

# Pax Christi USA

NATIONAL CATHOLIC PEACE MOVEMENT



(continued from p. 1) consider an extra gift to Pax Christi USA today to ensure the success of this effort and all the work that Pax Christi USA is called to do. Simply send your check in the enclosed Economic Justice for All Fund envelope. Or, consider becoming a Sustainer by making monthly automatic contributions either by your credit card or by our new system of electronic funds transfer from your bank account. It's safe and secure, and you can always stop your contributions. For more information and to sign up as a Sustainer, please contact Associate Development Director Tessa Ryker at 814-453-4955 ext. 238 or [tessa@paxchristiusa.org](mailto:tessa@paxchristiusa.org).

Even as we face escalating war in Afghanistan and an uncertain future in Iraq, glimmers of hope fill our hearts. Former recipient American Friends Service Committee recently announced that it nominated Fr. Roy Bourgeois to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. Congratulations, Roy! Having just returned from the SOA gathering at Ft. Benning, I was again filled with hope by seeing and interacting with so many young peacemakers. Their dedication, commitment, and spirituality embody the very energies we seek to support and nurture

with our intern program.

After many years of peacemaking in the face of endless war, it is easy to become exasperated. But then I gather with others—in a meeting to plan a campaign, at a conference to explore possibilities, in a prayer vigil to witness to another way—and I am struck by the depth of our movement. We are lucky in Pax Christi USA because we are part of a community of remarkable, ordinary, and inspiring people of faith committed to the Peace of Christ—a peace we cannot attain ourselves but to which we are called as believers to aspire and build. I thank you for the privilege of accompanying you on your journey, and I thank you for your commitment to Pax Christi USA's efforts to realize the Peace of Christ each day, with one another and with a world yearning for peace. I wish you a blessed Advent season and a joyous Christmas!

In peace,  
*Dave Robinson*

Dave Robinson,  
Executive Director, Pax Christi USA

**G**reetings of peace and Advent blessings! I truly wish we were in a different place as we enter this holy season, but as the Obama Administration prepares to send thousands of additional U.S. troops into a hopeless military effort in Afghanistan, our thoughts, prayers, and deepest yearnings remain focused on peace. The newest chapter in the U.S. wars in South Asia is now being written by President Obama himself. Tragically, the President appears to have missed Bill Moyers's remarkable show on November 20th. Moyers compiled phone conversations of President Lyndon B. Johnson as he struggled over the choice to escalate the Vietnam War. In scene after scene, Moyers presents a tortured President desperate to find an alternative to war but ultimately conceding the decision to his "commanders on the ground." Now we have a new President, attempting to bring great change here at home, who has, by deferring to the "commanders on the ground," set this country on a tragic path. The show is available online at [www.pbs.org/moyers](http://www.pbs.org/moyers).

work lies in investing in young people to build the next generation of peacemakers and leaders. In January Pax Christi USA will begin this effort by establishing a live-in peace community in Washington, DC, that will host a new national intern program. This effort will be grounded on formation in the spirituality of nonviolence. It will be a praying community and will augment our program work by bringing to bear the best and brightest of a new generation to the organizing, resourcing, communicating, and coordinating work of our program department. See the description and details of the program on page 6 of this newsletter.

I cannot overstate the excitement on the national council and staff for this new internship program in Washington, DC. As a member of Pax Christi USA, you have received, or will be receiving, our annual Advent appeal letter. This year's appeal is different from those of years past. The appeal focuses on support for this new program. The goal is to raise \$100,000 over the next months from many sources, including the Appeal, to fully fund the internship program and establish a firm financial foundation for it. We seek to place five interns in the house by next September. The first group of interns is ready to begin in January. These young people have made year-long commitments to Pax Christi USA, and I intend to ensure that Pax Christi USA's commitment to them is for the long haul. So, I ask you to prayerfully (continued on p. 8)

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## PEACEMAKING: Day by Day

It takes so much to be a full human being that there are very few who have the enlightenment or the courage to pay the price.

One has to abandon altogether the search for security and reach out to the risk of living with both arms.

- Morris L. West

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

## National Conference on Catholic Peacemaking Save the Date!

### June 25-27, 2010



Wyndham O'Hare  
6810 N. Mannheim Road  
Rosemont, Illinois

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**SALES AND PUBLICATIONS**  
Web: [www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org)  
Sales will close for the year December 11, 2009 at 5:00 PM EST. Please plan ahead and thanks for your understanding!

**LOCAL GROUPS**  
Contact: Johnny Zokovitch  
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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 USA JOINS PARTNERS IN SAYING  
“NO ESCALATION IN AFGHANISTAN”**

In late October, Pax Christi USA joined other partner groups in launching a new project and Website dedicated to influencing decisions regarding the unfolding situation in Afghanistan. Despite President Obama’s decision to send more troops, we must continue to pressure Congress, which holds the purse-strings for the escalation. The No Escalation in Afghanistan Website, [www.noescalation.org](http://www.noescalation.org), serves as a focal point for this effort. Posted on the site are the phone numbers of every Congressional office and what is known about their position on the escalation. Our members have already joined with thousands from our partner groups in calling Congressional offices and searching the media for information on where each Member of Congress stands. For more information, consult both the Pax Christi USA and No Escalation Websites as the situation continues to unfold.

**PAX CHRISTI NEW MEXICO HOLDS STATE ASSEMBLY  
WITH FR. LOUIE VITALE**

Pax Christi New Mexico held its state assembly in Santa Fe on October 17 with Rev. Louie Vitale, OFM. Fr. Louie shared with the group stories from his life’s journey and the events that led to his commitment to nonviolence. The day began with a prayer and reflection from Rev. John Dear and included workshops on the environment, immigration, war, and more. Over 50 activists from around the state attended.



Fr. Louie Vitale in New Mexico

**PAX CHRISTI INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION  
VISITS IRAQ**

An international Pax Christi delegation visited Iraq from September 10-17 as guests of the Iraqi Catholic bishops. The delegation included Pax Christi International Co-President Marie Dennis and Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of Pax Christi USA, along with representatives from Pax Christi Germany, Italy, France, and Belgium. The goals of the delegation included the following: to express solidarity with all Iraqi people; to gain a better understanding of Iraq’s complex reality; and to propose concrete actions that support the ongoing efforts of Iraqi people for peace and reconciliation in their country based on what was seen and heard. Bishop Gumbleton and Marie Dennis are looking for opportunities to speak on the situation in Iraq and share information ascertained by the delegation.

**PAX CHRISTI MICHIGAN MEMBER  
REV. PETER DOUGHERTY HONORED**

Pax Christi Michigan member and Pax Christi USA’s 2002 Teacher of Peace Fr. Peter Dougherty was

honored on Nov. 6th in Mumbai, India, with the International Gandhi Award by the Jannalal Bajaj Foundation. Rev. Dougherty was honored for his prophetic work in co-founding the Michigan Peace Team (MPT), whose mission is to create nonviolent alternatives to militarism and violence by training and placing violence reduction peace teams locally and around the world. For more, visit [www.michiganpeaceteam.org](http://www.michiganpeaceteam.org).

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

November 30, 2009

Dear President Obama,

With millions of U.S. people feeling the fear and desperation of no longer having a home; with millions feeling the terror and loss of dignity that comes with unemployment; with millions of our children slipping further into poverty and hunger, your decision to deploy thousands more troops and throw hundreds of billions more dollars into prolonging the profoundly tragic war in Afghanistan strikes us as utter folly. We believe this decision represents a war against ordinary people, both here in the United States and in Afghanistan. The war in Afghanistan, if continued, will result in the deaths of hundreds if not thousands of U.S. troops, and untold thousands of Afghans.

Polls indicate that a majority of those who labored with so much hope to elect you as president now fear that you will make a wrong decision—a tragic decision that will destroy their dreams for America. More tragic is the price of your decision. It will be paid with the blood, suffering and broken hearts of our young troops, their loved ones and an even greater number of Afghan men, women and children.

The U.S. military claims that this war must be fought to protect U.S. national security, but we believe it is being waged to expand U.S. empire in the interests of oil and pipeline companies.

Your decision to escalate U.S. troops and continue the occupation will cause other people in other lands to despise the U.S. as a menacing military power that violates international law. Keep in mind that to most of the peoples of the world, widening the war in Afghanistan will look exactly like what it is: the world’s richest nation making war on one of the world’s very poorest.

The war must be ended now. Humanitarian aid programs should address the deep poverty that

has always been a part of the life of Afghan people.

We will keep opposing this war in every non-violent way possible. We will urge elected representatives to cut all funding for war. Some of us will be led to withhold our taxes, practice civil resistance, and promote slowdowns and strikes at schools and workplaces.

In short, President Obama, we will do everything in our power, as nonviolent peace activists, to build the kind of massive movement—which today represents the sentiments of a majority of the American people—that will play a key role in ending U.S. war in Afghanistan. Such would be the folly of a decision to escalate troop deployment and such is the depth of our opposition to the death and suffering it would cause.

Signed by over 40 leaders in the peace movement, including:

Marie Dennis, Co-President,  
Pax Christi International

Dave Robinson, Executive Director,  
Pax Christi USA

Kathy Kelly, Pax Christi USA Teacher of Peace  
& Co-Director, Voices for Creative Nonviolence

**Act: Letters on Afghanistan**

Using the letter above, write letters to the editor and to your elected representatives. Consider posting the letter on Websites and listserves in which you participate. If there is a local vigil, action or other event opposing the escalation in Afghanistan, join it; if there is not one planned, consider organizing one yourself.

(MACC Symposium, continued from p. 5)

Upon completing the workshops, the participants congregated in groups to discuss their reactions, questions, and insights as well as to formulate action suggestions. These came in the form of political, faithful, and/or consumer-related initiatives and provided everyone with a way to put what they learned into constructive action. The symposium closed with a Eucharistic Liturgy, with Cardinal Rodriguez Maradiaga presiding. There was also an ongoing photography exhibit titled "Cerca de la Cerca" (Close to the Fence) by Teresa Fernandez.

The emphasis of the symposium was not only to educate but also to inspire thoughtful, dedicated

citizens to realize their true potential in advocating and bringing about change. The initial introductory words of Cardinal Rodriguez Maradiaga were revisited in the closing hours of the symposium and had come to possess new meaning for everyone involved. The Cardinal stated, "Have we learned, or do we not wish to learn, to calculate the effects of what we are doing?" This statement, if always on the surface of our minds, in itself is the mainstay toward living in global solidarity and therefore peace with one another.

More details about next year's MACC symposium can be found in future months at [www.maccsa.org](http://www.maccsa.org).



Meet Pax Christi USA's Interns!



**Lawrence Quirinius Barriner II** is a part-time intern working in web design and development and youth and young adult outreach. He works from our Gainesville, FL, satellite office and is supervised by our director of communications Johnny Zokovitch. Lawrence is a member of the Gainesville Catholic Worker and is a former computer science major. He has a fundamental interest in the act of creating which manifests itself in his current interests: web design, bread baking, bicycle assembly, knitting, and bracelet making. He brings skills in web design and programming abilities as well as a love for personal relationships to his work at Pax Christi USA.

**Elissa Criner** is a full-time intern working in administration and program work. She works in our Erie, PA, office and is supervised by our office manager Angie Amatangelo. Elissa comes to us from Gannon University's Foreign Language and International Studies program and chose her area of study based on her love of the Spanish language and culture and desire to be part of the immigration reform effort. To Pax Christi USA, she brings a strong concern for social justice, Christian nonviolence, and human rights as well as her bilingual ability. She enjoys traveling and participating in political advocacy on many fronts.

Pax Christi USA offers a wide variety of internships: long-term (1 year) and short-term (3 months) and various commitments in-between; full-time (30-40 hours) and part-time (8-25 hours); for class credit and stipended positions; in administration, development, field organizing, youth and young adult, communications, policy, web design and management, and more; and focusing on various program areas within Pax Christi USA's general plan (examples are nuclear disarmament, immigration, war, poverty, or climate change).

For more info on internships, contact Johnny Zokovitch at [johnnypcusa@yahoo.com](mailto:johnnypcusa@yahoo.com) or 352-219-8419.

**PAX CHRISTI NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA  
HOSTS KATHY KELLY**

This fall, Pax Christi Northeastern Pennsylvania members lobbied their Members of Congress to support health care legislation using direct contacts and op-ed pieces in the local newspaper. They also sought support for Rep. McGovern's bill to suspend and investigate the School of the Americas. In November the group hosted Kathy Kelly at the University of Scranton, Misericordia University, and at Nativity Parish, Scranton.

**PAX CHRISTI TEXAS GROUPS SPONSOR SPEAKING  
TOUR WITH DEATH ROW SURVIVOR**

The speaking tour, "Witness to Injustice," featuring death row survivor Juan Roberto Melendez-Colon visited communities throughout the Rio Grande Valley in early November. A native of Puerto Rico, Melendez spent nearly 18 years on Florida's death row for a crime he did not commit. He was exonerated and released from death row on January 3, 2002. Melendez visited Texas as concerns about the likely wrongful execution of Cameron Todd Willingham continue to call into question the reliability and fairness of the state's death penalty system. The tour was sponsored in part by

the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (TCADP), the Diocese of Brownsville, Pax Christi Brownsville, and Pax Christi Rio Grande Valley.

**PAX CHRISTI USA CONNECTIONS IN LATEST  
MICHAEL MOORE MOVIE**

In Michael Moore's latest film, *Capitalism: A Love Story*, Moore includes his own very personal musings on the role his Catholic faith has played on his formation and his politics, and he elevates the voices of longtime Pax Christi members and partners. In the movie, Moore asks his pastor about how capitalism jibes with the teachings of Jesus. Getting a very pointed response about the incompatibility of Jesus' proclamation of the gospel with the capitalist system, Moore decides that he better consult with another priest—Fr. Peter Dougherty, Pax Christi USA's Teacher of Peace in 2002. Moore then wonders if maybe he should just doublecheck all of this anti-capitalist sentiment with the bishop. So he pays a visit to Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, founding bishop-president of Pax Christi USA. The movie goes on to feature other individuals and groups who should be familiar to Pax Christi USA members.

**Note:**

Please note that the Pax Christi USA sales office will be closed from December 12, 2009, until January 4, 2010, although you may still place online orders during this time. Please plan ahead and thank you for your cooperation!

**Reflection for Christmas**

from *The Incarnation of Light, Truth, and Peace:*

*Reflections for Advent 2009*

by Megan McKenna, Ph.D.

The mystery of the Incarnation, the birth of the Word in the flesh of the human being Jesus, God becoming human and pitching a tent among us, is the reality that changes all of history and what it means to be human. We celebrate this tonight and today and for the next twelve days of Christmas.

It might be helpful to keep in mind that the words Truth, Light, and Peace are almost interchangeable in the Scripture texts. We celebrate Light, Truth, and Peace being born in our world long ago in the child Jesus, born of Mary and protected and sheltered by Joseph. We celebrate Light, Truth, and Peace being born in us this day and sheltered and protected in our world.

The mystery of the Incarnation is just that—a mystery. It is both easy to rhapsodize about and hard to say anything of depth about. Thomas Merton says simply: “Love is our true destiny. We do not find the meaning of life by ourselves alone—we find it with another.” More precisely, perhaps, we find it with others, with all others!

Years ago, I spent Christmas Eve in a small church in the Peruvian Andes where a picture of a Quechua woman holding her newborn baby girl had these words written underneath: “There is only one beautiful child in the world and each mother has that one!” Before the day was over, at least sixty pictures of various children were on the wall. The next day, the children were growing up! There were pictures of practically everyone in the village and any visitors as well (the wonder of Polaroid in those days).

There will be much talk of children this week—that Christmas is for children. This is true and not true. It is for children, all the beloved children of God, from every race, culture, language, religion, and place upon the face of the earth, no matter

their ages. And it is about children—most especially those born on the road, away from home, counted like animals, treated as slaves and possessions, immigrants and those caught between countries, on the wrong side of borders and walls. It is about children without clean water and mothers so weak they have no milk for them, about slow starvation and no protection. It is about children who are robbed even of their childhoods by war, economics, disease, racism, and prejudice.

The dancer Isadora Duncan said, “So long as little children are allowed to suffer, there is no true love in this world.” If this is true, there is very little love in our world because children and their mothers (and then the elderly) suffer the most. Yet, tonight and in the days to come, we celebrate and recommit ourselves to the Light, the Truth, and the Peace of God who has been born as one of us and abides with us always. THIS CHILD IS BORN TO US! All dominion and power rest on his shoulders. His names, given in the readings, are amazing—worth thinking about in all the seasons of the year ahead: “Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:5), Justice, Savior, Christ, Jesus, Emmanuel, joy to be shared by all the people, Light that shines on us, the Word made flesh, the glory of God, enduring love, love following upon love, the revelation of God that we can see, the Truth. When we look on the child in the manger (food for the hungry) and upon every child who comes to touch the baby Jesus and upon every child of God in the world, we must look with love and see the presence of God among us, in every single human being. We must try loving them as we claim we would love the child who was once born in Bethlehem.

**MACC hosts 3rd Annual Bilingual Symposium on “Global Solidarity”**

By Elissa Criner, Pax Christi USA Intern

The Mexican-American Catholic College (MACC) celebrated its third annual Bilingual Symposium this October, with the theme “Global Solidarity” and the focus on immigration in the United States today. This event came amidst the newborn college’s first official semester (although the organization existed for over thirty years prior as the Mexican-American Cultural Center in the bicultural city of San Antonio, Texas). The symposium was not only a bounding success, with over 100 people in attendance, but also largely instrumental in raising social justice awareness and orchestrating action at both the civilian and national levels.

The two-day symposium provided an opportunity for all who participated to confront head-on an issue that is known to many as clouded with controversy, mixed sentiment, and fearful and hateful rhetoric—the issue of so-called “illegal immigration.” In this sense, the true reality of this issue is, for many, very difficult to perceive and therefore invisible to even the most politically-inclined U.S. citizen. In fact, it is as invisible as the very individuals who comprise it: the undocumented population. San Antonio’s Archbishop Gomez understood this, for during his introduction, he described this sector of people as “invisible to us except in the conveniences they provide.” This led to the declaration of the basis of this year’s symposium: to uncover the disinformation surrounding the present immigration problem within the United States and foster ways to ameliorate all of the pain and hardship that it entails.

“Global Solidarity” was the title chosen, and although a title such as this can imply a variety of different themes, the focus and expertise that the presenters, participants, and speakers offered could not have been more straightforward.

The schedule of events began with a keynote address by Cardinal Oscar Andres Rodriguez Maradiaga S.D.B., Archbishop of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, who provided a compelling speech entitled “Global Village or Global Pillage?” He spoke of the deep, ever-

growing division in our world between the rich and the poor and the need of the Church and its members to work towards the reversal of such. Among his most notable statements was the following, borrowed from Pope John Paul II: “People are realizing that they are linked together by a common destiny, which is to be constructed together, if catastrophe for all is to be avoided.”

A series of five individual workshops was offered; each participant could partake in two, based on his/her particular areas of interest. The lineup consisted of the following:

1. “Current Public Policy on Immigration and Refugees: How does this policy respond to the common good in our country and to the social teachings of our Church?” Presented by Kevin Appleby, Director of the Office of Migration and Refugee Policy of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

2. “Immigration from Asia to Africa: Causes and migrants’ experience living in the U.S.A.” Presented by Cecile Motus, Assistant Director of the Secretariat for Cultural Diversity in the Church, USCCB.

3. Hisham Botar, Associate Director for the Refugee Settlement Program of Catholic Charities in San Antonio, Texas, offered a personal lecture on the causes of migration from Africa to the United States, based upon his own experience.

4. “Human Trafficking in the World and the U.S.A.: Causes, effects and legal protection available to victims. Why is the tragedy of human trafficking growing every year and how can we stop this trafficking?” Presented by Melissa Moreno, Director of the Anti-Trafficking Program for Catholic Charities in San Antonio, Texas.

5. “The Factors Driving Immigration from Latin America: Causes of forced migration and alternatives to migration promoted by Catholic Relief Services on the Mexican-U.S.A. border.” Presented by Erica Dahl-Bredin, Mexico Country Program Manager for Catholic Relief Services.

(continued on p. 6)

Booklet available from Pax Christi USA, [www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org).

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