



A Bishop Speaks

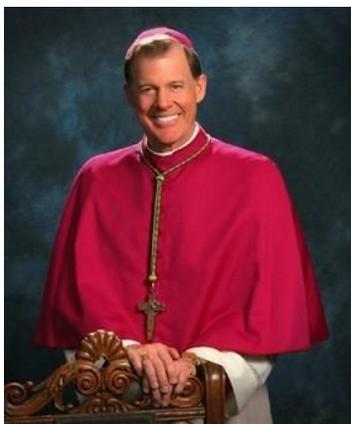
By Fr. Rocco Puopolo

“I think we need to sustain a serious conversation in New Mexico and across the nation about nuclear disarmament. We can no longer deny or ignore the dangerous predicament we have created for ourselves. We need to start talking about it with one another, all of us, and figure out concrete steps toward abolishing nuclear weapons and ending the nuclear threat...” Most Rev. John Wester, Archbishop of Santa Fe.

This quote is from the introduction to the pastoral letter, *Living in the Light of Christ’s Peace: A Conversation Towards Nuclear Disarmament*, which Archbishop Wester published on January 11th 2022: <https://archdiosf.org/living-in-the-light-of-christs-peace> Pax Christi is energized by this prophetic letter, and we here in Massachusetts have already set in motion several initiatives that will facilitate that conversation here.

These are wise words from a courageous bishop. Several years ago, I was the director of a pastoral center in Sierra Leone during the 10-year civil conflict that began in 1991. In 1996 at the height of the conflict, I hosted 13 university students who spent two weeks at the center in a workshop on peace and reconciliation for Sierra

Leone. I wanted their voices as young Catholics to be given an opportunity to be heard. After a week of input, they were each tasked with writing an essay on one of the topics that we studied that first week. One young man wrote an essay entitled: *Our Role as a Religious Entity in Ending the Civil Conflict in Sierra Leone*. The bottom line for him was a simple but challenging statement: if our religious leaders fail to offer us moral guidance in the face of this conflict, they are irrelevant!



Archbishop John C. Wester of Santa Fe (<https://archdiosf.org/>)

This challenged me and our Bishop to invite and gather all the religious leaders in Kenema town, Muslim, Protestant, and Catholic, once a month at the Center to look at practical issues that threatened our people, reflect from our faith traditions for shared inspiration,

Continued on page 2

A Time of Reckoning

By Pat Ferrone

In January, news traveled fast among the greater Pax Christi community that Archbishop John Wester of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe had written a powerful pastoral letter, adding his voice to the plea for the abolition of nuclear weapons. It seems that a visit to Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 2017 had opened his eyes in new ways to the genesis of the weapons still being created in his own backyard, decades after the world witnessed the first fiery annihilation of innocents by an atomic weapon. (Fr. Pedro Arrupe, SJ, living near Hiroshima at the time as master of novices, and a witness to the apocalyptic devastation, said “We did the only thing that could be done in the presence of such mass slaughter: we fell on our knees and prayed for guidance, as we were destitute of all human help.”)

Influenced, too, by the faithfulness of other peacemakers’ witness

Continued on page 3

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.

A Bishop Speaks

Continued from page 1

and then compose talking points that became the basis for a homily we all preached to our congregants the next weekend, offering that moral compass, whether that was in the mosques or the various Christian Churches. The challenge I felt from that 1996 essay I feel today after reading Archbishop Wester's pastoral letter.

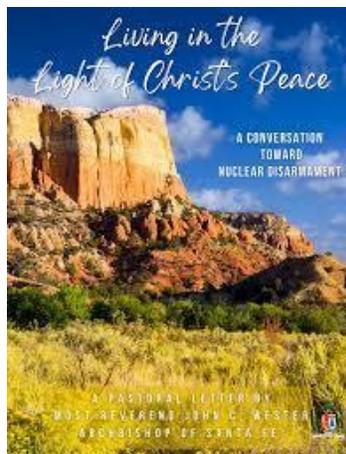
The letter is a good and comprehensive read. Let me walk you through it in broad strokes.

It uses the classic See, Reflect, Act methodology that many Church documents on social change use. The introduction invites us to see as he does the horror of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as well as the childhood memories of drills that some of us took part in as we feared an attack from Cuba back in 1962, the place of Santa Fe both in the peace movement and in the research, creation and storage of nuclear weapons, the men and women of faith who stood up against this industry, and, finally, to see the need for this conversation that will "invite us to step into the light of Christ and walk together toward a new future of peace, a new promised land of peace, a new culture of peace and nonviolence."

Part I reflects on the many writings of Pope Francis and his predecessors from the time of Pope Saint John XXIII who all urged a ban on nuclear weapons. These reflections highlight not only the various statements made by popes and bishops over the years as well as by Dr. Martin Luther King but the consequences of inaction, especially for the poor. Archbishop Wester ends this reflection with

examples from Jesus' ministry which lead us to see Him as the prophet of nonviolence He was.

Part II brings us back to see the situation we have today, how we got here, and where we may go if this madness is not stopped. What once was described as deterrence has now clearly become a hybrid of deterrence and nuclear war readiness, both of which threaten global annihilation. Recent US administrations from G.W. Bush to Trump have terminated some of the treaties that would have moved nations with nuclear capabilities to multilateral and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons.



[\(https://archdiosf.org/\)](https://archdiosf.org/)

And today there are a larger number of nations with such capabilities than when those treaties were signed. The danger is not only of war, but the very manufacturing of these weapons is poisoning water tables, exposing workers to radiation, perpetuating radioactive hazardous waste dump sites, causing cancer among many service workers, and driving the diversion of funds from human needs to a new nuclear arms race and modernization program, and let's not forget the occasional "accident."

Part III reflects yet again, but this time on the challenge to nuclear disarmament. Although none of the nations with nuclear weapons honored the Non-Proliferation Treaty that went into effect in 1970 but rather implemented massive "modernization" programs, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons went into force in January 2021. This section records the use and abuse of lands near Los Alamos, once home to native populations or Hispanic settlers, now used for toxic laboratories and waste dumps.

Economic studies have shown the inequality and institutional racism that has left New Mexico ranked the 49th state in per capita income. So, who is really benefiting here anyway? Quotes from the Holy See, President Eisenhower, Vatican II, and Pope Francis conclude this reflection that points "toward the creation and building of a new culture of justice that cares for our planet and offers peace to everyone."

All the above sections lead to Part IV, which is a series of suggestions for reflection, dialogue and action. I encourage you to read them in the letter itself. My notes do not do them justice. But what prods me to act is what Archbishop Wester said in his opening paragraphs. "We are the people who designed and built these weapons of mass destruction. We were the first to use them. We must be the people to dismantle them and make sure they are never used again."

After a final summary comes a set of appendices which offer a wealth of information: web sites to visit that will help readers understand the call for abolition and disarmament; legislative advocacy

suggestions (focused on the New Mexico congressional delegation, but we could do the same for Massachusetts); a series of suggested actions that includes family conversations, parish reading groups, and even how we invest our monies. There are questions for personal reflection and group discussion in Appendix II. The letter concludes with a comprehensive reading list.

This invitation to a conversation on disarming the nuclear arsenals of the world is a treasure trove of religious teachings, historical information, and challenging reflections which foster intentional actions to bring about disarmament and abolition of these weapons. Educators from middle school through university level will find material for courses that could bring this conversation into the academic fora.

Pax Christi and parish groups can use this letter in their reading circles. I hope to flood social media that I frequent with selected quotes from this letter that can stir conversation and comments on these platforms and draw many to the letter itself. Please share with us through this newsletter and social media what action you may feel inspired to undertake after reading this Pastoral.

As that young university student challenged me in 1996, so I challenge all of us today. If we fail to give our people the moral guidance found in this letter for these challenging and turbulent times, we may well be seen as irrelevant! And so, let us continue this conversation, “in the light of Christ’s Peace.”

-Fr. Rocco Puopolo, s.x., is co-coordinator, with Pat Ferrone, of Pax Christi Massachusetts.

COLLABORATIONS

As part of PCMA's ongoing collaboration with Massachusetts Peace Action, Mike Moran described our work for nuclear disarmament at MAPA's January 29, 2022 conference "Reducing the Threat of Nuclear War." You can watch keynote speakers (scroll down to 2 videos with that title): <https://masspeaceaction.org/our-issues/nuclear-disarmament/>

A Time of Reckoning

Continued from page 1

against the stranglehold of nuclear belligerence by the big powers, the awareness of the obvious, ongoing, and hidden desecration of people and the environment because of them, and supported by Pope Francis' condemnations, he was ready to speak: no more justified



Pope Francis in Hiroshima 2019 (abcnews.go.com)

deterrence, no more splitting hairs over the morality of holding all humanity hostage as nations threaten the unthinkable, whether a “just war” or a nuclear attack.

And so, the humble pastor’s words of candor came to us with a sensitivity to all caught up in systems which permit, even support, the squandering of money and lives to maintain our nation’s presumed superiority, or even the false hope of peace through intimidation. Not content

simply to open the wounds of our bad choices, Archbishop Wester invited us to rise again to the work of hard love and prophetic witness needed to keep the spotlight on the humanitarian/ ecological consequences of our hubris, and to change course.

Acknowledging the United States as the prime mover in the creation of the “original child bomb” (both the Japanese term for the atomic bomb and the title of Thomas Merton’s poem), he said, “We are the people who designed and built these weapons of mass destruction. We were the first to use them. We must be the people to dismantle them and make sure they are never used again.” He called the people of New Mexico to serious conversation and action leading to the abolition of these weapons. And, importantly, he offered ways by which those currently engaged in the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction as the means of their livelihood, can, metaphorically, turn “swords into plowshares.”

And, with the swiftness of the Spirit’s power, his words reached beyond boundaries and offered a sense of hope and blessing to those who have long resisted even the idea of ‘deterrence,’ in reality an oxymoronic invention (a national survey conducted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs in July 2020, in response to the statement “No countries should be allowed to have nuclear weapons,” found that, overall, 66% of the population supported this proposition.)

So here we are, stumbling our way into the 21st century, but with new fervor, seriously engaged with the surreal nightmares in which we exist: consider the possibility of the use

of nuclear weapons as war warnings rumble in Ukraine; imagine nuclear winter with billions dead or dying, or the “planetary emergency” as the human-initiated Sixth Mass Extinction plays itself out with the collapse of ecological infrastructure, the dying off of species and other grim global consequences. The best way forward is to wake up to the light of new days, and ways, to a deeper commitment to peace on behalf of the common good of people and planet - before the haunting nightmares of futility overcome us with a miasma of despair. We cannot afford to waste time in the face of the obvious threats. On our knees, or standing upright and expectant, we beg for the Spirit’s inspiration and power. We need to be reminded that we are inextricably bound to one another (friends *and* ‘enemies’), in need of healing and blessing, and the kind of love that frees us of fear and enmity, and allows us to disarm.

At this time, Pax Christi MA is directly engaged with spreading the good news of Archbishop Wester’s courageous effort. A few of us met recently with Fr. Bryan Hehir, Secretary of Health and Social Services for the Archdiocese of Boston. Our time with him was cordial, though relatively short, but we were able

to talk honestly about the necessity we (Pax Christi) see in promoting the letter within the archdiocese. We were urged to bring our ideas to Cardinal Sean O’Malley by requesting a meeting. One of these ideas was to address the issue of nuclear abolition at an Archdiocesan Justice convocation, something that has never been done. Immediately after, we sent a

letter to Cardinal Sean requesting such a meeting, and we await a response.

We are also engaged with other groups to promote the reading of the letter within churches, two of which will offer discussions among parishioners. We urge all local groups to do the same. The material is rich, as are guidelines for discussion and a bibliography for further reading. Some of us dialogued with a close associate of the archbishop and were encouraged to experiment with the dissemination of the letter.

Though we’ve been reminded that such an endeavor is the work of a single bishop - and does not necessarily represent the voice of a divided house of bishops, support is growing to second - or third - the conclusions drawn from one bishop’s prayerful and reasonable assessment of the existential threats to well-being.

Archbishop Wester couldn’t be any clearer than when he says, “I invite us to have a conversation together about what it means to follow the risen, nonviolent Jesus put down the sword, and love everyone, even the enemies of our nation.” We, as Pax Christi people, accept his invitation. We are talking and listening and praying to rid ourselves of our swords - and to love, in the spirit of Christ, even enemies.

-Pat Ferrone is co-coordinator, with Fr. Rocco Puopolo, of Pax Christi Massachusetts.

THE UKRAINE CRISIS

For resources to support peace and disarmament in Ukraine, see this Pax Christi USA web site page:

<https://paxchristiusa.org/the-ukraine-crisis/>

Holy Cross Pax Christi Update

By the Holy Cross PC E-Board

We are excited to share with you some of our updates and recent events we have hosted as the College of the Holy Cross chapter of Pax Christi.

At the start of the fall semester, we increased our membership by 15 people for a current total of 65 student members. We also increased our social media presence through Instagram, which helped improve our visibility and communication to the campus community.



At twelve meetings last semester, we engaged in meaningful discussion and fruitful dialogue on topics such as mental health awareness, the Covid-19 pandemic and its disproportionate impact on marginalized communities, and pacifism within the international community.

We ended the semester by hosting our annual fundraiser for Catholic Charities of Worcester’s Annual Toy Drive. By incentivizing students with the option to pie the chapter’s co-chairs, we were able to raise \$700.00! We are looking forward to the spring semester.

Pax Christi RI Continues Mission

by Madeline Labriola

Hello from your neighboring state of Rhode Island. It's been some time since we updated you on what we've been doing at Pax Christi RI to foster the cause of peace.

We continue to meet by zoom on the last Sunday of each month and on the 2nd Sunday for a study session. Our main priorities have been nuclear disarmament and antiracism. We include the climate crisis in these two issues as they are intersectional in many ways.

Using the model of prayer, study, action, we have a half hour prayer led by a different member each month, and we also have a rotating facilitator. Margo Murphy is the secretary/clerk who takes the minutes and prepares the agenda for the following month. Shared leadership works well for us.

The Sunday study group has read and discussed *Fratelli Tutti*, by Pope Francis, and *Jesus and the Disinherited*, by Howard Thurman. Over the next few months, we will study *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, by James H. Cone. All these titles are highly recommended.

The Disarmament Committee, led by Fr. Ray Tetrault and Bill Waters, has sponsored monthly demonstrations at prominent locations throughout RI including the shopping mall near Quonset Point, the offices of Senators Reed and Whitehouse, and of Raytheon. We display a huge banner, designed and produced by William Smith, which reads "Let's Ratify 2021 U.N. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons" (TPNW). Last year we raised \$6000 to install large placards on bus shelters in 12 locations around

Rhode Island to promote the TPNW for three months.

We continue to meet with our U.S. Senators and Representatives via zoom in collaboration with other peace groups, like the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), to speak out against the bloated U.S. military budget and nuclear arms. We have received polite responses but no major changes in policy positions yet.



PCRI members at RI State House
<https://paxchristiri.wordpress.com/>

The Anti-Racism Committee is developing ways to bring community conversations about race to our local churches and community centers. The first step was to educate ourselves. The "21 Day Ignatian Racial Equity Challenge" was an outstanding program to help us study the issues from a Catholic/Christian perspective. In an effort to collaborate with other groups. Claudia Arroyave, Chair, and her husband, Robert Watt, are talking with the Quakers, the Diocesan Office of Black Catholics, and others to produce a series of talks by zoom or in person for our Rhode Island communities.

Attending demonstrations, collaborations, and connecting the dots between poverty and military spending sent Fr. Bob Beirne to D.C. this summer to stand with the Poor People's Campaign. Two of our newest members, Tom Hobin and Nondas Voll, join in the lively discussions to help us plan creative

ways of spreading the message of nonviolent, peaceful living.

Charles Rupacz, Margo Murphy, and Pat Fontes maintain our online presence. See our web site, twitter account, and facebook page:
<https://paxchristiri.wordpress.com/>
<https://twitter.com/ri.pax/>
<https://www.facebook.com/PaxChristiRI/>

Most recently we produced a video on the history of PCRI and the priorities and successes of our group for PCUSA's 50th Anniversary Celebration (check their web site for the latest news: <https://paxchristiusa.org/>)

Madeline Labriola, Vice Chair of the National Council, keeps us updated on other work with the 50th Anniversary Committee as they plan the years' activities. Some of us plan to participate in the National Conference in August in DC and hope to see many of you there. We're also discussing a RI/MA Day of Celebration in the Fall. Stay tuned for more details.

Twenty-one years of activism have given Pax Christi a great deal of publicity in RI Catholic and local newspapers. Vigils, workshops, demonstrations, and presentations throughout the state have raised awareness and the conscience of our citizens. We are challenged to find new and creative ways to change our materialistic and militaristic U.S. culture.

The true message of Jesus is love of enemy and doing good to those who hate us. We stand together with all peace groups in our efforts to live nonviolently and at peace with one another. We pray, work, and hope for a better tomorrow.

-Madeline Labriola is a member of Pax Christi RI and Vice Chair of the PCUSA National Council.

Pax Christi USA

Online Peace Mass

In March 2021 PCUSA began hosting a virtual Peace Mass on the fourth Thursday of each month at 8pm EST. Past celebrants include PCRI's Fr. Ray Tetrault and PCMA's Fr. Rocco Puopolo, who delivered this homily on December 23, 2021.

Thursday, Fourth Week of Advent
Mal 3:1-4, 23-24; Lk 1:57-66

There are two power words that I would like to use as a basis for this evening's reflection. The first is the very meaning of the name John, **Beloved**. And the second is **Promise**. So, hold those two words in your mind - beloved and promise - while I unpack our readings for today. I know we want to celebrate Christmas at this Mass, but we are not there just yet. Let's not rush things.

I have been particularly impressed this Advent season listening to the prophets and better understanding the real challenges that the people of Israel had at the time of the prophets, mainly during and after the second exile to and from Babylon, again being enslaved, losing all, broken and far from the promised land, returning to a ruined landscape. I also recall the heroes of that age - the Maccabees and the prophets themselves.

And then I look at the time of Jesus and the whole burden of Roman colonization on the people at that time. Jesus was not the only one crucified. Hundreds of thousands were crucified. This was a means of torture and a scare tactic that the Romans used for any of those peoples they wanted to oppress. I think of Mary as a

young pregnant 15- or 16-year-old unmarried girl-child. Can you imagine what talk on the street was like? Mary, pregnant, unmarried. Life in those times was very hard and very challenging. I would like to just say that it was a mess. As many of you know, someday, when I get the time and discipline, I am going to write a book, and the title will be "Where I Saw Grace in the Mess." I have all the chapters in my head. I've got the title. Now I just must put pen to paper.

I am reminded of this book challenge as we look at the readings this evening. It is in this messy milieu I just described that John the Baptist is born. And as the story goes, Elizabeth and



Fr. Rocco said Mass in the chapel at Our Lady of Fatima Shrine

Zechariah take a great risk. They break with family tradition. He is to be named John. He is named Beloved, a name that was not part of their family. There was some resistance by the family, but John's parents stepped out of the boundaries of their own family tradition and named him Beloved.

And I took great inspiration from John the Baptist's birth and ministry as I responded to the call to missionary life. Every morning, as we pray the Benedictus, Zechariah's prayer of praise after naming John, I remember how this line was a kind of signatory phrase for me, particularly the line that says, "You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the

Lord to prepare His way, to give His people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins." That line was mine! That line called me to the kind of mission service I have been playing out for 50 years. It not only explains who I am, but what we in mission service offer - knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of sins.

But the line I would like to share in a special way tonight for all of us is what comes next: "In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace." Doesn't that say who we are as Pax Christi? We just had a state assembly in Massachusetts where we examined nuclear weapons abolition, racism, and climate degradation through Pope Francis's two encyclicals. These issues are very connected.

And as we looked at these and heard from some professionals in these fields, it seemed to be quite a mess. Many people are fearful because of racism that affects so many; or climate change that affects all forms of life - the trees can't breathe; they are scarred; the air and waters are poisoned; or nuclear weapons, the threat of war, and the costs we must pay to maintain and store these weapons. It is unconscionable. It seems we can never move the needle to make a change. We struggle with that.

The assembly gave us great hope. We shared a love for life. We shared wonder and awe in the face of the mess. Part of it, I believe, is because we affirm our own belovedness, not just that of John the Baptist, but all of us who are called to prophesy, to advocacy. Our name is John, in a very particular way. We are beloved

and we are able to enjoy that belovedness not only as we meet virtually as we're doing now, but as we reach out to others, inviting them into our circles, as well as addressing Church, Government, Industry - all the wonderful things we do because of our belovedness and because we are light and believers in a Spirit that is bigger than us, beyond us, moving us into a place of grace and mystery. We become people of the promise.

We felt that grace and promise on December 4th when 45 of us were at the Zoom assembly. We were bowled over by the beauty and power of God's Spirit that took us from some very frightful realities and offered us the chance to see the power of light and to share that light through actions we proposed. We are people of promise, even though it is not easy. It is never easy to be in a mess. We second guess ourselves. We doubt. Some walk away. But I think because of who we are, and what Pax Christi is, we can hang on together and inspire each other and more.

I would like to end by inviting us into that mystery, to trust that mystery of belovedness and promise, and to know that each and every one of us has a story, a chance to trust and watch that Spirit work in us to become powerful witnesses to others.

I was in Sierra Leone, West Africa as a missionary for 12 years over a span of 26 years, during times of peace and times of war. In 1991 a terrible civil conflict began. It affected peoples of three countries, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia. There were refugees from each of those countries throughout the region. Twenty-five percent of the population of Sierra Leone were displaced beyond its borders into Liberia and Guinea. Another 25 percent were displaced internally. The whole country stopped,

normal life was suspended, especially during the 9 months of the coup from May of 1997 to February of 1998, when the insurgents had taken complete hold of the country. We all lived in fear and uncertainty in those months.

From 1995 to 1999 I was the director of a pastoral center in Kenema that at one time served people from many parts of Africa offering courses in Integral Human Development. Our main programs were catechetical in nature, occasional retreats, but also very practical courses like farmers cooperatives, youth empowerment, women's empowerment. I went



A "peace hut" at Kenema Pastoral Center: <https://kenemadiocese.org/>

there after doing a sabbatical in peace, conflict resolution and reconciliation studies in the hope of adding a program to our lineup of offerings that would help prepare everyone for postwar reconstruction, reconciliation, and peace. And we did offer a few of these programs, even though it was very difficult and dangerous to travel from place to place.

On February 13th, 1998, our center was overrun and looted by 40 child soldiers beginning at 11am. The previous day the coup had been reversed, so, in retreat and in their quest for loot to "pay themselves," these young men and women started with our properties. In fact, all the Catholic centers throughout the country were looted because the Church did not support the "revo," as the insurgents called it.

Later that day, I was wounded by an 11-year-old child soldier with an AK47 bigger than he could carry. In great fear, he fired near my feet to frighten me, and the bullet ricocheted up into my thigh. He was killed the next day, along with over 100 child soldiers who were caught being naughty in Kenema town. His crime? He shot a priest. I was very lucky. I am here to tell the story. He is dead. No justice for him or the others.

Two years later I returned to the States very broken. It was dark. It was a mess. I was a mess. And it took me a while to realize that I had post-traumatic stress disorder. Meantime, I could feel that something was wrong and decided to go on a retreat. Isn't that what we do when we suspect a problem? So, I went to a Carmelite retreat center in New Jersey for an 8-day directed retreat. It was a very difficult retreat. For one thing, my spiritual director was much younger than I was (clearing of throat), and he had a hard time understanding what I went through. The Scripture reflections were very difficult, too. He found my reflections on those scripture passages very different from others' (that retreat house gave all retreatants the same scripture passages to pray each day, which made me feel very constrained). Missionaries, he said, have a different take on life (roll of eyes).

I remember being asked to pray the Good Samaritan story, but I was the guy who was left half dead on the road, wounded, forgotten, hurt, abandoned. Where was God in that scenario? And that is just one of many prayer periods that were offered where my vulnerability and brokenness was exposed.

As the days went on it did not get any better. On the next to last day, all retreatants were asked by their directors to compose a Magnificat

for the last meeting, a song of praise and thanksgiving that would reflect the fruits of our wonderful days together on retreat (roll of eyes again). I was in no mood to be thankful. What did I see in the mystery of the mess that I and the hundreds of thousands of people who were experiencing wars in Africa could claim as good? That year there were armed conflicts in 22 African countries. Twenty-two! In Sierra Leone, on January 6th, 1999 (the feast of the Epiphany), 10,000 people were killed as the capital, Freetown, was burned. Hundreds of thousands were displaced. It was reported in the New York Times on page 5 only once, on January 11th.

So, I was not a very happy camper. But I did comply, taking all my notes written throughout the week and I went up to a ridge on the nearby mountain where I had gone each day of the retreat. As I read through each day's notes, I jotted down words on a fresh legal pad, and those words came together so that in the end I had a Magnificat, a powerful poem/prayer that spoke to the mystery, that spoke to the evil, but more importantly, spoke of the grace, a grace that will be born again to us at Christmas, just two days away, a grace that draws its strength at the foot of the cross.

I would like to end by sharing that poem with you. And then I invite you to look at your life and at the "messes" you're engaged with through Pax Christi, and look forward to the promise as the Prophet told us this evening, seeking the belovedness, as did Elizabeth and Zechariah when they welcomed their newborn son into our world, so that you can be as amazed as I at the miracle of the Spirit that draws the grace from that mess and allows us to be light

in the darkness.

*Ish'allah - God is Great
Islam - Surrender
Barakah - Give thanks
Credo - I believe.*

*The light of greatness
shines forth
as darkness.*

Aren't they the same?

*The silence and depth of the
wound...
makes space for the fullness of
God.*

And so...

*I stand beneath a tree
long dead
and displaced
whose dry wood has become the
gibbet of another's death.*

*And as he dies, his blood moistens
the wood
which lost its sap
in other times and other places.*

*I don't stand alone,
for there are many who witness the
deaths that strike us dumb.*

*But
God is bigger than us, my friend,
and here we see His power.
And we are many.*

*Ish'allah,
Islam,
Barakah,
Credimus,*

We believe

*©Rocco Puopolo, s.x.
July 1999*

*-Fr. Rocco Puopolo, s.x., is Local
Superior, Our Lady of Fatima
Shrine, Holliston, MA*

St. John's Prep Pax Christi Update

By Bill Mackinson, SJPC faculty advisor & religion teacher

St. John's Prep school life is filled with so much happening and such vibrant energy these days. In the midst of this liveliness, we gather for our weekly Pax Christi SJP "Prayer for Peace" on Tuesday mornings before classes at 7:40 - 8:00 am in our school's Commons.

Reflecting the intergenerational dialogue Pope Francis calls for in his 2022 World Day of Peace message, our gathering usually includes a dozen students, six faculty members, and two "retired" Xaverian Brothers who reside on campus, Brother Paul and Brother David. We've gathered weekly since 2002, and this year we have a particularly committed group.



We begin our "prayer for peace" with a moment of calm and proceed with student voices proclaiming thematic words of inspiration and peace. We invite "prayers of the faithful" and share a communal prayer reading. We close with individual greetings of peace and fist pumps! What a treat it is to have two octogenarian Brothers join us! Brother Paul performed accompaniment ministry in South Carolina for many years, while Brother David served for years in Congo and Kenya. They continue to witness to justice and peace among us!



Saturday April 23rd, 2022 10:00am to 12:30pm

Via Zoom



"Wisdom speaks to and from all ages"

Pax Christi Massachusetts will gather and pray at its Spring Retreat via Zoom on April 23rd from 10:00am to 12:30pm. We will draw wisdom from the young and the old. We take our cue from this year's Papal Message for the World Day of Peace, January 1st, 2022, Tools for Dialogue Between Generations, Education for Building Lasting Peace."

Using the See, Reflect and Act method, we will listen to youth sharing their concerns and hopes through short videos. Sr. Jane Morrissey and Rev. Brian Ashmankas will reflect on that wisdom and share their own insights, wisdom, hopes, and dreams.

The Holy Spirit, we trust, will empower all of us to appropriate action for peace rooted in common prayer as we celebrate and experience the grace of Christ's Resurrection.

Sr. Jane Morrissey, a Sister of St. Joseph of Springfield, has worked and taught among the poor in Holyoke and Springfield as well as abroad in Colombia, Peru, Bolivia and Guatemala. She is one of the founders of Pax Christi in our State.

Fr. Brian Ashmankas is a newly ordained priest and has been active in Pax Christ for many years including work in prison ministry and service as a member of our state board and the Pax Christi USA National Council. His ministry currently focuses on facilitating online conversations between those on the religious peripheries, including the so-called "nones," from multiple states, backgrounds, and generations.

Co-sponsored by the *Agape Community* & *St Susanna Parish, Dedham*

Registration Form

Registration is free. Email Paxchristima@gmail.com by April 8th and we will send you the link inviting you into the meeting. For those who wish to offer a donation to support this event, you can make the check out to Pax Christi MA and mail it to

Pax Christi MA 6 Bolser Avenue Natick, MA 01760

www.paxchristima.org

For information: paxchristima@gmail.com

PCMA Assembly 2021: Remembering- Repenting-Restoring

By PCMA board members

Jeanne Allen, Nancy Carapezza,
& Mike Moran

The keynote speaker at our December 4, 2021 virtual fall assembly - Eli McCarthy, a Georgetown University Program on Justice and Peace faculty member - began his reflections on Pope Francis's encyclicals *Laudato Si* and *Fratelli Tutti* with the heroic true story of how Georgia school bookkeeper Antoinette Tuff saved over 1,000 lives in 2013 which were at risk from a troubled young man with an AK-47 rifle by treating him with empathy and compassion.

McCarthy presented these virtues as part of a "just peace ethic" which Francis sees in both encyclicals as the active nonviolence of Jesus, the most effective way to break the cycles of violence unleashed by war, systemic racism, and the death penalty, to preserve the dignity of all life, and to build sustainable peace. He also recommended a "public health" approach to these issues as more consistent with the Pope's call for "social friendship" and "a process of encounter" with different cultures than a military or police-based approach.

His closing action suggestions for Pax Christi included: training in nonviolent action skills; involvement with local "peace teams" to defuse tension, like Nonviolent Peaceforce; and promoting a "just peace" framework for conflict

resolution with local bishops and in Catholic schools. -MM



Eli McCarthy (*georgetown.edu*)

The first of three local speakers addressing current issues was Northampton-based physician Dr. Ira Helfand, on the abolition of nuclear weapons. "We can talk about it [nuclear war], as unpleasant as it is, and do something, or we can experience it." What a wake-up call for a Saturday morning!

Dr. Helfand remarked that although the risk of nuclear war decreased significantly with the dismantling of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the younger generation doesn't remember the threat we elders lived under for decades, the danger of nuclear annihilation has re-escalated recently, and that the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* "Doomsday Clock" is now set at a mere 100 seconds to midnight.

Six major reasons are: worsening US-Russia relations (Ukraine, the Baltics, increasing numbers of nuclear weapons); worsening US-China relations (Taiwan, trade); Korea; tension between India and Pakistan (both nuclear powers); cyber-terrorism (which might hack into command/control systems and launch a missile, or lead one power to think a missile has

been launched at them and retaliate); and climate change.

He walked us through the consequences of using nuclear weapons - catastrophic, not just where the bombs would be targeted, but everywhere—humans, animals, and the earth itself. Yet, we lack the political will to dismantle the remaining 13,000 remaining nuclear weapons. We need to rekindle an **appropriate** fear and act. Once we know about the current situation, we cannot ignore it.

How can we mobilize? "Back from the Brink" is a movement to create a national consensus for the United States to sign the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Start at the grassroots - sign up churches and faith communities, municipalities (15 in MA so far), and states (4 so far). This is the way the Nuclear Freeze Movement worked in the 1980s, and it can be done again.

As people of faith, we can reflect on the words of Moses to the Israelites, which Dr. Helfand, Co-President of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, quoted in closing: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore, choose life" [Deut 30:19] -JA

Our second local speaker, who addressed racism, was Dr. Alexandra Pineros Shields, Executive Director of ECCO (Essex County Community Organization), a multifaith collaboration working for immigration and racial justice on the North Shore of Boston.

Christ Jesus Victor

By Nancy Small

With head bowed he leans
on a wooden cross beam
on his shoulder lie hands
of believers who stand
round him praying while displaying
flags and banners paying
homage to their Lord
and their ruler untoward
Pro Jesus, Pro Trump
scaling barriers they jump
setting mayhem in motion
with frenzied emotion
and deadly devotion
a stunned nation quakes
as its government shakes
fearing what's now at stake
Will the dawn resurrect
what this mob insurrects?

Have you Christians not heard
in your churches the Word
that the Christ who was slain
did not murder or maim
gave his life in the name
of God's kin-dom of peace
where all violence shall cease
here the bound shall be free
and the blind finally see
that to follow the Christ
is to lay down your life
not with carnage or hate
but with love as the gate
to a world free from fear
and a vision writ clear
every soul, every race
reflects God's holy face
help the weak become strong
make the outcast belong
toward each other be kind
in your hearts daily find
strength enough to pursue
justice long overdue
bearing bravely the light
that persists through the night
seeking help from on high
till Christ Victor is nigh.

-A PCMA member and PCUSA
Ambassador of Peace, Nancy wrote
this poem on the January 6, 2021
insurrection "in support of
Christian nonviolence."

She presented the city of Lynn
as an example of ECCO's
tireless work on implicit bias
training for community and
police, where seeing everyone
as human beings is key. ECCO
is now implementing with Lynn
a \$500,000 project for an
unarmed crisis response team.

Dr. Shields described all
ECCO's work as allowing those
"closest to the pain" to lead the
work of the organization,
because power and liberation
are unleashed in community.



Dr. Shields (eccoaction.org)

Our last two local speakers –
Ryan Hagen, founder of
Crowdsourcing Sustainability,
and Fran Ludwig, of the Boston
Catholic Climate Movement –
addressed the climate crisis.

Over 150,000 subscribers from
150+ countries follow Ryan's
web site, which he launched
several years ago to help people
everywhere begin reversing
climate change. Now a "huge
sustainability nerd," he notes
that since climate is the context
for everything, "if we get it
wrong, nothing else will be
right." He shows how we can
use our skills to do our part.

Fran described BCCM's
"Laudato Si Action Platform" as
a structured plan for individuals,
schools, businesses, parishes,

etc. to identify how well we are
caring for God's creation and
how we can do it better. giving
examples with quotes from
Laudato Si. We are caretakers
of creation, yet creation is also
taking care of us, she reminded
us - we are a part of creation,
not apart from it. -NC

Departing board members Rev.
Brian Ashmankas and Charles
Gobron were thanked for their
years of service, and new
member Sr. Rita Raboin,
SNDdeN, was welcomed. Three
2021 "Peacemaker" awards
were then presented to: Sean
Ellis (death penalty exoneree);
Roger and Charlotte Stanley
(prison ministry); and Pat
Ferrone ("lifetime achievement
as the embodiment of peace
spirituality in action"). All the
above and web links suggested
by speakers can be viewed on
this recording of the Assembly:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hwLKhS4jCw>

Pax Christi MA Board of Directors 2021-2022

Co-Coordinator:	Co-Coordinator:
Pat Ferrone 238 Harris Avenue Needham MA 02492 781-752-9722 patferrone@gmail.org	Fr. Rocco Puopolo, s.x 101 Summer Street Holliston MA 01746 202-997-8049 (email page 12)
Treasurer:	Secretary:
Nancy Carapezza 13 Red Barn Road Wayland, MA 01778 508-740-4500 npez@comcast.net	Jeanne Allen 10 Sutton Place Easthampton, 01027 413-270-5880 (email page 12)
OTHER BOARD MEMBERS:	
Bessom (Somerville); (Jamaica Plain); (Southampton); (Springfield); (Palmer/Newsletter Editor); Rose Morrissey Sr. Rita Raboin	Irene Desharnais Phil Harak Sally Markey Mike Moran Rose (Westborough); (Somerville)
QUARTERLY BOARD MEETINGS	
are held virtually at 10:00 AM and are open to all PCMA members. The next two will be held on March 12 & June 11, 2022.	

Local Groups

Berkshire P.C.

Carolyn Zablontny
P.O. Box 14
Mill River, MA 01244
berkshire.pax.christi@gmail.com
Contact for meeting info

Beverly P.C.

Sr. Linda Bessom, SNDdeN
(857) 236-1370
linda.bessom@sndden.org
Mtgs 2nd Tuesday, 7:00 PM
St. Mary's Convent

Boston (Citywide) P.C.

Irene Desharnais
Paulist Center, 5 Park St
Boston, MA
iredesharnais@comcast.net
Contact for meeting info

Cape Cod P.C.

Edouard & Francoise Rocher
77 Old Post Road
Centerville, MA 02632
(508) 771-6737
paxchristi-cc@comcast.net
Our Lady of Victory
Centerville, MA 02632
Contact for meeting info

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

Roger & Charlotte Stanley
55 Pleasant Street
Berlin, MA 01503-1610
cstanley041258@verizon.net
St. Rose of Lima Parish
Northborough, MA 01532
Contact for meeting info

Fatima Shrine P.C.

Fr. Rocco Puopolo, s.x.

101 Summer Street
Holliston, MA 01746
(202) 997-8049
rndpsx@hotmail.com
Mtgs 2nd Friday, 4:00 PM
Upper Room

Holy Cross College P.C.

1 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
Marilyn Paul-Lewis
(413) 739-3278
parishsocialministry@gmail.com
Contact for meeting info

Metro West P.C.

Membership info: Faith
fmadzar@gmail.com
Steadfast Hope info: Jan
peacejpl@comcast.net
Mtgs 3rd Wednesday, 1:00 PM
Natick Public Library

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

Sheila Matthews
199 Maple Street
Somerset, MA 02726
(508) 674-8220
sheilmatthews@aol.com
Mtgs 3rd Tuesday, 7:00 PM
Chapel of Reconciliation

Rhode Island P.C.

Margo Murphy
(401) 861-6988
margomurph@aol.com

Madeline Labriola
(845) 691-8015
mlabriola@mac.com
St. Peter's Church
350 Fair Street
Warwick, RI 02888
Mtgs last Sunday, 6:00 PM

St. John's Prep P.C.

St. John's Preparatory School
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. Susanna Parish P.C.

Pat Ferrone
262 Needham Street
Dedham, MA 02026
(781) 752-9722
parferrone@gmail.com
Contact for meeting info

SHOL Collaborative P.C. – Sacred Heart & Our Lady's

Ann Capoccia
573 Washington Street
Newton, MA 02458
(617) 527-7360
anncapoccia@verizon.net
Contact for meeting info

Western Mass P.C.

Jeanne Allen
10 Sutton Place
Easthampton, MA 01027
(413) 270-5880
jeanne.allen@hhcinc.org
Mtgs 2nd Friday, 7:00 PM
Elms College, Chicopee

*(NOTE: Meetings of some groups
may be virtual during Covid)*

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, or if you would like to be added to a list of Pax Christi "friends" and receive current messages from the Board, please email changes or additions to Mike Moran: moran3@comcast.net

Pax Christi Massachusetts
6 Bolser Avenue
Natick, MA 01760

paxchristima@gmail.com
www.paxchristima.org