

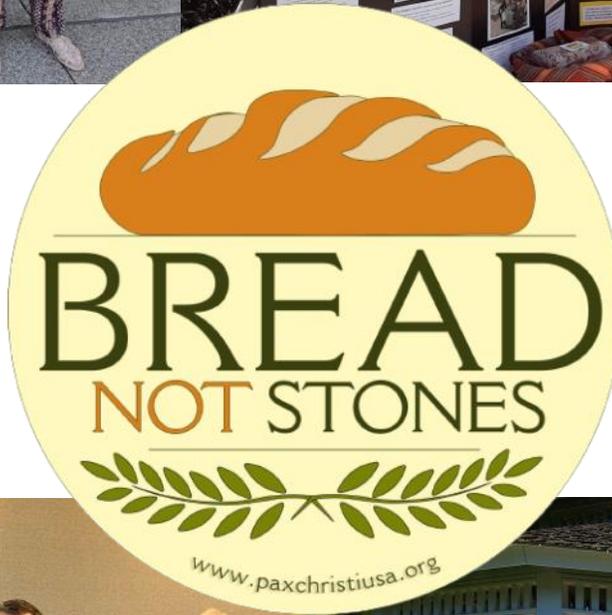


# The Peace Current

Pax Christi USA  
 The National Catholic Peace Movement  
 Membership Newsletter, Fall 2022



During the Bread Not Stones Days of Action in September, Pax Christi local groups undertook over 25 actions across 18 states: legislative visits, public witness, prayer vigils & more, challenging U.S. military spending.



Inside find a Bread Not Stones reflection by Ambassador of Peace Nancy Small, a report-back from the BNS Days of Action, our #PeopleOverPentagon Act endorsement, with more BNS resources on the website.





### The Peace Current

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# The ‘peace of Christ’ is a work in progress

By Charlene Howard, Pax Christi USA National Council Chair

*“The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”*

~1 John 3:1b -2



My Sisters and Brothers, I am currently enjoying one of the greatest blessings of my life. I am helping my youngest daughter transition into motherhood for the third time as she adjusts to her newborn. Since she was considered high risk and the circumstances surrounding her pregnancy were not ideal, it was our constant prayer that she and the baby would experience an uneventful gestation and delivery ... and God did not disappoint. We now just hold our little one for untold amounts of time staring into her little face, soaking in every expression, coo and movement. We look for minute changes in her temperament, awareness and physical appearance, adoring this bundle of joy in our arms while simultaneously wondering what she will be like. You know the list of questions: Who will she favor? Whose temperament will she mirror? What will her talents be? How will she carry on the family values, characteristics, etc.? What we do know is that all will be revealed in time.

And so it is with us, those who are working to bring about God’s kingdom. We are God’s peacekeeper children and though we have been at this important endeavor for 50 years or more, all has not yet been revealed. We are continuously becoming, evolving and changing to reflect and be the Peace of Christ – a work in progress. This beautiful aspiration is also most challenging to actualize. As we are confronted with the unsolicited invasion of Ukraine; an unabashed morally questionable political process; intentional neglect of municipal water systems in neighborhoods and cities of people who experience economic disenfranchisement due to their color; and a seeming lack of respect for all human life, we become frustrated, angry and worn out by it all. This demands that we do a self-check to ensure that we still see God’s peace at work **IN** us. We must seek the ways the Holy Spirit is revealing to us to know God’s way forward in response to these issues so that the effective work of peace can be actualized.

It is my prayer that you do the hard work of finding peace within. Allow God to reveal where your understanding, attitude, choices, and ideas need to be more in alignment with God’s authentic truth as you move forward to bring about true peace in the world. Remember — *“We do know that when it [God’s true peace] is revealed, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”* — and so too, through us, the whole world.



# New Pax Christi International Secretary General announced



Pax Christi International, the global Catholic movement for peace and nonviolence of which Pax Christi USA is a section, is pleased to announce that Martha Inés Romero has been appointed Secretary General as of Jan. 1, 2023.

Based in Colombia, Martha Inés has served Pax Christi International for more than 15 years, including a term on the international board. She is currently the regional coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean. She will continue in this role as she also takes up her duties as Secretary General.

“It was an honor to work with Martha Inés on the staff of the international secretariat during my four years there,” said Pax Christi USA Executive Director Johnny Zokovitch, who previously served as senior communications officer for Pax Christi International. “Her years of experience within the Church, her analytical skills, her deep love of peace and nonviolence, and her commitment to marginalized and impoverished communities are tremendous gifts to the movement. All of us at Pax Christi USA offer our sincere congratulations to Martha Inés and look forward to working with her in the future.”

Martha Inés describes herself as a “humble life-long learner,” and brings a rich depth of experience working throughout the Americas and with global partners. She studied conflict transformation at the Kroc Institute for Peace (USA) and was a member of the Catholic Peacebuilding Network. She has contributed to the transformation of Catholic teaching through promoting a culture of peace, nonviolence, and reconciliation, first with Catholic Relief Services, contributing to the Caritas Internationalis network, and then with Pax Christi International, through participation in synodal processes and the Laudato Si’ Action Platform.

“I look forward to listening and learning from our dedicated members and partners worldwide. The diversity in our movement is our main strength, one that we can draw on as we transform communities through justice, peace, and nonviolence,” said Romero.

Martha Inés Romero will replace outgoing Secretary General Greet Vanaerschot, who retires after 40 years of service to Pax Christi International in a variety of roles.

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## *PCUSA congratulates Pax Christi Int’l partner Memorial on the Nobel Peace Prize*

Pax Christi USA congratulates Memorial on being recognized as the co-recipients of the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize. Memorial was honored by Pax Christi International in 2013 with the Pax Christi International Peace Prize for their outstanding work in keeping alive the memory of the victims of political repression in Russia’s recent history and for its deep commitment to human rights in the country.

Alongside human rights advocate Ales Bialiatski from Belarus and the Ukrainian human rights organization Center for Civil Liberties, Memorial was recognized by the Nobel Peace Prize Committee for many years promoting “the right to criticize power and protect the fundamental rights of citizens. They have made an outstanding effort to document war crimes, human right abuses and the abuse of power. Together they demonstrate the significance of civil society for peace and democracy.”

The recognition of Memorial’s work by the Nobel Peace Prize Committee is a ringing endorsement of the important work they have done, especially in light of the current Russian invasion of Ukraine. Pax Christi USA celebrates this recognition of Memorial and we are heartened that the Nobel Peace Prize may bolster our colleagues there and all those who suffer under repression for speaking truth to power.



# Who gives their children stones when they ask for bread?

By Nancy Small

Pax Christi USA Ambassador of Peace

Nancy Small, Ambassador of Peace & former national coordinator, offered the following reflection during the September 22nd online PAX Mass, which focused on the Bread Not Stones campaign.

As we gather this evening in the light and love of this beloved community, I begin with a question that Jesus posed long ago. "Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone?" The answer to Jesus' question seems obvious. When a child asks for bread, who would be so cruel and callous as to give the child a stone?

The answer? Us. The U.S., that is, and its misguided national budget priorities. The cruel and callous behavior Jesus pointed out comes at the hands of a national budget that pours hundreds of billions of dollars into stones in the form of an immoral and insane national military budget. And because so much is given to military power, a myriad of social needs are left unfunded or underfunded.

Over 20 years ago, Pax Christi USA decided to put the words of Jesus into action as it embarked upon its first Bread Not Stones campaign to educate and advocate for national priorities that redirect military spending to fund pressing human needs. Throughout the nation Pax Christi members rose up with a powerful message

about choosing bread for the crying and compelling needs of our nation over stones of military might.

At that time, the defense budget approved by Congress was \$272 billion for fiscal year 1999.

We believed it was morally indefensible for our government to spend that much money on the military while ignoring a wide array of human needs. Since then, U.S. military spending has skyrocketed to unimaginable levels. In April 2022, Congress approved a defense budget of over \$800 billion, \$37 billion more than President Biden requested.

U.S. military spending is now greater than the defense spending of the next nine nations combined. Today we face monumental social challenges, highlighted by a worldwide pandemic, racial oppression, economic injustice, and the climate crisis. It is abundantly clear that investing in militarism neither keeps us safe nor promises the peace our communities long for.

Earlier this year Pax Christi embarked upon a new Bread Not Stones campaign, amplifying the cry of Jesus to choose the bread of life and liberation over stones of war, violence and oppression. In this week of action Pax Christi members are highlighting this message in their hometowns and in halls of power through campaigns of education and advocacy, by meeting with elected officials, writing letters to the editor and taking to the streets. Pax Christi members are challenging a nation of military might by changing our nation's narrative about its national spending priorities.

As we do, we are putting into action prophetic words spoken by Catholic leaders like Pope Paul VI who said, "Countless millions are starving, countless families are destitute...countless people need schools, hospitals, and homes worthy of the name. In such circumstances, we cannot tolerate public and private expenditures of a wasteful nature; we cannot approve a debilitating arms race. It is our solemn duty to speak out against them."

We are lifting up the cry of Pope Francis, who said, "It is high time that governments develop economic policies aimed at inverting the proportion of public funds spent on education and on weaponry. The pursuit of a genuine process of



## Congress' priorities:

 \$28 million to end U.S. baby formula shortages

 700 times that much in military aid to Ukraine



Continued on page 5...

international disarmament can only prove beneficial for the development of peoples and nations, freeing up financial resources better used for health care, schools, infrastructure, care of the land, and so forth....”

Through our Bread Not Stones campaign, we are answering the prophetic call of the U.S. Catholic bishops who wrote in their peace pastoral nearly 40 years ago, “We see with increasing clarity the political folly of a system. [where] billions [are] readily spent for destructive instruments while pitched battles are waged daily in our legislatures over much smaller amounts for the homeless, the hungry, and the helpless here and abroad.”

As we gather tonight, we bring our longing for a life-enhancing understanding of security that nurtures empathetic and sustainable communities where:

- Healthcare, housing, and food are fundamental human rights.
- A living wage is guaranteed to all people.
- Restorative justice practices, a process for reparations, and other means to dismantle systemic racism are funded.
- The human dignity of all people is protected – especially those who are in any way excluded, marginalized, or oppressed.
- Effective education is free for all regardless of their zip code.
- Care for the earth’s many ecosystems becomes central to our economic model.

As we gather tonight, we bring our longing for foreign policy based on just and environmentally sustainable strategies, a fairer distribution of wealth between all people, peacebuilding instead of warmongering, the protection of the human dignity of all and the planetary dignity of Mother Earth.

The money is there. According to the National Priorities Project, if we chose to redirect military spending we could supply over two billion households with solar electricity. We could provide over 16 million jobs that pay more than \$15/hour plus benefits. We could create over four million clean energy jobs. We could provide more than 100 million people with healthcare. We could provide affordable housing for more than 87 million people.

The choice is ours to make if we as a nation have the moral and political will to make it. So as we gather tonight let’s bring our lament that our nation fails to recognize that true security lies in improving the lives of all people, especially those considered the least among us. Let’s bring our longing that our national priorities be converted away from weapons to the well-being of people in need and that our nation’s heart of stone become a heart of flesh that feels the longings of the least among us and beats with compassion for the common good.

We come to this liturgy tonight bringing bread, not stones, bread that will be broken as the body of Christ. When we go forth from this liturgy tonight, let us be the Body of Christ, breaking our nation’s obsession with military might, as we choose bread, not stones and challenge others to do the same.

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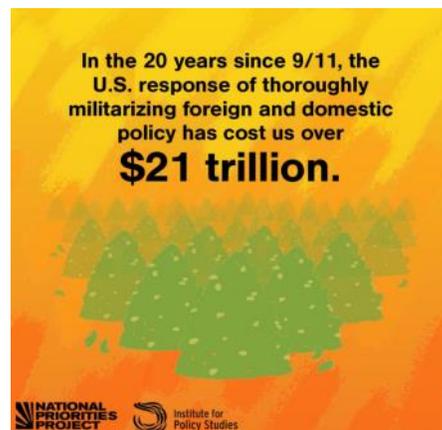
## **Pax Christi USA endorses the #PeopleOverPentagon bill**

As part of our Bread Not Stones campaign, Pax Christi USA has endorsed the People Over Pentagon Act, HR 8040, sponsored by Reps. Barbara Lee (D-CA) & Mark Pocan (D-WI). See more at <https://peopleoverpentagon.org/bill/>.

This act would cut \$100 billion from the three-quarters-of-a-trillion dollar Pentagon budget, reducing waste and encouraging lawmakers to spend this funding on the true needs of their constituents instead. Proponents of the bill argue that reallocating \$100 billion away from the Pentagon is an essential first step towards realigning our national spending priorities.

Researchers at the National Priorities Project have noted that \$100 billion used elsewhere could pay for:

- Powering every household in the United States with solar energy
- Hiring one million elementary school teachers amid a worsening teacher shortage
- Free tuition for 2 out of 3 public college students in the U.S.
- Sending every household in the U.S. a \$700 check to help offset effects of inflation



# On the line: Bread Not Stones Actions around the U.S.

## PAX CHRISTI LOCAL GROUPS, STATE & REGIONAL CHAPTERS CALL FOR BREAD NOT STONES

Dozens of Pax Christi USA local groups and hundreds of individual members participated in the Bread Not Stones Days of Action in September, standing up against the federal government and calling for a redirection of military spending.

Groups from California to Massachusetts prayed, studied, and acted for change. From meetings with members of Congress to demonstrations outside of weapons-producing facilities, Pax Christi members amplified a peaceful voice and stood against inflated military budgets that promote weapons over people.

Here is a just a glimpse of some of the creative, powerful actions that took place during those September days:

- ⇒ PC St. John the Baptist-Silver Spring (MD) met with staff of Congressman John Sarbanes elevating the call for a budget that prioritizes human need over military greed.
- ⇒ PC New Jersey held a Bread Not Stones Teach-In & Vigil about moving money from military spending which is used to perpetuate all forms of oppression including racism and xenophobia while exacerbating economic disparities and worsening the climate crisis. L3Harris Technologies was less than a half mile from the vigil; they are one of the largest military contractors in NJ, providing weapons and surveillance technology to ICE, Border Patrol, and the Israeli occupation.
- ⇒ PC Memphis held an interfaith prayer gathering



using the BNS prayer card and shared actions and had a meeting with Rep. Steve Cohen about the People Over Pentagon Bill.

- ⇒ PC Northern California posted BNS flyers at their church and shared it at the community's interfaith "International Day of Peace" celebration.

⇒ PC Massachusetts' board concluded their in-person board meeting with the "Bread Not Stones" ritual.

⇒ PC Metro DC-Baltimore and the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker held "A Nonviolent Vigil and Prayer Service for Peace and Justice" during the annual AFA Air-Space-Cyber Conference and Technology Exposition, i.e. the "Arms Bazaar."

⇒ PC South Dakota circulated a prayer service for local groups and members to use individually or in their churches on the International Day of Prayer for Peace.



- ⇒ The PC Young Adult Caucus held an event on the military budget.
- ⇒ PC Hampton Roads (Norfolk, VA) delivered letters to bank managers at Wells Fargo and Bank of America with the Norfolk Catholic Worker, linking the continued financing of nuclear weapons companies and ongoing investment in fossil-fuels projects saying “Budgets are moral documents. It is time to demand that these financial institutions invest in infrastructure that supports life and health for all!”
- ⇒ PC Santa Fe (NM) supported a resolution that the Board of County Commissioners passed recognizing September 21, 2022, as “The International Day of Peace and Urging the United States Congress to Reduce Funding to the United States Department of Defense and Reallocate Those Funds to Domestic Needs.”
- ⇒ Over 350 PCUSA members gathered on Zoom and Facebook Live for the September Pax Mass, focusing on Bread Not Stones, celebrated by Fr. Joe Nangle, ofm.
- ⇒ PC Seattle members participated in the rally and march organized by Citizens for the Universal Abolition of Nuclear Weapons,
- ⇒ Pittsburgh Area PC made a banner from the Bread Not Stones artwork and a two-sided mini-flyer they used at their joint action with the PNC Stop Banking the Bomb Campaign protest.
- ⇒ PC Atlanta offered a public prayer service after their church’s largest Mass, using the Bread not Stones resources and holding it at the Peace Pole at erected in honor of one of their founders, Sr. Sally White.
- ⇒ PC Pacific Northwest joined with members of Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action at the Trident Base to leaflet base workers as they go to work.
- ⇒ PC Maine accomplished letter writing, letters to the editor and incorporated BNS study and prayer into their small groups.



Pax Christi USA’s national staff and National Council offer our sincerest thank to all of these groups and everyone who took action during the BNS Days of Action! We are amazed by your commitment and honored by your witness within our movement.

## *Help us build (bake?!) a better world*

Pope Francis calls us to “a dignified existence...protecting and regenerating the natural world.” To live this life, he says we must “redesign the economy,” redirecting money spent on war to programs that make for peace.

Bread Not Stones isn’t just about eliminating nuclear weapons, beating our swords into plowshares, and slashing our disastrous military budget (although it is about all of those things!) **It is about building a better world.**

That’s why we’re adding something fun to this campaign! In this newsletter mailing is a recipe card (like the one pictured to the right) where you can hand-write your favorite bread (or cake, or pie, or scone—you get the idea!) recipe for a “Bread Not Stones” cookbook we’ll be compiling in the coming year! You can submit your recipe by filling out the enclosed recipe card and sending it back into the office using the remittance envelope in this mailing (or go to [bit.ly/paxrecipe](http://bit.ly/paxrecipe) online and use the form there).

Even small acts of creativity—like baking bread—help us to build a better future: one where racial, environmental, and economic justice rule the day. One where delicious bread recipes matter more than sinful military budgets. **Help us build a world where we can promise our children “bread, not stones.”**

, NOT STONES

NAME OF DISH

FROM THE KITCHEN OF

INGREDIENTS

SERVES

PREP TIME

TOTAL TIME

OVEN TEMP

DIRECTIONS

NOTES

"IS THERE ANYONE AMONG YOU WHO, IF YOUR CHILD ASKED FOR BREAD, WOULD GIVE A STONE?"

[PAXCHRISTIUSA.ORG/BREAD-NOT-STONES-2022/](http://PAXCHRISTIUSA.ORG/BREAD-NOT-STONES-2022/)

# A reflection for the Second Sunday of Advent, December 4

By Bishop John Stowe, OFM Conv.  
Pax Christi USA Bishop-President

Isaiah 11:1-10 | Romans 15:4-9 | Matthew 3:1-12

*Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. (Mt 3:3)*

On this Second Sunday of Advent, there is still no “deck the halls” or “ho, ho, ho” to be heard in our liturgy. Instead we have the rather severe portrait of John the Baptist presented to us. The prophet dressed in camel’s hair while feasting on locusts dressed with wild honey is quite a contrast with the high-pressured push for consumption that dominates our media these days in the countdown to Christmas. In fact, it’s hard to see what was attracting so many people to the River Jordan. The invitation to prepare the way, the call for repentance of sins, is hardly a crowd pleaser. And for the “holy ones” who came to John, he didn’t have the nicest words – he calls them a brood of vipers! What is the attraction?

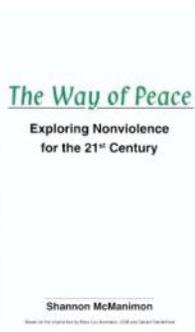
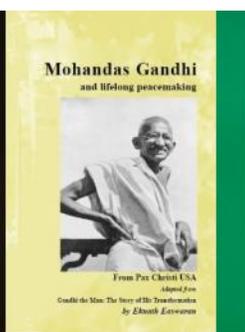
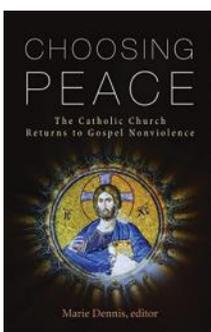


It must be the possibility of coming clean.

The baptism of repentance which washes sins away is being offered with no questions asked, only the desire to be forgiven. What a concept! Our lines for the Sacrament of Reconciliation would be a mile long if we realized what is being offered--freedom from the worst moment of our past, freedom from the worst aspects of ourselves, encouragement to keep trying and a reminder that we are precious in the eyes of God who made us sons and daughters at our own baptism. That should be quite the attraction.

John the Baptist quotes our poet guide, Isaiah, inviting all to prepare the way of the Lord. In the first reading, Isaiah’s dream of the impossible continues. He envisions wolves lying down with lambs, leopards and goats, calves and lions, babies and vipers together. Universal reconciliation, nature and humanity, and a little child is the guide to this wondrous new world. The passage begins with the hopeful image of a shoot of fresh growth bursting forth from an old stump. Isn’t that our vision as we strive to care for our common home, the earth? And natural enemies resting peacefully with each other; isn’t that our hope for a world without violence and threats? It is possible, says our poet prophet, when the Spirit of the Lord rests upon us! Come, Holy Spirit. Come, Lord Jesus. Renew our world, renew the human race. Let us be washed clean of all that does not enhance our dignity. Help us prepare your way in the world.

*What are you looking to ‘wash clean’ in yourself this season?*



**Don't forget to visit the Pax Christi USA store online! All December, every classic publication, new resource & all 50th anniversary items will be 50%. For items from our old inventory, this will be your last chance to get them before they're discontinued. Check out the store at <https://paxchristiusa.3dcartstores.com/> or find a link to it on the Pax Christi USA website.**

