

Pax Christi Massachusetts Newsletter



Violence Ends Where Love Begins

Volume 23, Number 1, Summer-Fall 2016

Coordinator's Corner: Notes from Baltimore

By Pat Ferrone

The steamy city of Baltimore was the August 2016 site for the Pax Christi USA national gathering, whose theme was "Building the Beloved Community," addressing the signs of the times with bold conversations leading to transformative actions. Well over 100 Pax Christi members from across the country arrived in a spirit of prayerful exuberance and solidarity of purpose - to pray, study and act together, and to be nourished by old and new friendships.



On Friday evening, Sr. Patty Chappell greeted us with serious intent, though her welcome was laced with spontaneous humor. Addressing the weekend theme - the disease of racism that affects and infects our country, she focused on "transformation" - the vision and energetic force that
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activates our experiences and intuitions "to take us to places of newness and hope we might not have chosen," rather than simply on "change," which always has a "backward glance." Sr. Patty roused us to singing prayer with the gospel song "Come by here, O God, come by here! Now." "Come, Lord" - to this place, and to this city of discord and sorrow that struggles with the reality of racial inequity and violence, and is haunted by the death of Freddie Gray in questionable conditions.

In our prayer, we named the common thread of racism that weaves through some of our country's most pressing issues ("Islamophobia, the criminal justice system...militarism...") and called on the Cloud of Witnesses to be present here and now: the peacemakers and prophets of our time; those despised and eliminated 'others' who languish or died because of institutionalized, hard-hearted policies and laws: indigenous people, slaves, Holocaust victims, the tortured and imprisoned, and victims of violence and war.

The litany of sorrows for "what we have done and what we have failed to do" reminded us of the call of the gospel to wake up and name the blight of injustice, and to find

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The Church's Turn Toward Nonviolence

By Fr. John Dear (April 2016)

For its first three centuries, Christianity required the practice of active nonviolence as taught by Jesus. The early Christians refused to serve the Roman Empire or kill in its wars, and so they were routinely arrested and killed. All that changed in the year 313 when Emperor Constantine legalized Christianity. He baptized his



(www.fatherjohndear.org)

troops and established Christianity as the official religion of the Empire. Christians could now serve in the Roman military and kill Rome's enemies. In effect, he threw out the Sermon on the

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NOTE: To promote a greener future with a leaner budget, print copies of this newsletter are mailed only to our readers who have no access to email.

Coordinator's Corner: Notes from Baltimore

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new ways to align with those who suffer. Bishop Ken Untener's "Romero Prayer" recalled that though we labor on behalf of God's Kin-dom, our efforts and vision are limited. Yet, we continue in trust, hoping that our stumbling efforts will become an opportunity "for God's grace to enter and do the rest."

Lisa Sharon Harper, preacher, activist, author and Chief Church Engagement Officer at Sojourners, was Friday night's keynote speaker on "Racial Injustice & the Personal & Systemic Transformation Needed in Creating the Beloved Community." Her prodigious work on behalf of racial justice, and a myriad of other justice issues, is lauded by both religious communities and secular organizations.

Eloquently, Lisa used her experiences in South Africa to elucidate how we have "perverted and subverted" God's call to "loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke and set the oppressed free..." While there, she fasted for 22 days (after hearing God say, "Keep fasting and don't stop until I tell you to,") with 60 other faith leaders from around the world, as part of their commitment to assess the current state of people of color.

She spent some days on Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela was held for 18 of his 27 years in prison, subjected to brutish physical labor, and limited to one

family visit per year, for resisting apartheid economic, educational, and social policies affecting the 80% black population. She spoke of the significance of fasting - to hunger after God - with the desire to actually DO something about injustice, aware that there "should be no separation between you and God and you and the least." Otherwise, fasting is in vain, and our words are only "talk, talk, talk..." worth little.

Lisa interpreted love and forgiveness, as practiced by Mandela after his release, as a "humanizing act" by black South Africans toward their white oppressors, and a means of reclaiming their humanity (only human beings have the ability to forgive, and exercise "agency"), noting also that repentance and restitution are necessary from



Lisa Sharon Harper (PCUSA)

the oppressors as a way of taking responsibility for the horrific and demeaning suffering caused by policies of dehumanization.

Reflecting on Genesis, Lisa examined the ways in which being made in the "image of God" and given "dominion" over our world have been misinterpreted. Instead of the loving stewardship of the world and one another intended by God, and the appreciation of the full range of cultural and ethnic contributions to the building of Shalom and right relationships,

history's unfolding points to patterns of dominative power in which some are decreed more valuable in the eyes of God than others, and rational justifications of "the lesser evil."

According to Lisa, this dominion, for example, racial injustice, can be understood by the construct of "race," and the presumption of white privilege, which have seeded minds and hearts and created policies and laws that overtly, or subtly, ossify racist attitudes. Race is a man-made category, not created by God, and the source of division throughout time. In contrast, ethnicity, arising out of the dispersal of humanity to all regions of our world, is dynamic and blessed by God. At its best, it is not about power, but about group identity that spawns the richness and diversity of cultural expression to build up and edify the human community.

Perhaps the most surprising reference to the enlargement of the "race" label came with Lisa's mention of the "Doctrine of Discovery," a Papal Bull written by Pope Alexander VI in 1493 that essentially blessed the exploitation of non-Christian lands when it declared: "...The Catholic faith and the Christian religion be exalted and be everywhere increased and spread, that the health of souls be cared for and that barbarous nations be overthrown and brought to the faith itself." Eventually, she told us, this doctrine became the basis for Western expansion in the United States and was codified into law in 1823 by a Supreme Court decision that eradicated the indigenous people's "rights to complete sovereignty as independent nations," and allowed

them to retain only the “right of occupancy” in their lands.

Only in recent years has this Doctrine come under scrutiny and been refuted by some religious groups. In November 2013, the Sisters of Loretto wrote to both Pope Francis and the USCCB, asking them to renounce the Doctrine. Response to date has been lukewarm, at best. The Episcopal church, the Unitarian Universalists, the Methodists, and some Quakers, along with the Romero Institute and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, have all repudiated this document, which insinuated into consciousness (and laws) a hierarchy of racial values suggesting that God blesses some more than others: the first US census which listed only “white” as a category; immigration laws that required proof of ‘whiteness.’ It is a reminder of the powerful influence of our words and deeds in constructing reality.

On Sunday morning, our own Fr. Rocco Puopolo offered the final presentation. His beautifully rendered stories of family, mission, and the work of Pax Christi MA entranced the audience, which often smiled and nodded in recognition as his stories became ours. We came to realize that honoring our own experiences and insights while accepting our fragility and vulnerability is a gift, and that “though our vulnerability may feel terrible, it is not terminal.” He brought laughter as he told tales of his maternal grandmother, defined either as “in your face” (at times), or “respectfully insistent” when questionable behavior required modification. Rocco called on the stories of others, like John Newton and his gradual transformation from slave-trader to abolitionist, and together we sang “Amazing Grace.” Our hearts expanded as the

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words became our own.

He spoke of the 2015 MA Pax Christi Assembly with Sr. Helen Prejean, and of Isaura Mendez, who told of the murders of her two sons on the streets of Boston, and her commitment to forgiveness toward their murderers (recently, we learned that her third son had been wounded by gunfire as well, but is recovering). He reminded us that as we work to point the way to the Beloved Community free of fear and filled with peace and justice, we are called upon to acknowledge the links between racial injustice and militarism, Islamophobia, the US Criminal Justice System, immigration, and the degradation of our earth.



Sr. Linda Bessom, Pat Ferrone, & Fr. Rocco Puopolo on work duty in Baltimore (photo courtesy of Pat)

Wherever we are, we must be prophets and makers of the peace of Christ and “respectfully insist” that active, creative and nonviolent love are the only means for achieving our goals - even in the face of dark evil.

The weekend was memorable in more ways than I can describe here. Prior to the official start, regional coordinators met with the national staff and were led in discussion to recommit to using Catholic Social Teaching as part of the basis for spreading the good news and promoting the peace of

Christ. Separately, the regional leaders met to discuss issues and efforts pertinent to their regions, and watched a Powerpoint presentation by Tom Webb of Northern California on anti-nuclear weapons efforts. Saturday morning workshops on various topics related to racial injustice produced many new action ideas.

On Saturday afternoon, in 97 degree weather and 100% humidity, about 50 of us took part in a communal work detail, cleaning up two vacant lots in Central West Baltimore, near the neighborhood where Freddie Gray died. We were supervised by the No Boundaries Coalition, dedicated to “deconstructing boundaries and reconstructing communities.” Working side by side, we mowed, raked, pulled weeds, clipped branches, picked up trash and bottles (filling untold numbers of garbage bags) as we guzzled water and watched the sweat pour from our bodies, all in the spirit of solidarity.

In our midst from beginning to end were staff members, coalition workers, Pax Christi members old and young, as well as Art Laffin of the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker community in D.C., who was honored with the Teacher of Peace award at the closing of the conference on Sunday. The day ended with a cook-out in an almost park-like setting, partially the fruit of our own labor.

Great thanks to all who organized, supported, and attended the gathering. We begin again, and anew, to undermine injustice and plant seeds of love to grow the peace of Christ. May God’s beloved community come soon.

Pat Ferrone is Coordinator of Pax Christi Massachusetts.

The Church's Turn Toward Nonviolence

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Mount and the commandment to love one's enemies, and turned to the pagan Cicero to justify Christian violence, sowing the seeds for the so-called "Just War theory." Over time, justified warfare became the norm, Christians everywhere waged war and every one forgot that Jesus was nonviolent.

For the last 1700 years, as we all know, Christians have waged war, led crusades, burned women at the stake, systematically persecuted Jews and Muslims, kept millions of people as slaves, run concentration camps, blessed conquest, prayed for successful bombing raids, and built and used nuclear weapons. Throughout Catholic history, Jesus' teachings of nonviolence were rarely discussed, much less implemented.

Until last week. Eighty of us from 25 nations were invited to the Vatican last week for the first ever conference to discuss formally abandoning the so-called "just war" theory and formally returning the Church to the nonviolence of Jesus. This was the first ever gathering of its kind in history!

For three days, we deliberated at the Vatican about the questions of violence, war, and nonviolence. Catholic peace leaders came from Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, DR Congo, South Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, the Philippines, and Japan. Everyone who attended had submitted a paper ahead of time about their vision of peace and

nonviolence as well as their own experience living and practicing nonviolence, often in warzones. We shared our experiences, and reflected on the nonviolence of Jesus, the "just war" theory, and a new "just peace" paradigm. During the last closing hours we discussed and debated a draft of a statement, which was eventually completed, approved and released the following day at a press conference at the Vatican radio.

What is so unusual is that this event was co-sponsored and hosted by the Vatican Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. We were welcomed by the head of the Council, Cardinal Peter Turkson, who was the leader behind Pope Francis' recent encyclical on the environment. Nine of his staff attended the conference. Turkson



"Just Peace" Conference, Rome, April 2016 (www.paxchristi.net)

opened the conference by reading a long letter of welcome from Pope Francis, and sat in during the final hours as we debated the wording of the conference statement. He gave his full support to the conference and the statement, which, in the end, called upon Pope Francis to write a new encyclical which would formally reject the just war theory once and for all and return the Church to the nonviolence of Jesus.

This has never happened before. With this event, this statement, and

this call, the Church could change course from the last 1700 years. A new encyclical on nonviolence could open up a whole new history for Christianity, and return us to the spirit of the early Church, where no one was allowed to participate in war, prepare for war, or kill another human being, where everyone had to practice and teach the nonviolence of Jesus.

The statement, called "An Appeal to the Catholic Church to Re-Commit to the Centrality of Gospel Nonviolence," offers four points: first that Jesus was meticulously nonviolent; that there is no just war and we should never again invoke the so-called "just war" theory; that nonviolence as a methodology for positive social change works, whether in our personal lives, in nations, and internationally, that it can resolve conflict and peacefully transform any situation; and finally, that the time has come for the Church to apply nonviolence at every level around the world. (read the full statement at: www.paxchristi.net).

I was asked to speak to the group about Jesus and nonviolence. That's easy, I said: Nonviolence is the only thing Jesus taught. He did not teach us how to kill or wage war or make money; he taught us how to be nonviolent. In the Sermon on the Mount, he says: "Blessed are the peacemakers, they are the sons and daughters of God. You have heard it said, thou shall not kill; I say to you, do not even get angry: be reconciled. You have heard it said, an eye for an eye but I say to you, offer no violent resistance to one who does evil... Love your enemies." These core teachings forbid all violence, including participation in the mortal sin of war. Nowhere does he say: but if your enemies are really bad, and you meet these

seven conditions, kill them. There is no just war theory, there are no exceptions. We are not allowed to kill.

For the nonviolent Jesus, there is no cause however noble for which we support the taking of a single human life, much less thousands or millions. He calls us to pursue the endless creativity of nonviolence. What's even more exciting is that he commands us to love our enemies because we really are sons and daughters of the God who lets his sun rise on the good and the bad and the rain to fall on the just and the unjust. In other words, God is nonviolent!

His last words to the church before he died were to the point: "Put down the sword." There in the Garden of Gethsemani, where the disciples wanted to kill to protect Jesus and themselves, feeling justified in their violence, they were ordered to put down the sword. They realized that Jesus was deadly serious about nonviolence, so they all abandoned him. He went to his death in perfect nonviolence, and the story goes that he reappeared to them, remained nonviolent, and told them to carry on his mission of nonviolence.

"We believe that there is no 'just war,'" we wrote in our statement. "Too often the 'just war theory' has been used to endorse rather than prevent or limit war. Suggesting that a 'just war' is possible also undermines the moral imperative to develop tools and capacities for nonviolent transformation of conflict."

"We call on the Church we love to continue developing Catholic social teaching on nonviolence," we concluded. In particular, we called upon Pope Francis to write a new encyclical on nonviolence

which would abandon the just war theory and require Gospel nonviolence to be taught in every Catholic diocese, parish, school, university, seminary, and religious order in the world. Catholics would be urged to promote nonviolent practices and strategies for the abolition of violence, poverty, war and nuclear weapons, and reach out to the whole human race with the wisdom of nonviolence.

"The time has come for our Church to be a living witness and to invest far greater human and financial resources in promoting a spirituality and practice of active nonviolence and in forming and training our Catholic communities in effective nonviolent practices," we concluded. "In all of this, Jesus is our inspiration and model."



Pax Christi International leaders Bishop Kevin Dowling, Greet Vanaerschot & Marie Dennis, with Peter Turkson (paxchristi.org.uk)

If Pope Francis writes such an encyclical, like his environmental encyclical, it would touch not only the world's one billion Catholics, but all Christians and all people. He could help us better understand how war has become obsolete, how nonviolence offers a far better methodology for conflict resolution, and why the time has come to abolish war and nuclear weapons once and for all. That would be nothing less than one of the great turning points in history.

"I believe we are at an important and hopeful turning point in

human history," Nobel Peace Prize winner Mairead Maguire said after the Rome conference, "a turning from violence to nonviolence, war to peace." I hope Christians and Church people everywhere will study our statement, urge their local church leaders to teach Gospel nonviolence, and pray for and call for such an encyclical so that we can get Catholics and Christians out of the big business of war and start the world down a new path--toward a new world of peace.

*Reprinted with permission.
Fr. Dear led PCMA's annual Assembly in 2008 and co-founded Campaign Nonviolence in 2014.*

Faithful Citizenship What Is a Catholic To Do?

By Elaine L'Etoile

As November elections draw near, Catholics reflect upon which candidates they wish to vote for in the fall. Voting for our government leaders is an important civic duty, but how often do we fail to participate in the everyday decision making that guides our local, national and international community?

It is easy to express dissatisfaction when we find that our city, state or nation is not moving in a direction that we think is good, when our schools are underfunded or people cannot find jobs, when we hear of the newest victims of gun violence or when our congressional leaders are voting on GMO food labeling.

It is another thing to ponder what actions we have taken, or omitted to take, that precipitated these unacceptable conditions. What is our commitment to fostering a community where all flourish and

can contribute to the moral betterment of that community?

The United States bishops, in their teaching document, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* (2015) focus on our political responsibility as both Catholics and American citizens. This document reminds us of our obligation to shape the moral character of our society as we, through the eyes of faith and informed by reason, seek to create a morally sound society.

We acknowledge that no candidate is perfect, that sin is a part of our social fabric, but that the faithful can make a positive difference, shape public policy, and hold each other accountable for our words and actions. It is our duty as Christians, informed by Scripture and Tradition, to assist in the creation of a world that best reflects the goodness of God. We are citizens of God's heavenly Kingdom, challenged to seek not just our own good but that of all.

The bishops begin by noting that the all life is sacred and that respect for life is a core Catholic moral teaching. In a world where more and more are feeling politically powerless and frustrated about the lack of positive change, the bishops remind us of our duty to work for the "just ordering of society," to renew our efforts, working within political parties, communicating our concerns to our elected officials, and joining with community organizations or diocesan social mission networks, to apply Catholic moral teaching in the public realm.

This document notes that the Church helps the faithful to develop a well-formed conscience which can meet the political or social questions that surface. What

can we do to develop a well formed conscience?

We first recognize that we are called to choose what is good and avoid evil. Then, through study of Scripture and Church Tradition, a thoughtful exploration of the societal impact of public policies and programs, and prayerful reflection, we can discern those conditions which aid all to grow and flourish.

Highlighted in the document are four key principles of Catholic social teaching that guide us toward a culture and a consistent ethic of life: regard for the dignity of the human person; subsidiarity; the common good; and solidarity.



Foundational to our Christian morality is reverence for the human person. We are challenged to honor the dignity of human life whenever it is threatened. We are obligated to protect all life from torture, war, abortion, human trafficking, and to overcome poverty and human suffering.

The principal of subsidiarity focuses on how we organize our society and reminds us that everyday living and decision making on the local level or within family life is where individuals first develop relationships that foster creativity and the capacity to reach their full potential. While there is a place in society for larger institutions and our government,

these should not interfere when the local institutions or the family can better provide for the protection of human dignity, meet human needs, and promote the common good.

The common good is the "sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily" (*Gaudium et Spes*, p. 26). The common good is obtained when human rights and basic responsibilities are honored. It is always rooted in justice.

When we move to safeguard the dignity of our brothers and sisters and address an injustice, we are acting in solidarity. By this our bishops mean the inherent equality and rights of all people. Solidarity is about recognizing the neighbor among us, the stranger, the poor, the immigrant, the drug addict, and even our enemies. Special emphasis is given to the Church's "preferential option for the poor."

Our bishops entreat us to offer a moral witness that transcends any political party or platform, and speaks to all people of good will who seek a more just and peaceful world. Integral to our faith is the expression of Christ's love for all humanity, best manifested in the social interactions and political decision making that bring about justice and a reverence for all. Voting is an important aspect of this commitment, but we must always ponder the question, what more must I do to gain life and give life? (read the full document at: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship-title.cfm>)

Elaine L'Etoile is a member of Our Lady of La Salette Pax Christi.

Blessed Franz Jagerstatter: The Call of Conscience

Rev. John Connors, pastor of St. Anne Parish in Chicopee, MA, celebrated the annual Mass sponsored by Pax Christi Western MA in honor of Franz Jagerstatter for broadcast on the local NBC affiliate's "The Chalice of Salvation" on August 28, 2016, and delivered this [edited] homily.

If your conscience was moved by today's gospel, that may very well be a sign of the development and maturing of your conscience. Just as we grow up and develop physically, so, too, are we called to grow and develop our consciences.

Some psychologists today identify three major phases of conscience development. It is important that our conscience be developed, or we cannot comprehend in the deepest sense some of the key points in the teachings of Jesus.

The first phase in the development of our conscience is characterized by an egocentric point of view that we have when we are very young. Take a young child. Rules and expectations are evaluated by the child solely on how they impact him or her. You might say we want the first seat at the banquet.

A second phase in development of our conscience enables a growing older child to see herself or himself as part of a greater society. We learn that we are more than just ourselves. There is a sense of belonging to a greater society or community. The notion of sacrifice and sharing is institutionalized.

Jesus touches on this societal need and second phase of conscience development when he says in today's gospel: "When you hold a
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banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind; blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you." In other words, our hearts should reach out to the stranger and the unfamiliar, not just to people we know, or who are close to home.

Finally, in the third phase of the growth and development of our conscience, we begin to make individual choices about values and principles, and embrace them out of conviction for their own rightness, whether or not they agree with society's rules. These values are independent of the self and rooted in the divine. In fact, we may even be called to sacrifice our self-interest or the approval of others in society to do what we believe is the right thing.



Franz Jagerstatter (PCUK)

The life of Franz Jagerstatter illustrates this third phase of conscience development. A farmer in Austria during the Second World War, a husband and father of three, he was executed for his refusal to serve in the Nazi Army. He was killed by Hitler's army for refusing to kill for Hitler's army. He was a devout Catholic, a third order Franciscan, and a church sacristan for his local parish.

But Franz held to his conscience and stood up against Nazism. In making a stand for justice and dignity, he was put to death by the Nazis 73 years ago this month. At Mass today Pax Christi of Western Massachusetts honors the example that Franz set for us all. The Church also honors Franz, as he was beatified in 2007. He showed

that the development of conscience can lead us to make great sacrifices, even our own lives.

Not many of us here today in Massachusetts may be called upon to make the kind of sacrifice that Franz Jagerstatter did, giving his own life in martyrdom. But in today's gospel Jesus does call on us to stretch our conscience past the first phase of conscience development – our own egos.

We are called on to develop an informed conscience beyond what society may deem moral or immoral, right or wrong. That may mean that we stand up against impoverishment, war, or injustice, and the disregard of human life from the moment of conception. We should move beyond our childish egos into a developed conscience that is properly formed and ingrained in divine law that avoids erroneous judgment.

We can apply this notion in so many ways to our lives today. Certainly it is not always easy or clear. But as we see war and injustice all around us, we are challenged to see as Jesus himself sees. And Jesus sees much more than we do.

Let us pray today that we see the point of Jesus telling us about all people having a seat at the banquet and enjoying the blessings of our world. Let us pray today that we move beyond simply following societal norms in forming our conscience and develop it to advocate for values and principles out of conviction for their own rightness, even if that is different from what society tells us.

Let us leave this Mass today hearing God's whisper from this gospel and the whispering of the Holy Spirit in the deepest corners of our conscience.



Pax Christi 2016 State Assembly

Ending the Nuclear Nightmare!

Faithful Witnesses and Nonviolent Strategies!!

a presentation by

Marie Dennis and Jonathan Alan King
Saturday, October 22nd, at St. Susanna Parish

262 Needham Street, Dedham MA

For directions: www.saintsusanna.org

Registration begins at 8:30 am – Program 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Parish Mass at 4:00 pm for those who wish to remain.



Marie Dennis is a leader in the movement, “**Catholics for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons.**” She is the co-president of Pax Christi International since 2007, the co-founder and member of the Assisi Community in Washington DC, the former director of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns. She is a mother of six, an accomplished author and holds a Masters Degree in Moral Theology from Washington Theological Union. She was one of the coordinators of the **conference at the Vatican** this past April that focused on **Nonviolence and Just Peace.**

Jonathan Alan King lectures at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as the professor of Molecular Biology since 1969. He is the convener of the Massachusetts Peace Action “**Nuclear Disarmament Working Group**” seeking abolition of these weapons as well as working on “**the People’s Budget.**” He has a long career in the academic world of science with more than 250 publications to his name. He has been involved in numerous campaigns **opposing the militarization of science and technology**, including strengthening the prohibitions to biological weapons development.



Registration Form

Name _____ Street Address _____
City/State _____ Phone/E-mail _____

Donation* \$40 at the door, \$35 if postmarked by October 10th (Lunch Included)
Student Donation* \$15, registration by October 10th suggested. (Lunch included)

I would like to be an Assembly Sponsor and will donate an additional tax-deductible gift of
\$ _____ to help defray the cost of the Assembly.

Mail Registration and check, made out to “Pax Christi MA” to:
Charles Gobron, 6 Bolser Avenue Natick, MA 01760

*Scholarships available

www.paxchristima.org

For information: paxchristima@gmail.com

Facing Violence Unafraid: 2016 Pax Christi MA Retreat

By Mike Moran

Pax Christi Massachusetts continued its annual tradition of sponsoring a statewide retreat for PC members and friends on Saturday, April 9, 2016, when about 40 attendees had the rare pleasure of being led through the day by not one but two of our own. Sr. Jane Morrissey and Phil Harak co-facilitated a program on the theme "Facing Violence Unafraid: Building on Jesus' Nonviolent Alternatives" at St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish in Upton.

Both drew on their extensive teaching backgrounds at the high school and college levels to "flip the classroom" so that all present could participate equally in dialogue.

They began by introducing the Ignatian concept of "imaginative prayer," through which we each visualized stories about Jesus from the Gospels in a way that is meaningful to us now. For example, the parable of Jesus anointed by a sinful woman (Luke 7: 36-50) caused many of us to reflect on how we may have sinned against others through our interactions with them. One of my table mates resolved after discussion of this parable in our small group that she would start every day from now on by asking herself "Who can I help today?"

To show how we can transcend the violence of "woundedness" that sometimes cripples us, Sr. Jane described how a family visit to Germany led her to forgive her grandmother, who grew up there, for a cutting remark she once made

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to Jane as a girl many years earlier. Standing where her ancestor was a child also gave Sr. Jane the grace to ask her grandmother's forgiveness for carrying the perhaps unintended wound so long in her heart, which could now open to the mission of her order, the Sisters of Saint Joseph, "that all may be one."

In asking us to reflect on how we may each be blocking our constant invitation from the Holy Spirit to "become one with God," Phil pointed out that such childhood "hurts" and memories of them later can make us more reactive than creative, missing many chances that we all encounter in our daily lives for "moment to moment peacemaking" by "turning the other cheek" to "create scenarios" that resolve hurts through empathy, love, and healing.



St. Gabriel's Parish, Upton

After additional opportunities for indoor or outdoor prayer and meditation breaks on our own in the lovely early spring weather, the retreatants left St. Gabriel's at the end of the day inspired with a new question in our hearts for future daily reflection, "Jesus, what else do you want me to know?"

Special thanks are due to PCMA board member Sue Malone and other members of the Central MA Pax Christi group who provided food and hospitality that made the day even more memorable.

Mike Moran is the editor of this newsletter.

Toward Nuclear Disarmament

By William Waters

To the Editor:

In Hiroshima, Japan, on May 27, 2016 President Barack Obama summoned people everywhere to embrace the vision of a world without nuclear weapons, as he previously did in Vienna, Austria in 2009. Unfortunately, President Obama's actions are not consistent with his espoused goal to abolish all nuclear weapons.

The United States should be supporting the **Humanitarian Pledge** to eliminate nuclear weapons which was issued in 2014 at the conclusion of the **Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons**. The Humanitarian Pledge is supported by 127 nations. And the United States should be supporting the new **United Nations Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament** which has the backing of 138 nations.

In President Obama's own words: "...persistent efforts can roll back the possibility of catastrophe." Concrete actions of the United States should match the President's rhetoric in support of global nuclear disarmament. Hopefully, it will not take a humanitarian calamity to motivate us to eliminate this existential threat!

This letter to the editor from Bill Waters of Rhode Island Pax Christi was published in the June 16, 2016 edition of the Rhode Island Catholic and is reprinted here with his permission.

Muslim Voices in an Election Year: Compassionate Listening

Annual Francis Day Celebration
Saturday October 1, 2016 at the Agape Community

*Francis Day celebrates the life of Francis of Assisi who met with
Sultan Malik al-Kamil of Egypt in 1219: a model for nonviolent witness*

Program begins promptly at 10:00am



Nadia Alawa, founder and president, Nu Day Syria, 2016, (after 2015 Ted Talk), project for re-making the lives of Syrian mothers and children; recipient of inaugural Humanitarian Award, James Foley Legacy Foundation.



Tahirah Amatul-Wadud, Chicopee-based attorney specializing in religious rights; Board member Mass. Chapter/Council on American Islamic Relations; speaks widely on the rights/needs/treatment of Muslim women; launched "Know Your Neighbor Program" at a 2015 White House Ceremony.



Dr. Hisham Moharram, second generation Muslim, founder of Good Tree Farm, PhD in agriculture and plant biology, environmental stewardship through sustainable organic farming; a faith-based journey into local food security doing no harm to people and planet.



Robert Emmet Meagher, Professor, Hampshire College since 1972; has directed and participated in programs for healing veterans from wounds of war; pacifist author on numerous books on war and peace.



Dr. Ahmad Al-Hadidi, a physician and poet from Iraq, earned master's degrees in public health and peace studies in the U.S.; worked as a volunteer helping Iraqi children with war-related injuries seeking treatment in Boston hospitals; worked as a translator for films on humanitarian and peace-building issues and as a researcher on violence and HIV/AIDS in Uganda.

Featuring an interfaith prayer service at 4pm

Agape is a lay-Catholic, intentional community dedicated to nonviolence and interfaith dialogue

Music by Alicen Roberts, Rachel Ravina & Chris Nauman



Please bring a brown bag
lunch & dinner
Parking is on-street

Agape Community 2062 Greenwich Rd. Ware, MA 01082 (413) 967-9369 peace@agapecommunity.org
www.agapecommunity.org

More Election 2016 Guidance

In addition to the article on pages 5 and 6 of this newsletter issue, a variety of “Resources for Election 2016” are available at this link on the Pax Christi USA web site:
<https://paxchristiusa.org/resources/resources-for-election-2016/>

Francis Day 2015 at Agape

By Mike Moran

Agape’s 33rd anniversary Francis Day program on Saturday, October 3, 2015, focused on the theme “Building and Sustaining Nonviolent Communities.” For the second year in a row, colder than average temperatures and occasional rain couldn’t lower the high spirits of a large and enthusiastic crowd, which once again ranged in age from pre-school to ninety plus.

After a warm welcome which included news that Dorothy Day, whose name would be mentioned often through the day, was “trending on facebook” just days after Pope Francis had praised her in his address to Congress in Washington D.C., keynote speaker Michael Baxter took the podium to answer the questions what is community and how do we pass it on? Professor of Religious Studies at Regis University in Denver, CO and a co-founder of Catholic Worker houses in Phoenix, AZ and South Bend IN, he talked the talk because he had walked the walk.

Baxter cited the Holy Trinity as an example of how three essential aspects of community work together to sustain it: (1) truth; (2) hope; and (3) love. The truth of a
Summer-Fall 2016

community is the mission it serves, which gives confidence to its members and increases participation. Hope conquers the despair that can arise when short-term results are not always evident, as Thomas Merton warned in his



Michael Baxter (Agape)

“Letter to a Young Activist.” Love is how we “learn to know each other” in community and how, in Dorothy Day’s view, we can best counter the impersonal force of “holy mother the state.”

Michael Boover, poet, theologian, and co-founder of the Mustard Seed Catholic Worker house in Worcester, introduced an afternoon panel of young communitarians as inheritors of this tradition not only from Dorothy Day but from Agape founders Suzanne and Brayton Shanley. Jackie Allen and Chris



Hartford Catholic Worker
(hartfordcatholicworker.org)

Doucot shared stories from the Catholic Worker house they co-founded in Hartford, CT, the “third poorest city in the United States.” Edgard Hayes and Ann Rader told

of their experience founding and living at the Freedom Farm community in Middletown, NY. Tom Murphy described his work with disabled members of L’Arche community in Haverhill, MA.

Common elements of their presentations were: the culture shock of moving among urban, suburban, and rural environments; financial shortfalls and reliance on divine providence; the rewards of living in community; inspiration from the example of Agape and Dorothy Day’s memoir *The Long Loneliness*; and, more to the point, long-term dedication to building and maintaining their nonviolent communities.

At the end of the day, the future of Agape and other communities of nonviolence it has inspired seemed secure in the hands of a new generation of communitarians.

Mike Moran is the editor of this newsletter.

Pax Christi MA Board of Directors 2015-2016

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OTHER BOARD MEMBERS: Brian Ashmankas (Millbury); Nancy Carapezza (Wayland); Irene Desharnais (Jamaica Plain); Phil Harak (Southampton); Sue Malone (Westborough); Sally Markey (Springfield); Rose Morrissey (Westborough); Fr. Rocco Puopolo, s.x. (Holliston).

Quarterly Board meetings (the next are Dec 10 and March 11) are held in the Hogan Campus Center at Holy Cross College in Worcester at 10 AM and are open to all PCMA members.

Local Groups

Beverly P.C.

Sr. Linda Bessom, SND
15 Bubier Street
Lynn, MA 01901-1704
(781)595-7570x18
linda@mahomeless.org
Mtgs 2nd Tuesday, 7:00 PM
St. Mary's Convent

Boston (Citywide) P.C.

Christina Abbey
Paulist Center, 5 Park St
Boston, MA
(781) 286-5004
LNCabbey2004@yahoo.com
Mtgs 1st Monday, 2:00 PM

Cape Cod P.C.

Edouard & Francoise Rocher
77 Old Post Road
Centerville, MA 02632
(508) 771-6737
Mtgs 2nd Wednesday, 9:30 AM
paxchristi-cc@comcast.net
Our Lady of Victory
Centerville, MA 02632

Central Mass P.C./Our Lady of Guadalupe P.C. (MCI Shirley prison chapter)

Sue Malone
45 Adams Street
Westborough, MA 01581-3610
(508) 366-2050
organurse@gmail.com
Mtgs 2nd Wednesday, 7:00 PM
St. Rose of Lima Parish
Northborough, MA 01532

Fatima Shrine P.C.

Fr. Rocco Puopolo
101 Summer Street

Holliston, MA 01746
(508) 429-2144
frocco@xavierianmissionaries.org
Mtgs 2nd Friday, 4:00 PM
Upper Room

Holy Cross College P.C.

One College St, Box 16-A
Worcester, MA 01610
Marty Kelly
(508) 793-2617
mkelly@holycross.edu
Meetings and activities geared to college calendar

Holy Cross Parish P.C.

221 Plumtree Road
Springfield, MA 01118
Martin & Sally Markey
(413)739-3278
parishsocialministry@gmail.com
Mtgs 1st Monday, 6:30 PM

Metro West P.C.

Faith Madzar
24 Grove Street
Natick, MA 01760
(508) 655-0268
fmadzar@gmail.com
Contact for meeting info

National Shrine of Our Lady of La Salette P.C.

Sheila Matthews
199 Maple Street
Somerset, MA 02726
(508) 674-8220
sheilmattthews@aol.com
Mtgs 1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 7:15
Chapel of Reconciliation

Rhode Island P.C.

Bill Waters

(401) 438-6612
wjtwj157@gmail.com
Fr. Ray Tetrault
(401) 374-5036
St. William Parish
200 Pettaconsett Ave
Warwick, RI 02888
Mtgs last Sunday, 6:00 PM

St. John's Prep P.C.

72 Spring Street
Danvers, MA 01923
Bill Mackinson
(978) 774-1057
wmackinson@stjohnsprep.org
Prayer for Peace, Tuesday mornings, 7:45-8:00 AM

St. John's Seminary P.C.

Brian Ashmankas
127 Lake Street
Brighton, MA 02135
(774) 276-1281
brianashmankas86@gmail.com
Contact for meeting info

St. Susanna Parish P.C.

262 Needham Street
Dedham, MA 02026
Pat Ferrone
(781) 449-3890
parferrone@rcm.com
Contact for meeting info

Western Mass P.C.

Jeanne Allen
10 Sutton Place
Easthampton, MA 01027
(413) 527-0037
jeanne.allen@hhcinc.org
Mtgs 2nd Friday, 7:00 PM
Elms College, Chicopee

If you belong to a Pax Christi group that is not listed above, please let us know so we can add it to our list. If any information above is incorrect, please email corrections or additions to: moran3@comcast.net

Pax Christi Massachusetts
6 Bolser Avenue
Natick, MA 01760