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.

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Visit www.paxchristiusa.org for more educational and spiritual resources for peace.
**PAX CHRISTI USA BISHOP-PRESIDENT SIGNS LETTER ON HEALTH CARE REFORM**

In late July, Pax Christi USA Bishop President Gabri-no 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 peaceful 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 CANDLEIGHT 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 immigrants in over 66 different local law enforcement agencies across the country who signed the letter.

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.

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.”

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**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.
End the War in Afghanistan

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.htm 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 war in Afghanistan and Iraq now is being rushed through Congress 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 we intended 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 Pakistani 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 reinitiated 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 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.

(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 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.

Updates from Pax Christi USA

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

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Kathy Kelly with Kairos Day, Chicago, July 2009

photo by Johnny Zokovich
Reflection

Maybe For Us, Today, in This Country

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 storms I was experiencing at the time.

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. But many of your branches yielded not 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-colored tree to reflect the diversity and richness of My Being, to show forth the innumerable colors that I desire. Instead will yield them in plenty and yield them because you hoard your grain for profit, make it a political weapon, I will cover your grain with ash.

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

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 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.

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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 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 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?