

**Youth Empowerment: Cry Justice, Cry Peace!**

*Pax Christi USA at the SOA – 15<sup>th</sup> annual gathering, November 20, 2015*

**Opening Music** by Charlie King

**Welcome and Introduction:** Sr. Patricia Chappell, SNDdeN, Executive Director of Pax Christi USA

**Opening Prayer:**

Leader 1: Tonight we gather as poets, activists, believers, dreamers and peace-makers. We are citizens of a country gone mad with violence, a country that believes that conflicts and disputes can be solved by weapons and that all wrongs can be righted by the use of violence. We are here to free ourselves and each other from that illusion. We are also here to re-dedicate our actions for peace, for gathering support from one another and for remembering that it is God's work that is being done through us.

Reader: A blended reading from the prophets Micah and Isaiah (Mi 6:8 and Is 58:6-8): God has already made it abundantly clear what "good" is, and what Yahweh needs from us:

Simply do justice: Remove the chains of injustice! Undo the ropes of the yokes that bind my people. Let those who are oppressed go free. And break every injustice you encounter.

Love kindness: Share your bread with those who are hungry. Shelter the homeless and those made poor by unjust structures. Clothe those who are naked. Free those imprisoned.

And humbly walk with your God: All those in need are your flesh and blood...walk with them.

(Silence)

All: **All nourishing God, your people cry for help against the violence in our world: Where children starve for bread and feed on weapons; starve for vision and feed on drugs; starve for love and feed on videos; starve for peace and die murdered in our streets.**

Leader 2: Creator God, timeless preserver of resources, forgive us for the gifts that we have wasted. Renew for us what seems beyond redemption; call order and beauty to emerge again from chaos.

All: **Convert our destructive power into creative service; help us to heal the woundedness of our world.**

Leader 1: Liberating God, release us from the disguised demons of suspicion and fear that unjustly imprison our immigrant brothers and sisters in concentration camps of isolation and loneliness.

All: **Free us from all demons that blind and blunt our spirits; cleanse us from all justifications for violence; open our narrowed hearts to the suffering of those who are poor and marginalized who only want safety and peace for their children to grow.**

Leader 2: Abiding God, loving Renewer of the human spirit, unfold our violent fists into peaceful hands; stretch our sense of family to include our neighbors; stretch our sense of neighbor to include our enemies until our response to you finally respects and embraces all creation as precious sacraments of your presence.

**All:** Hear the prayer of your starving people as we resist systemic injustice and institutionalized violence, that we may always choose life and resist the forces of death as we struggle together to be true peace-makers.

**Panelists:**

- ❖ **Yves Nibungco**, Chairperson of Anakbayan USA, [www.anakbayanusa.org/](http://www.anakbayanusa.org/), a comprehensive National Democratic mass organization of Filipino youth and students in the United States. He played an integral role in founding Kapit Bisig Kabataan Network, a national Filipino youth and student led relief network built in response to Super Typhoon Haiyan. Yves also organizes workers and migrants with the NJ based Filipino Immigrants and Workers Organizing Project. Contact him at [chair@anakbayanusa.org](mailto:chair@anakbayanusa.org).
- ❖ **Nerissa Allegretti** is a health worker, community organizer, and human rights activist. She is the Midwest Coordinator of the National Alliance for Filipino Concerns (NAFCON), Founding Chairperson of the Fellowship for Filipino Migrants (FFM), and U.S. Coordinator of Movimento Laici Missionari Scalabriniani, a global organization of Roman Catholic lay missionaries in service of migrants and refugees.
- ❖ **Kathy O’Leary**, coordinator for the New Jersey region of Pax Christi (PC-NJ). She acts as the PC-NJ representative to local coalitions including the NJ Advocates for Immigrant Detainees and the NJ Prison Divestment Campaign. She is the former VP of the board of trustees for First Friends, a non-profit organization which coordinates volunteer visitation programs for immigrants in detention and provides resettlement services for asylum seekers who have been released from detention. (moderator)

**Collection to support the work of Pax Christi USA:** Sr. Patricia Chappell, SNDdeN. We ask that you please give as much as you are able in support of the work of PCUSA. Checks can be made out to Pax Christi USA. Baskets will be circulated. **Thank you for your generosity.**

**Question and Answers with Our Speakers**

**Final Comments and Announcements**

**Closing Prayer (An Immigrant’s Prayer, by Remigio Hernandez):**

**All:** O holy God, Heart of heaven and earth, praised be your holy name. Your daughters and sons, from all peoples of the world, regardless of borders, praise you. We praise you and give you thanks because you have placed in our hands the immigrant pilgrims who make the earth flourish and produce, to bring food to the table of the rich and the poor alike. We praise you and give you thanks because you walk always with those who cross borders, in search of well-being, doing their part in building the world you entrusted to us. On our way, we are mindful of your Presence in the promise to Abraham and Sarah and in the liberation of your people, Israel. We praise you and give you thanks for your blessings on all immigrants, on those who cross all the borders in the United States. And you, O Lady of Guadalupe, empress of the Americas, be always our protector and intercessor for reconciliation and the building of equality and peace. Amen.

**Closing Music**

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