conference issued a statement, “Called to be Peacemakers.” It reaffirmed the centrality of the peacemaking vocation and included an invitation to the faithful to reflect on ways they can be “sentinels of peace.”

Responding to this invitation by the bishops, Pax Christi USA began conversations with other national Catholic organizations to explore how we might collaborate on an effort to engage Catholics in reflecting on this “essential vocation of peacemaking.” The collaboration evolved into what became known as “A Peoples’ Peace Initiative.”

The initiative sought “to read the signs of the times” in the current historical context and apply the wisdom of Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching to articulate the new challenges of peace we face. From the beginning, a guiding principle was to place at the center of reflection the experiences and perspectives of those most marginalized in society, particularly communities of color, women, and the impoverished. This attempt was both a challenge and a commitment to build greater racial diversity in the work of peacemaking in the future. The initiative also served to deepen the work for justice as an essential foundation for peace and to elevate the global common good as central to the vision of the beloved community to which we are all called as children of God.

We Celebrate Signs of Hope and Resistance

As we go forward to meet the challenges and promise of peace, we look to the examples of Christ and our Catholic traditions for the wisdom and courage to embrace the vocation to become peacemakers. We have found that are not alone but are surrounded by “a cloud of witnesses” (Hebrews 12:1-4), those modern-day peacemakers who have faced challenges head-on and given their lives in a generous offering of justice, service, and love. Through their example, we see the work we must continue, the hope we must foster, and the resistance we must demonstrate even in the face of great challenge.

Theological Reflection on the Challenges of Peace

Reflection from a PPI Group in New Mexico

Starting out as strangers, we dared to become a small, blessed community of peacemakers and justice seekers. . . . The need to hear from the people themselves on peace issues is long overdue, especially since the institutional church has been noticeably silent in recognizing and emphasizing that the evil of war is as integral a part of a “consistent ethic of life” as the violence and immorality of abortion, death penalty, euthanasia, etc. . . . It also seemed like an opportune time to explore the relatedness and immediacy of war and peace issues to the daily struggles to find peace in our own hearts, families, neighborhoods, communities, and country.

Our theological reflection on the challenges of peace begins with our own encounter with the Risen Christ. It is our encounter with Jesus that shapes our understanding of peace. It is our experience of the Risen Christ in our families and communities that gives expression to that faith. That faith then impels us to look at the world and to examine the obstacles to peace.

Our society has increasingly come to believe that violence can be redemptive. Violence is thought to have the power to conquer or save us from evil and to establish justice. The power of violence seems more immediate than day as it becomes the preferred way to resolve conflicts. Violence in all of its forms is sinful because it destroys human dignity and the common good. When violence becomes institutionalized—as poverty, war, or racism—it becomes a form of idolatry, denying the sovereignty of God and the redeeming power of Jesus Christ’s love. As in the Gospel of John, instead of truth, we get lies; instead of light, darkness; instead of freedom, slavery; instead of life, death.

We believe it is essential for us, as Church, to elevate a clear moral voice to call for an end to all war as a means to resolving conflict. War truly is a defeat for humanity. We must lead a global movement to abolish war, just as those of a previous generation led the movement to abolish slavery. We must promote peace-making, peace-building, and peace-keeping alternatives to establish justice and the conditions for enduring peace. We recognize that the Church is in a unique position to lift its moral voice to call for a bold restructuring of an economic system that puts profits over people and to challenge scandalous military spending in the face of massive human need. We also believe that given global warming and our nation’s over-reliance on non-renewable energy sources, care for creation and global restoration are also essential elements of our work for peace.

We know that to end war and poverty, and to achieve peace and justice, we must work untringly to end the violence of racism in all of its forms, from individual prejudice, to institutional racism and systemic racial oppression. Together, as people of color and white people, we must cultivate solidarity, strong partnerships, and an understanding of each other and ourselves.

Finally, we are committed to building the foundations of the beloved community. We affirm that we have heard the cries of our people, whose suffering under the many disguises of violence has pierced our hearts and whose aspirations have filled us with hope. With them and with people of faith throughout the world, we seek a world at peace, where the dignity of each person, racial equality, social and economic justice, and the integrity of the whole creation form the heart of our peacemaking efforts.

As Pax Christi, together with the Catholic organizations that participated in the Peoples’ Peace Initiative and with all people of good will, we affirm our “essential vocation of peacemaking,” a vision for peace and inclusive human security grounded in the Gospel. As individuals, as a Church, as a nation—we are called to something more, called to be peacemakers, and to resolutely face together the challenges and promise of peace in the twenty-first century.

The final report, “Called to Be Peacemakers: The Challenge and Promise of Peace in the Twenty-First Century” will be available in Spanish and English in September at www.paxchristiusa.org. A People’s Peace Initiative was convened by Pax Christi USA.