



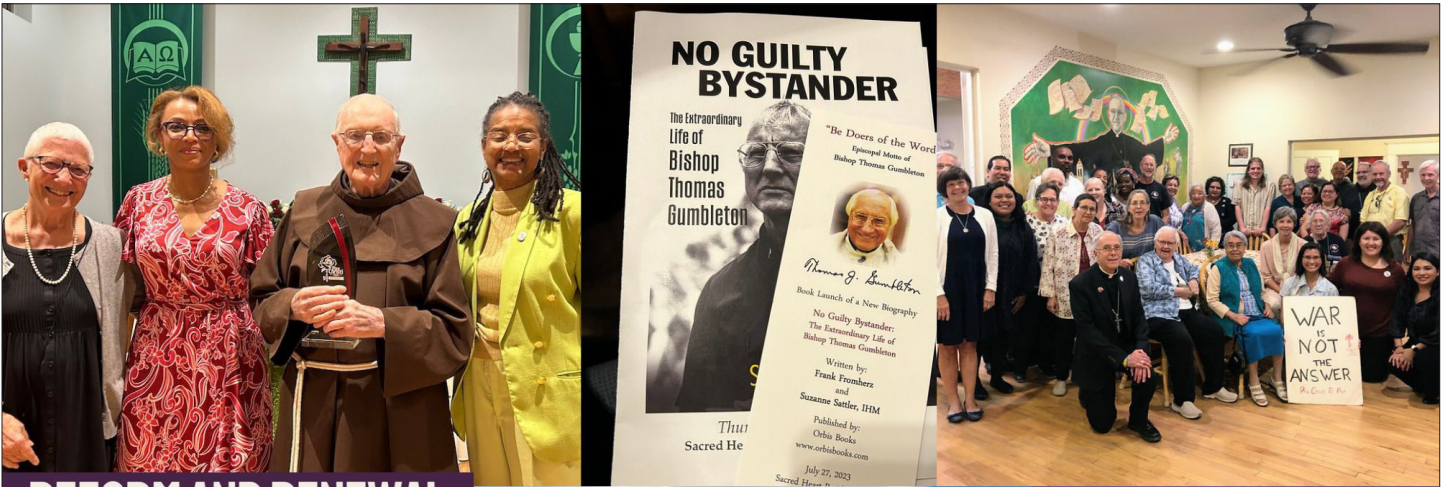
The Peace Current

Pax Christi USA

The National Catholic Peace Movement

Membership Newsletter, Spring 2024

Our work in solidarity: 2023 Year in Review



REFORM AND RENEWAL
 PCYAC VIRTUAL ADVENT RETREAT
 REGISTRATION OPENS DECEMBER 1
SATURDAY DECEMBER 16
 12-3:30 PM ET
<https://tinyurl.com/PCYAC-Advent>



40 YEARS OF "THE CHALLENGE OF PEACE: GOD'S PROMISE AND OUR RESPONSE"
 A Pax Christi USA webinar
Wednesday, May 24, 8 PM Eastern
 Learn more and register here:
<https://tinyurl.com/40yearsChallengeofPeace>

With Pax Christi USA Bishop President John Stowe, OFM Conv.
 Dr. Lisa Sowle Cahill (Boston College)
 Josephine Carmel (Pax Christi USA National Council)
 and Donna Tolliver Grimes (Pax Christi USA Ambassador of Peace)

Called to Care
 Fall Series on Nonviolence & Care for Creation
 Young Catholic Climate Activists on the Frontlines of Advancing Nonviolence

A Rojo Tsosie
 City Organizer & The Navajo Nation

Henry Glynn
 Graduate Student
 Notre Dame University

Diana Marin
 Program Manager
 Young Adult Mobilization at
 the Catholic Climate Covenant

Nia White
 Campus Minister
 Lewis University

Ryan Di Corleone
 (Moderator)
 Managing Editor of
 America Magazine





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Lobby visits for nuclear disarmament

By Ronnie Fellerath-Lowell, program associate for nuclear disarmament

Back from the Brink resolutions seek local and state support toward diminishing the threat of nuclear weapons and advocating for steps toward their abolition.



On February 15, Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility (CPSR) organized a lobby day in Annapolis, MD in support of BftB. As a long-time member of both CPSR and Pax Christi Metro DC-Baltimore, Dr. Art Milholland represented both groups. Karen Gregory, Kathy Heller, and Ronnie Fellerath-Lowell, members of Pax Christi-St. John the Baptist, Silver Spring, MD, participated as well. The Pax Christi group quickly appreciated being part of a

coalition which we joined in visiting our own senators and delegates whom we had previously contacted. We received a warm welcome from the four offices we visited and met two of our delegates, one of whom agreed to co-sponsor the resolution!

The coalition will continue to seek more supporters as the BftB resolution moves through the legislative chambers.

Physicians for Social Responsibility leads the Back from the Brink Campaign, which Pax Christi USA has endorsed as a co-sponsor. Pax Christi encourages working in coalitions to pass local and state Back from the Brink resolutions.

Visit preventnuclearwar.org for more information, and contact Pax Christi USA to report on your BftB efforts and successes and to request assistance.

Quick updates from state groups

- **Pax Christi Northern California** hosted its annual assembly on January 27, with keynote speaker Fr. John Dear. Therese Mughannam Walrath was presented with the annual “Tom Webb Memorial Peacemaker Award.”
- **Pax Christi Massachusetts** hosted an online forum, “Building a world without nuclear weapons: An urgent imperative,” with guest speakers Archbishop John Wester, Ira Helfand, and Marie Dennis. The recording is available on our website.
- **Pax Christi Michigan** continues its series of monthly online workshops; recent topics include indigenous rights, racial justice, and justice for migrants.
- **Pax Christi New Jersey** has been deeply involved with local efforts to urge a ceasefire and to hold elected officials accountable for the U.S.’s support of Israel’s war on Gaza.
- **Pax Christi Florida** participated with the Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops in the annual “Catholic Days at the Capitol” on Feb. 6 and 7. Members joined with delegations from their respective dioceses and met with legislators on several bills.



Pax Christi members John Frank, Susan Priddy and Isaac Chandler in Tallahassee on Feb. 7

Our work in solidarity: 2023 in review

By Johnny Zokovitch, Pax Christi USA Executive Director

Ed. note: See a version of this year-in-review on the Pax Christi USA website with links and more.

Every January, it fills me with a sense of pride when I start to look back at all of the work we accomplished as Pax Christi USA over the previous year. Pulling this year-in-review report together to highlight just some of that work conjures up in me such a deep sense of gratitude for everyone in our movement and all the ways we — individually and collectively — are witnessing to the “peace of Christ” in our world today.

As I reviewed this past year, so many things struck me, but one in particular I want to share with you before moving on to the monthly highlights of the year. **What struck me is just how deeply local AND international we are in this work.** Let me start by highlighting how our local groups (on campuses, within religious communities, in parishes, etc.) and our state and regional chapters are thriving with the commitment of thousands of members on the ground working in their neighborhoods, parishes, cities and states; advocating with their local bishops and pastors and their elected leaders on city councils and in the statehouse; agitating nonviolently for peace with justice. Just a few examples: Pax Christi state chapters and local groups published op-eds on gun violence (Little Rock); celebrated their 30th anniversary (South Dakota); hosted Pax Christi USA leadership to learn more about border issues (El Paso); lifted up Pope Francis’ message of nuclear disarmament with a billboard campaign (Pacific Northwest); organized visits by the Golden Rule Peace Boat in Maryland, New York and New Jersey (Metro New York, New Jersey, Upstate



National Council member Jeff Sved, Charlie Haddux, Sr. Lil Mattingly, National Council member Fr. Fred Thelen, and Exec. Director Johnny Zokovitch, El Paso, October 2023

New York, Baltimore); hosted state conferences on the threat of white nationalism (Michigan); honored local peacemakers for their extraordinary witness (Metro DC-Baltimore); and too many to list held actions in support of a ceasefire in Gaza.

But all of this work at the local level is mirrored by how intentionally we’ve been cultivating a more profound sense of solidarity with our Pax Christi family around the world. Again, just a few examples of how we have strengthened our ties with our partners in the Pax Christi International network will suffice. This past year we supported and promoted efforts like

the webinar with this year’s recipient of the Pax Christi International Peace Prize; a statement like the one on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; international roundtables on active nonviolence; celebrating the work of and then hosting a meeting in Washington with our sister organization from El Salvador; celebrations of the power of nonviolence with partners around the world for the Catholic Nonviolence Days of Action in September; a message sent to the G7 summit signed by numerous Pax Christi sections from around the world calling for greater commitment to nuclear disarmament; webinars on the 60th anniversary of *Pacem in Terris* and on women and peacebuilding;



the international effort to elevate Pope Francis’s prayer intention “for a nonviolent culture” in April; delegations to Palestine (photo above, with PCI partners) and the Philippines (where Pax Christi USA staff met with Pax Christi Philippines members); and so much more.

All this is to emphasize **what a gift it is for each of us that no matter where we are or how localized or even sometime solitary our efforts may be or feel, we are indeed part of great wave of witness happening all over the world.**

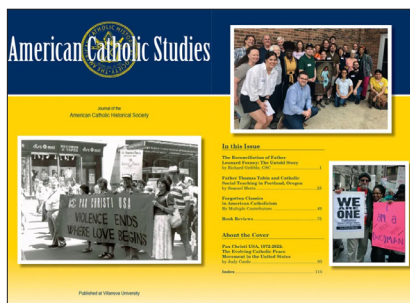
So as you review the highlights below, I hope you too will experience that profound sense of solidarity, that abiding, palpable sense of community that testifies to how we do this work TOGETHER, never alone. **I hope you’ll feel the gratitude I have for you, and appreciate how every one of us incarnates the fullness of “Pax Christi” in the witness we give wherever we are.** And that you’ll feel gratitude for being in this movement, local AND global, as you live out your own discipleship to the nonviolent Jesus.

Continued on page 4...

Our work in solidarity, *continued from page 3* ...

And now for the 2023 Year-in-Review, taking it month by month and picking out a few highlights for each...

JANUARY – On the heels of Pope Francis’s World Day of Peace message and our participation in an interfaith vigil for faith in democracy, we learned of the passing of Pax Christi USA Teacher of Peace and former national coordinator, Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB. **Mary Lou was a giant in the Pax Christi USA universe, her leadership stretching from our beginnings in 1972 through her serving as the co-chair of our 50th anniversary committee in 2022.** ... Two historical pieces featuring Pax Christi USA were published, one by Judy Coode in American Catholic Studies, and the other by Pax Christi USA Ambassador of Peace Nancy Small, putting a nice bow on the end of our celebration of our 50th anniversary. ... Pax Christi members also publicly marked the second anniversary of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons entry into force.



FEBRUARY – Pax Christi USA National Council Chair Charlene Howard joined Pax Christi Michigan for a special event elevating the six African American Catholics being considered for sainthood, continuing our efforts to support their cause. ... We joined the effort in support of a study commission on reparations. ... Charlene and her husband Michael also provided, with others, the reflections for the 2023 Lenten reflection booklet. ... As part of the ongoing Bread Not Stones campaign, we urged President Biden to dramatically cut the military budget for 2024 and to invest the funds in nonviolent and humane programs that promote the well-being of all. ... We curated and promoted resources



National staff John Noble (third from left) and Lauren Bailey (right) visit with Pax Christi Northern California members, February 2023

for prayer, study and action throughout Lent focused on the theme of “witness” and rooting ourselves ever more deeply in discipleship to the nonviolent Jesus, fortifying us to address injustice, violence, and oppression. ... Our intergenerational co-learning program Peace Pairs continued in 2023, with a new class of participants working on joint projects.

MARCH – The fruits of the efforts of a number of Pax Christi groups, like Pax Christi Maine and Pax Christi South Dakota, to get the Vatican to renounce the “Doctrine of Discovery” were finally realized in March with a Vatican announcement. ... Pax Christi USA staff members joined a delegation to the Philippines and executed a number of follow-up events in support of the delegation and strengthening our collaboration with Pax Christi Philippines. ... Pax Christi USA’s program director, Roxana Bendezú, was also part of a Pax Christi International delegation to Palestine in February with the delegation’s report being issued this month.

APRIL – We continued our advocacy for a ceasefire in Ukraine, including lifting up the words of Pope Francis and supporting a petition which was delivered to political leaders in Washington, D.C. On the one year anniversary of the war, we issued a PSA calling for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. ... Pax Christi USA was also a co-sponsor of Ecumenical Advocacy Days in Washington, D.C., focusing on the theme “Swords Into Plowshares.” We contributed a workshop on our Bread Not Stones campaign and Pax Christi USA Teacher of Peace Marie Dennis was one of the keynote speakers.

MAY – In our persistent work to amplify Catholic Social Teaching within the Church, we hosted a webinar amplifying the message of *The Challenge of Peace*, the U.S. bishops’ peace pastoral, on the occasion of its 40th anniversary. ... We also continued our partnership with Meta Peace Team to provide bi-annual nonviolence trainings open to anyone in the Pax Christi USA community. ... Pax Christi USA also co-sponsored the Warheads to Windmills webinar with Nick Mele of the Pax Christi USA Nuclear Disarmament Working Group among the speakers.

JUNE – In a PSA to mark the observance of June as Torture Awareness Month, we published a new prayer card version of Pax Christi USA Teacher of Peace Sr. Dianna Ortiz’s prayer and invited members around the country to light a candle on June 26 in support of survivors of torture. ... Fr. Jim Martin joined us for our

Continued on page 5 ...

Our work in solidarity, continued from page 4 ...

quarterly #PAXMass, this one done in collaboration with Outreach Ministries and observance of Pride Month. ... And our Gun Violence Prevention Working Group held their first webinar as a contribution to Gun Violence Awareness Day. ... The Pax Christi Young Adult Caucus hosted both an in-person retreat in Chicago this month (and an Advent virtual retreat in December.)

JULY – More than 40 leaders from every constituency of Pax Christi USA gathered in Washington, D.C. for an historic anti-racism summit, assessing the first 20+ years of the racial justice commitment that we first made in 1999; reflecting on our work to become an anti-racist, multicultural peace movement; and looking ahead to the next steps of our ongoing commitment to anti-racism. The weekend summit was facilitated by former National Council member Kim Mazyck. ... Later in the month, staff members, Ambassadors of Peace, and members of Pax Christi Michigan were all on hand for a celebration in Detroit of Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, Pax Christi USA's founding bishop-president, and the release of a new biography about him.



National staff member Michelle Sherman and Pax Christi Michigan's Mary Hanna at Sacred Heart Church in Detroit, July 27, 2023

AUGUST – Pax Christi USA promoted the pilgrimage of Archbishops John Wester and Paul Etienne to Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the partnership with their Japanese counterparts to create a nuclear weapon-free world, while also resourcing our membership for prayer, study and action in observation of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki anniversaries.

SEPTEMBER – Pax Christi USA celebrated the lifelong witness of Fr. Joe Nangle, ofm, with this year's Teacher of Peace Award and a ceremony held with more than 250 people at Joe's home parish in Arlington, VA. ... Our

Fall edition of The Peace Current celebrated the work of young adults and students in our movement. ... In the latter half of the month, Pax Christi local groups, state chapters and members across the nation participated in events lifting up the Catholic Nonviolence Days of Action.

OCTOBER – We immediately responded to the Hamas attacks and the subsequent war Israel unleashed in response to those attacks, gathering resources for prayer, study and action which included advocacy efforts with the U.S. Congress, public pressure campaigns on President Biden, fasting with Pope Francis, and more. ... We also launched our first sign-on statement for U.S. bishops in over two decades, focusing on the Bread Not Stones campaign to redirect military spending to human need (and resulting in nearly 20 U.S. bishops signing on; see page 7). ... And we offered a Called to be Peacemakers (Virtual) Retreat, an online series on nonviolence and the care of creation aimed at students, and the publication of a new Vow of Nonviolence prayer card.



NOVEMBER – Our Bishop-President, Bishop John Stowe, OFM Conv, wrote a powerful rebuke of President Biden's assertion that Pope Francis and the U.S. Administration were "on the same page" regarding Israel's attack on Gaza; the piece was featured by Religion News Service and picked up by newspapers and digital media across the country. ... We co-sponsored and helped organize a candlelight vigil calling for a ceasefire in Gaza and a pray-in at the U.S. Senate where two Pax Christi USA Ambassadors of Peace, Jean Stokan and Bob Cooke, were arrested for civil disobedience.

DECEMBER – Our 2023 Advent program was focused on the devastating war taking place in Gaza and included PSAs, weekly prayer services, our quarterly #PAXMass, and more resources for prayer, study and action all aimed at lifting up the call for a ceasefire. ... We reprinted one of our most-sought-after prayer cards, "A Prayer to Abolish the Death Penalty," written by Pax Christi USA Teacher of Peace Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ who also wrote a beautiful testimony to the enduring promise of the Pax Christi movement. ... And Sr. Norma Pimentel, MJ authored our biggest selling Advent reflection booklet of the past 10 years, with more than 5,000 copies being sold.

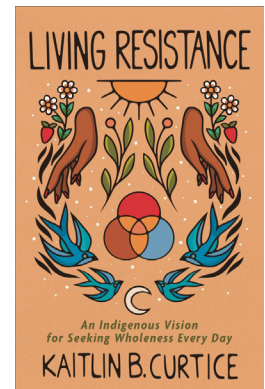
We look forward to 2024 and walking "the way" together!

Updates from the Pax Christi USA Young Adult Caucus

Literary Circle for Liberation: *Living Resistance*

Starting February 21, the Pax Christi Young Adult Caucus (PCYAC) has held bi-weekly Literary Circle for Liberation (study circle) for young adults ages 20-39 with *Living Resistance: An Indigenous Vision for Seeking Wholeness Every Day*, by Kaitlin Curtice, an award-winning author, poet-storyteller, and public speaker.

Curtice shows that we can learn to practice embodied ways of belonging and connection to ourselves and one another through everyday practices, such as getting more in touch with our bodies, resting, and remembering our ancestors. She explores four “realms of resistance”— the personal, the communal, the ancestral, and the integral — and shows how these realms overlap and why all are needed for our liberation. Readers will be empowered to seek wholeness in whatever spheres of influence they inhabit.



Although the study circle is limited to young adults, we encourage the larger membership of Pax Christi USA to read along!

Save the dates! Challenging conversations: Intergenerational nonviolent peacemaking through difficult times, a two-part Peace Pairs webinar on May 1 and 15

CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS

Intergenerational Nonviolent Peacemaking In Difficult Times
A Pax Christi USA Peace Pair Project

Tiffany Hunsinger Janice Vanderhaar

Save the Date

A two-part interactive series:
Wednesdays, May 1 & 15
8-9:30 Eastern on ZOOM
REGISTRATION OPENS IN APRIL!

Pax Christi USA 50th Anniversary

Save the dates for “Challenging conversations: Intergenerational nonviolent peacemaking through difficult times,” a two-part interactive series facilitated by Peace Pair Tiffany Hunsinger, a member of PCYAC, and Ambassador of Peace Janice Vanderhaar.

- Session 1: Wednesday, May 1 – 8-9:30 PM Eastern
- Session 2: Wednesday, May 15 – 8-9:30 PM Eastern

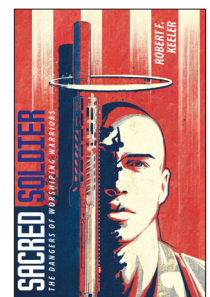
For both sessions, participants will receive an excerpt from *Beyond Violence: In the Spirit of the Nonviolent Christ* by Jerry Vanderhaar and reflection questions from Tiffany and Janice. Each session will include prayer, reflections and input from Tiffany and Janice, and discussion with participants. The program will run for an hour, with an additional half an hour for social time.

Registration will open in April on the Pax Christi USA website.

Sacred Soldier: The dangers of worshiping warriors **A new book written by Pax Christi Long Island’s Bob Keeler**

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and military veteran Bob Keeler has just published a new book, *Sacred Soldier: The dangers of worshiping warriors*, which examines both the realities of the U.S. military and the worshipful attitude that many U.S. Americans hold toward it. (Bob joined Pax Christi in the early 1990s after interviewing Sr. Mary Lou Kownacki, then national coordinator of Pax Christi USA, during the first Gulf War.)

This new book offers a more clear-eyed, warts-and-all view of our military. It argues that we owe our warriors more than empty words of gratitude, “Thank you for your service.” We owe them honesty as they enlist; we owe them protection from rampant sexual abuse by other members of the military; hesitance to shed their blood in multiple deployments to unwinnable wars; and the highest possible quality of care when they return from battle, wounded in mind, body, and spirit. We need to ask the hard questions, such as: Are today’s soldiers truly defending our freedom, or too often suppressing the freedom of other peoples?



Published by Interlink Books, distributed by Simon & Schuster. List price \$20; 248 pages.

19 U.S. bishops endorse Bread Not Stones statement

*Pax Christi USA's 2023 Bread Not Stones campaign invited U.S. Catholic bishops to add their name to a statement endorsing the campaign key message, that our country's budget should respond to true human needs rather than to military excess. **Thanks to the hard work of Pax Christi members across the country, at least 99 bishops in 65 dioceses were contacted, and almost 20 have signed.***

*The story of this campaign is not only about the bishops. **It is also about the efforts of ordinary Catholics who urged their bishop to add their name to this moral document reflecting the well-established teachings of the Catholic Church.** Like the persistent widow in the Gospel (Luke 18:1-8) who continued to seek justice from an uncaring judge, these committed Catholics persisted in the hope that they could convince their bishop to affirm Catholic Social Teaching. Read the text of the letter below:*

In the preamble of Jesus' teaching of the Golden Rule, He asks his followers, "Which of you, if your child asks for bread, will give them a stone?" (Matthew 7:9)

The growing gap between the rich and the poor is compounded by a growing gap between our nation's spending on weapons and preparations for war and our commitment to end poverty. Our poor and marginalized brothers and sisters cry out for the bread of compassion and justice. Shall we continue to offer them stones?

We are told that our military spending secures peace for our people and the Church recognizes the legitimate need for the adequate defense of nations. **But our reliance on unfettered military spending is rooted in a mistaken notion of peace and an erroneous understanding of what constitutes true security for our people.**

As Pope Paul VI made clear, "For peace is not simply the absence of warfare, based on a precarious balance of power; it is fashioned by efforts directed day after day toward the establishment of the ordered universe willed by God, with a more perfect form of justice among men." (*On the Development of Peoples*, 1967)

At the gathering of the world's bishops during the Second Vatican Council in the early 1960s, the Church made clear that, "The arms race is one of the greatest curses on the human race; it is to be condemned as a danger, an act of aggression against the poor, and a folly which does not provide the security it promises." (*The Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World*, #81).

The Church has repeated many times that "the arms race is to be condemned unreservedly," "it is an injustice," "it is a form of theft," "it is completely incompatible with the spirit of humanity and still more with the spirit of Christianity." (The Holy See & Disarmament Reply to an invitation by the General Assembly of the United Nations, 1975)

In our dioceses we hear the cry of the poor who hunger

for the bread of compassion and justice. We hear that cry in our Catholic Charities offices, in our food pantries, in our parish St. Vincent de Paul ministries. We hear that cry in our schools, hospitals, homeless shelters, and immigrant outreach efforts.

The U.S. federal budget is a moral document that identifies what we value. **We cannot remain silent while our nation squanders hundreds of billions of dollars every year on weapon systems that add little to our nation's national security while neglecting the poor and marginalized in our dioceses and around the world.**

Our misplaced reliance on new and ever more lethal conventional and nuclear weapons will never bring us the peace for which we long. If we want genuine peace, we must seek justice for the "least of these" (Matthew 25) by beating our swords into ploughshares, and our spears into pruning hooks. (Isaiah 2:4)

Signed:

Bishop John Stowe, OFM Conv., Lexington, KY
Bishop Emeritus Thomas Gumbleton, Detroit, MI
Cardinal Robert McElroy, San Diego, CA
Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., Newark, NJ
Archbishop John Wester, Santa Fe, NM
Archbishop Thomas Zinkula, Dubuque, IA
Bishop Steven Biegler, Cheyenne, WY
Bishop John Dolan, Phoenix, AZ
Bishop Daniel Garcia, Monterey, CA
Bishop Joseph R. Kopacz, Jackson, MS
Bishop Mark Seitz, El Paso, TX
Bishop Anthony Taylor, Little Rock, AR
Bishop Louis Tylka, Peoria, IL
Auxiliary Bishop Matthew Elshoff, OFM Cap., Los Angeles
Auxiliary Bishop Anthony C. Celino, El Paso, TX
Bishop Emeritus Donald Hanchon, Detroit, MI
Bishop Emeritus Richard Pates, Des Moines, IA
Bishop Emeritus Peter Rosazza, Hartford, CT
Bishop Emeritus Richard Sklba, Milwaukee, WI



A reflection for Easter, March 31, 2024

Written by Frida Berrigan, from "A Fast That Matters: Reflections for Lent 2024"

Acts 10:34a, 37-43 | Colossians 3:1-4 | John 20:1-9

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb.

Here we are, finally arriving on Easter Sunday. Hallelujah.

Like a lot of people, I have a complicated relationship with the Catholic Church. The maleness, the hierarchy, the violence towards the vulnerable, the secrecy, all that property, the blessing and/or the silence on U.S. war-making and nuclearism, all that ornateness. My complicated relationship is made slightly more complicated by the fact that my parents were a nun and a priest who fell in love and were pushed out of their vocations. ...

That relationship wrinkle is made even deeper by the depth of grace, wisdom and courage that my parents found in the Jonah House liturgy and Bible study circles far from the institutional church. So, I was raised by two people who grew up with the Latin mass (they literally spoke Latin), were educated in the church and went on to educate within the church, but raised their three kids outside of the strictures of the capital-C Church.

My parents were steeped enough in the Church to sometimes be surprised by the gaps in our religious education. "What do you mean, you don't know the rosary," my mom asked me one time. "You never taught us the rosary," I replied. They forgot that we needed to be taught things like that. I know the rosary now. I learned it during a five-day fast and vigil close to the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, in Cuba, as Witness Against Torture prayed for the Muslim men imprisoned and tortured there to be freed.

My husband and I are raising our own kids in the Unitarian Universalist tradition ... I now find myself exclaiming in some of the same ways my parents did about their very ecumenical, very wholesome, but very de-christological centered faith formation. "What do you mean you don't know what the Trinity means!!"

I'll give you an example. The Berrigans – my dad and his brothers Dan and Jerry and Jim – loved to get together and tell jokes. Most of these jokes were religious and bawdy. But a favorite was best told by our friend Ellen Grady. It involved three mafia guys who die and are

sent to heaven by mistake. There, they get a chance at a second chance. If they could tell Saint Peter what Easter is, they'd get to stay in heaven.

The first and second guys can't tell Saint Peter what Easter is ... they botch their explanations and get Easter confused with other holidays. They get sent to hell. But, the third guy seems like he is going to get into heaven because he is describing Jesus' passion and crucifixion very well. Then he gets to the part where Jesus comes out of the tomb "after three days. If he sees his shadow, he goes back down for six more weeks."

It never fails, it is a great joke!

My kids love it when I tell this joke. But, they are not Catholic, and they don't know the passion and crucifixion story very well themselves. My daughter Madeline will laugh and laugh, "I don't get it," she says with laugh tears running down her face, "I love it, but I don't get it!"

I love it, but I don't get it. It could sum up how the disciples are feeling at the tomb in this reading, right?

The passage from John's gospel is full of the disciples' uncertainty. Mary tells the other disciples; "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him." One of the disciples runs to the tomb, peers in to see the burial clothes but does not go in and the concluding line, "For they did not yet understand the Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead."

Mary of Magdala, Simon Peter, John, the other disciples: they love Jesus, they have walked this long journey with him. They have heard – over and over again – that it would end with this moment, this vindication of life over death, this resurrection. ***And they do not get it!***

Do we get it? Do we understand what Jesus' resurrection means in our world today? We know it is not chocolate bunnies, jelly beans and plastic grass. We know it is not the Empire's theology of muscular, white Jesus who triumphs and will save the select few.

Jesus' resurrection in our world today means that we are alive again too. Our fast is over. And now, renewed by our Lenten rituals, we go forth hungry. Hungry for good things to fill our bellies, maybe ... But more than that, hungry for good works to fill our aching world with love, compassion, justice and beauty.

