



## Are Laws Enough To Bring Palestinians Peace and Justice?

By Philip J. Harak, Ed.D

Two years before he was murdered, Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke prophetic words on law and morality. He said, “It may be true that the law cannot change the heart but it can restrain the heartless. It may be true that the law cannot make [a person] love me, religion and education will have to do that, but it can restrain [that person] from lynching me...And so a strong action program will recognize the need for legislation to deal with many of the ills that we still face. And along with this, is the need for nonviolent direct action.”

Focusing on the current slaughter in Gaza, can Pax Christi members and other peacemakers rely on laws to assure that no Palestinian will continue to get metaphorically lynched? In the tradition of our Pax Christi organization, let us prayerfully prepare for rightful action by studying facts, which are obscured in this current crisis.

First, I share that in addition to my deep desire to oppose this atrocity nonviolently, I have a familial connection. My father was born in Lebanon, and my mother’s parents were as well. All my life I have

witnessed media dehumanization and stereotyping of Arabs. At times I have been the recipient of anti-Arab slurs, especially during the US invasion of Iraq. I am convinced that Arab and Muslim bigotry is an accepted, invisible prejudice in our country. It is almost never included in the groups of targeted social identities. Intergenerational distrust and hatred of Arabs has had



Palestinian poet Refaat Alareer (Al Jazeera photo) – see poem, page 3

devastating consequences, both here and there. It is one of the innate “permissions” we gave in support of our bombing and 15-year blockade of Iraq, directly causing the deaths of more than one million people, many of them children.

My sister’s husband was born in occupied Palestine and emigrated here. His horror stories of his life there still haunt me, though they are never part of the main media’s narratives about Israel and

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## A New Paradigm for Life: Gospel Nonviolence

By Marie Dennis

[Former co-president of [Pax Christi International](#) and program chair for the [Catholic Nonviolence Initiative](#) Marie Dennis delivered these remarks as a panelist at Pax Christi MA’s January 27, 2024 virtual forum “Building a World Without Nuclear Weapons;” they are reprinted here by permission of the author. - Ed.]

In a few minutes Ira Helfand and Archbishop Wester will focus our attention on the moral imperative of nuclear disarmament. I am grateful for the opportunity to set the stage for this important conversation.

Some of you may have heard me say before that I believe humanity is on the threshold of a new way of being, a new paradigm, a new logic for life and that embracing Gospel nonviolence at the center of Catholic life and teaching will help us move in that direction.

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# Are Laws Enough..

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Palestine. My sister and he had two sons, and today those men have three of their own children. Recently while I was visiting my nephew, he looked at his two-year-old son, teared, and said to me with profound sadness, “When I see him, I cannot help but see the kids who look like him being killed in Gaza.” My family looks exactly like the countless killed, and those devastated, starving, surviving Palestinians. Just like we resemble Iraqis.

Don't the many existing laws protect those innocent targets of warfare? In 1948, the United Nations passed the Genocide Convention, in large part as a legal prohibition in response to the horrors of the Nazi extermination camps. Forty years later, our country finally signed on to that act. Israel is a co-signatory as well. Those two countries are clearly not adhering to that law.

This past January 23, three simultaneous protests were held at the Federal Courthouses in Springfield, Worcester, and Boston. I spoke in front of the Springfield office. With me were representatives from the AFL-CIO, Jewish Voices for Peace, Healthcare Workers for Peace, and others. We demanded that our legislators begin to *discuss* and of course enforce the Leahy Law, which essentially prohibits the Department of State, and the Department of Defense (formally more accurately called the Department of War) from arming governments who clearly target civilians. Are our legislators committing willful ignorance, or willful blindness?

There are other deliberately disregarded laws, as well. Our country adopted the Arms Export Act, which also prohibits arms sales to countries that will clearly use them against civilians. I invite you to read the laws I have named as part of your own prayerful study. You may find what over 800 academics world-wide have called genocide: Israel is intentionally killing mass numbers of defenseless Palestinians. Colleagues from Palestine have told me that their friends and relatives there have witnessed atrocities committed by the Israeli Defense Forces, which include sniping at health care workers



*January 23 protest in Springfield (Springfield Republican photo)*

seeking to aid the wounded and those buried under rubble, targeting and killing journalists, and intentionally bombing hospitals in Gaza. Israeli officials brazenly proclaim such actions. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called Gaza a “city of evil.” Israel’s defense minister Yoav Galant publicly called the Palestinians “inhuman animals.” In the same speech, he proclaimed Israel’s direct intention to enforce a complete siege on these “animals,” cutting off all water, food, electricity, and medical supplies. That inhuman action violates the international law requiring the occupying power to

provide humanitarian means of survival.

Mass punishment violates another international law: it is a war crime. Hamas is also subject to international laws. But since when is mass murder as retaliation, or to achieve any goal, like rooting out Hamas, an option? On January 26, South Africa accused Israel of being an Apartheid state. They would know. They have formally accused Israel, and by extension, its partner, the US, of violating the Genocide Convention.

In the face of this carnage, how has our government, headed by the proudly Catholic President Biden, responded? Of course, we Christians are taught to love—not kill—our enemies. King said that laws restrain the heartless. Do the following facts extend that love and restraint?

Let’s first consider this historical context concerning US military support of Israel. Each year, we give Israel billions of dollars for their military. For example, per <https://ifamericansknew.org/>, in fiscal year 2022, we taxpayers gave Israel, at the beginning of the year, \$4.8 billion earmarked for their own and our joint military actions. Paying them in full upfront also allows Israel to earn interest on the entire amount. To help make those staggering figures more accessible, we give Israel’s military about \$550,000 every hour of the day and night. I strongly urge the reader to visit that website. You will discover that with our endorsement and military weaponry, Israel has in fact been imprisoning, and methodically and intentionally killing countless Palestinians since

1948. Given today's ongoing slaughter, will Mr. Biden not suspend arms and publicly demand a ceasefire?

In fact, Mr. Biden has ordered our representatives to provide diplomatic cover for Israel. On February 20, our UN delegation vetoed the widely supported resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire and critical attention to what was presented as horrifying human suffering of Palestinians. We were the only country to veto this resolution. It was the third time we have vetoed such a resolution.

Instead of demanding that our partner there follow the laws, and provide food, water, medicine, and trauma recovery, we instead plan to send them *more weapons to continue the mass killing*. According to current and former US officials, the Biden administration is currently preparing to send additional bombs and other weapons to Israel. The proposed arms delivery includes roughly a thousand each of MK-82 bombs (a 500-ton unguided bomb), KMU-572 Joint Direct Attack Munitions, and FMU-139 bomb fuses. The arms are estimated to be worth tens of millions of dollars.

These kinds of actions are what prompted Fr. Emmanuel Charles McCarthy recently to call Mr. Biden a "modern day Pontius Pilate." We are experiencing a dark, extended Good Friday.

Early Church sages warned that an unnamed evil is given license to repeat and grow zealously. We know in our life and in history that evil will perpetuate itself if not interrupted, repented, corrected, with direct attempts to restore justice and peace. Let us pray, and imagine Jesus today, again, in Palestine. On which end of the

rifle would He be? Let us act today differently from the crowd that Pilate addressed, as he displayed the tortured and humiliated Jesus.

After we have studied, and continue to pray, an action step we can take is to challenge the existing rationalizations and ideology that perpetuate and endorse war-as-murder. Let us instead use our imagination to hear the cries of the tens of thousands of Palestinians so that we can access our empathy. Because without empathy, we lose an essential part of our humanity. Let us remember that Jesus never refused to heal or to help anyone in need, even the Roman Centurion who was then an agent of violent oppression.



*Sr. Jane Morrissey at January 23 protest (Republican photo)*

With clear minds and open hearts, we can use our creativity and gifts to plead individually with our elected representatives. We can work with groups like Pax Christi or others who are striving diligently to end this suffering and begin the long healing process. We need to continue to nonviolently, creatively, directly oppose Israeli Defense Forces' killing of Palestinians.

At one time, slavery was legal. Jesus' execution was legal. Laws alone will not ensure adherence to Christ's Kingdom.

But we must not let today's

darkness blind us to the truth of the Resurrection. We are in fact an Easter People. Paul reminds us in RO 8:18-25 that we all are "not without hope, for even the created world will be freed from this fate of death..." We must be nonviolent, hope-filled, courageous bearers of Light.

As I move forward in my opposition, yes, Palestinians physically resemble my family. But Christ teaches me that they, like their Israeli tormentors, are God's family, whom we love.

*-Dr. Phil Harak is co-coordinator, with Fr. Rocco Puopolo, of PCMA.*

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### **If I Must Die**

*By Refaat Alareer*

If I must die,  
you must live  
to tell my story  
to sell my things  
to buy a piece of cloth  
and some strings,  
(make it white with a long tail)  
so that a child, somewhere in Gaza  
while looking heaven in the eye  
awaiting his dad who left in a  
blaze —  
and bid no one farewell  
not even to his flesh  
not even to himself —  
sees the kite, my kite you made,  
flying up above,  
and thinks for a moment an angel  
is there  
bringing back love.  
If I must die  
let it bring hope,  
let it be a story.

*-Palestinian poet, professor, and activist Refaat Alareer, was killed, along with six other members of his family – two siblings and four of their children - by an Israeli airstrike in Gaza, at age 44, on December 6, 2023 (photo, page 1).*

# Reflections on Pax Christi MA Israel-Palestine Webinar

By Jan Leary, Metro West PC

Forty-eight people attended a Pax Christi MA-sponsored Zoom webinar on Israel-Palestine on November 2, 2023. Panelists were all Pax Christi members /supporters from Massachusetts:

\***Muna Killingback**, a Palestinian Catholic, gave a multi-leveled perspective that included the lack of coverage and media bias against Palestinians in our country.

\***Philip Harak**, PCMA co-coordinator, shared his views as an Arab-American and those of his late brother, Fr. Simon Harak, SJ, who traveled widely through the Middle East in support of peace.

\***Jan Leary**, facilitator of PCMA's Metro West local group and <https://ifamericansknew.org/> national board member, addressed PTSD among Palestinian children, who are directly impacted by US taxes of \$10 million a day, which our government hands to Israel with no expectations toward peace.

\***Scott Schaeffer-Duffy**, a pacifist and co-leader of SS. Francis and Therese Catholic Worker in Worcester, shared his powerful experiences and observations from having visited Israel-Palestine six times since 1989.

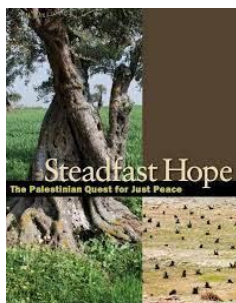
The panelists were aided by **Fr. Rocco Puopolo**, s.x., PCMA's other co-coordinator, who so ably moderated the panel and the Q&A session that followed, and by **Mike Moran**, PCMA newsletter editor, who was the "wind beneath the panelists' wings" and with his

usual acumen kept this webinar floating smoothly. The 56-minute webinar can be viewed here: <https://paxchristima.org/elementor-919/>

As you may know, Israel has said it dropped 6,000 bombs on Gaza in just one week this past October. Israel has been dropping more bomb firepower on Palestinians than was used on Hiroshima. The number of Palestinians killed by Israel just within the past FIVE MONTHS is over 30,000, Thirty **Thousand**, dead. Why is this fact rarely seen in our media?

Please keep Palestinians in your daily prayers and pray that our government will insist on a ceasefire immediately and will hand over no more US tax dollars that are devastating Palestinians until Israel stops its oppressive 75-year occupation of Palestinian land and agrees to Palestine's becoming a full State. For, in the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

Jesus was a brown Middle Eastern refugee who lived in Palestine. What would he choose to do in our upcoming November election?



Why did October 7 happen at the edge of Gaza, and why have 30,000 innocent Palestinians had their lives sacrificed in just five short months? Is it genocide? To

understand what is happening today in Palestine, it is essential to know the long historical **context**. In case you don't know, Gaza is the size of Plymouth, MA. Israel, with a massive nuclear stockpile, is the size of New Jersey.

**Steadfast Hope: the Palestinian Quest for Just Peace** is a 48-page book offering recent historical insights needed to understand and discuss with others the "facts on the ground" in Palestine. It offers an inspiring view of the activities currently being undertaken by Christian, Jewish, and Muslim peacemakers working for justice and reconciliation. Included are suggestions and guidance on how the cause of just peace for the people who share the Holy Land can be achieved, helped by all.

I have **30 copies** available. My cost for each was \$5.00, but I'm willing to give these books free of charge. I can schedule the four dates according to your needs.

**Prior to these four meetings, there are two important needs for help:** 1) This series will be offered via Zoom. Someone with a Zoom account is needed to 'manage' the Zoom process. Funding is available to cover any costs associated with this Zoom service. 2) You need a book. I'm in Natick, so stopping here to pick up book(s) would be very helpful. Scanning via email and mailing via USPS are other options, for which funding is available to cover costs.

If you'd like to learn more about Steadfast Hope with like-minded Pax Christi members, email Jan at [metrowestpaxchristi@comcast.net](mailto:metrowestpaxchristi@comcast.net) Include your name, address, email, phone, town and whether/how you can help with either of the above two needs.

## A New Paradigm...

(continued from page 1)

Teilhard de Chardin believed that humankind would eventually turn toward “a single force that unites without destroying,” the force of love as understood in the Gospel. Czech philosopher, Tomas Halik, believes that decisive moment is happening right now.<sup>1</sup>

Franciscan Sister Iliia Delio talks about “the new person” emerging in evolution, who is called into a “new type of consciousness where things are first seen together and then as distinct within this togetherness.”<sup>2</sup> She affirms that we are being rewired for belonging to the cosmic whole. We are more and more aware that we are one earth community and “are beginning to see that systems in nature do not work on principles of competition and struggle but on cooperation and sympathy.”

In other words, we humans are opening our eyes - literally. We are beginning to shift from dominating and extracting to reciprocity, living with and respecting.

Michael Nagler, founder of the Metta Center for Nonviolence, talks about “the new story” that is replacing the “old story” told by the dominant white culture about scarcity, competition and violence. He insists that violence is not the nature of humans - that love, faith, trust and the desire for community, peace and well-being are central to our identity. “Violence, he says, “is a tendency that pulls us back, away from the recognition of unity; nonviolence pulls us forward, toward that recognition ... The discovery of our capacity for nonviolence, connected as it is

with higher consciousness or love, is a key to this development ...Nonviolence is not only at home in the new story, it *is* the new story”<sup>3</sup> – a new story that is completely incompatible with the possession of and threat to use nuclear weapons.

This new nonviolent paradigm toward which we are moving is based on a very different understanding of our place as humans in the spectacular cosmic reality that we are just now beginning to see – thanks to the Hubble and Web telescopes and other amazing scientific discoveries. Cosmic consciousness affects who we are, how we live, everything we do – the ground has shifted; the context for every dimension of life is different.



Iliia Delio ([christogenesis.org](http://christogenesis.org))

That is the backdrop as the Church learns to embrace nonviolence, a new way of thinking that could guide the world, including in times of crisis, toward peace rooted in justice rather than justified war; toward respect and inclusion rather than exploitation; toward reciprocity and solidarity, rather than to risk nuclear Armageddon!

Nonviolence is a spirituality, a way of life, a global ethic, a proven effective, diverse array of tools for transforming conflict, preventing or interrupting violence and building the New Creation and it is

increasingly found at the center of Catholic thought and teaching on violence, more and more clearly displacing the just war tradition.

Ugandan theologian Emmanuel Katongole calls nonviolence “a spirituality that reflects the very nature of God.” It is a powerful force that unites without destroying, an essential dimension of the beloved community.

As a universal ethic, nonviolence offers the Church a theological, pastoral and strategic foundation for the long-term work of struggling for and building a just and sustainable future. It is a paradigm of the fullness of life with which we are called to respond to monumental contemporary challenges, including the nuclear arms race.

In his 2023 book, *I am Asking in the Name of God: Ten Prayers for a Future of Hope*, Pope Francis repeats a familiar quote from Dr. King: ‘It is no longer a question of choosing between violence and nonviolence, but between nonviolence and non-existence.’ Pope Francis adds, “The choice is up to us.”

So, why is this shift to nonviolence happening now?

First, I believe we humans are tired of violence. One glance around the world, including at our own cultural and political battlefield, makes it clearer and clearer that the human community cannot sustain the levels of violent conflict, systemic violence and war that have such unconscionable consequences. We simply have to find a better way to live together on this small planet.

<sup>1</sup> Independent Catholic News 11 Feb 2023

<sup>2</sup> Iliia Delio, *The Hours of the Universe*, 98

<sup>3</sup> Michael Nagler, *The Third Harmony*, 96-97

Second, nonviolence is at the heart of the Gospel in the Sermon on the Mount. There is no clearer lesson that Jesus taught – love your enemy – and he lived that lesson, all the way to the Cross.

Third, nonviolence works. One of the great gifts of our age is the growing recognition of active nonviolence as a positive and powerful force for social change. Recent research (including the landmark 2011 research of Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan) speaks to the effectiveness of active nonviolence and to the importance of increased investment in research and training to strengthen our capacity to apply effective nonviolent approaches, even in extremely dangerous circumstances.



(ericachenoweth.com)

Fourth, everything is connected (as Pope Francis says so often) – security will be realized for everyone or for no one. Nuclear deterrence is a deceitful strategy that offers a false illusion of security. It is time to replace the logic of violence in which we are mired with a new logic of nonviolence. Otherwise, we will be perpetually trapped exactly where we are right now, convinced that self-defense is only and always armed, that only weapons and military might can interrupt violence and protect threatened

communities. The question is not *whether* to defend against a brutal military invasion or what feels like an existential threat, but *how*, especially how to imagine and build a new paradigm where nonviolent options are increasingly viable and effective -- the absolute opposite of nuclear weapons.

Fifth, the facts (you will hear clearly today) are irrefutable. Given what we know about the physical, economic, psychological, moral, environmental and ecological consequences of a nuclear war – in fact, of any war, and what we have witnessed over and over as wars and military might fail to accomplish whatever was their stated purpose - as war begets violence begets war, we know that we need to find a better way to deal with humanity's conflicts.

In order to move in a new nonviolent direction, however:

\*We have to believe that this is actually possible. The global energy around the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is a great sign of hope, as is the energetic, positive international response to the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative – from both inside and outside the Church. In a world awash in multiple expressions of violence, nonviolence offers us a powerful way to respond. It opens the space for creative, life-giving alternatives; trains us for active love and healing rather than for fear and killing; and is a sign and channel of God's nonviolent love. Yes, we have to believe a shift to nonviolence is possible.

\*We also have to invest in nonviolence. To be nonviolent and to act nonviolently require training and discipline, planning and spiritual practice, personal and communal preparation.

\*And the Catholic Church needs to articulate a new moral framework, *not* a revision of the just war tradition. The realization of a new paradigm based on nonviolence is even more necessary than it was two years ago – and more difficult, given the wars in Ukraine, the Middle East, Sudan and beyond - and the immense danger of nuclear weapons.

Nonviolence offers an alternative to our violent way of life, a paradigm shift that can provide solid ground for the abolition of nuclear weapons.



*Pope Francis condemning nuclear weapons in Hiroshima, Japan, November 2019 (Vatican News)*

Pope Francis said, “A culture of nonviolence is not an unattainable dream, but a path that has produced decisive results. The consistent practice of nonviolence has broken barriers, bound wounds, healed nations.”<sup>4</sup> Nowhere is this transformation more desperately needed than in freeing the world from what Dick McSorley called the “taproot of evil in our society,”<sup>5</sup> the terrifying threat of nuclear weapons.

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Pope Francis to Cardinal Blase Cupich, April 4, 2017

<sup>5</sup> Rev. Richard McSorley, SJ, “It’s a Sin to Build a Nuclear Weapon,” U.S. Catholic, 1976

# Building a World Without Nuclear Weapons

-By C. R. Spicer

It happened in the season of Epiphany, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January, observing the third anniversary of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons' entry into force, the second anniversary of Archbishop John Wester's pastoral letter on nuclear disarmament, "Living in the Light of Christ's Peace," and days after the Doomsday Clock was left by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists at 90 seconds to midnight.

Pax Christi USA Bishop President John Stowe offered the opening prayer for a two-hour afternoon forum billed as "Building a World Without Nuclear Weapons: An Urgent Imperative."

Panelists were Archbishop of Santa Fe, John Wester, Dr. Ira Helfand, a Nobel laureate, past president of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, and Marie Dennis, program chair for the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative. The program included a taped appeal from US Congressman Jim McGovern for grassroots support of H.Res.77 ("Embracing the goals and provisions of the TPNW) and music provided by *What the World Needs Now Interfaith Coalition Singers*.

Frances Jeffries, a self-described believer in prayer but not a Catholic, said, "Archbishop Wester has a way of speaking from his belief so that no one is excluded."

"It's important to understand the actual unholy power of nuclear weapons" said Deacon Dave Hankle, who viewed the

presentation from Vero Beach, Florida, referencing Dr. Helfand's presentation. His rigor of knowing is reminiscent of *The Day After* a film that President Ronald Reagan viewed from the White House in the 1980s. Dr. Helfand's mind has fully embraced the already there of nuclear weapons and inspected the disastrous aftermath that detonation of a nuclear device with such a yield would produce.

"He comes to this from a place of profound distress at the potential of these weapons to destroy the world, human beings, civilization--how it can happen in such a short time," said Barbara Allaire, an organizer. "But he speaks with the conviction that we can turn this around, and you feel like when you're listening to him, yes, we can do this."



(Pax Christi USA photo)

"I was pleasantly surprised how hopeful I felt," said Madeline Labriola, member of Pax Christi Rhode Island, "especially when Dr. Helfand said it was really easy to dismantle these weapons." Allaire added "He has an optimistic view of what we can do on the nuclear disarmament issue compared to climate change, which relies on everybody in the world to curb carbon emissions."

"But converting our weapon systems into windmills and infrastructure--they didn't touch on that very much" said Labriola. "In Rhode Island and Connecticut, we are huge supporters of the military industrial complex, with General Dynamics and Electric Boat

building submarines all around us, which has been so ridiculous to me, when we could be building alternative energy products."

"I'm worried for my children and grandchildren, Labriola said, "I just want to leave them a safe world." Encouraged, she listened twice to Marie Dennis's talk on nonviolence, explaining, "She has been a big part of my life. When she was co-president of Pax Christi International, she was always so positive and hopeful, she always points to places where people make a difference. She keeps believing."

"I was particularly moved by the conversation that [moderator] Claire Schaeffer-Duffy led with the three speakers," Allaire said. Behind the scenes, curating Q&A from the chat were both Joseph Gerson, president of Campaign for Peace, Disarmament and Common Security, and Linda Taylor of the Pax Christi MA board. "Such a rich conversation--the way Claire drew out understandings from all the panel speakers."

Recruitment aimed outreach to all 253 U.S. and Canadian Catholic dioceses. Taylor, for example, who wrote to Frank Dewane, Bishop of Venice, Florida, acknowledging his role on the USCCB Committee on International Justice and Peace, received a confirmation that event information would be distributed to all 69 parishes and missions in his diocese.

Pat Ferrone of St. Susanna parish in Dedham found that none of the diocesan newspapers in NY state mentioned the event, which disappointed her outreach efforts. But, recalling Austrian conscientious objector Franz Jagerstatter's question to his bishop - "If the Church stays silent in the face of what is happening,

what difference would it make if no church were ever opened again?" – Ferrone said her efforts will persist: "Though he was ultimately executed for his resistance, Franz's words still call peacemakers to Jesus's mandate of nonviolent love for friends and enemies alike."

Months into the process, a plan was shelved for a hybrid event set to be sponsored by the Archdiocese of Boston. The planning committee quickly pivoted. Once Pax Christi USA confirmed its ability to provide technical support for the online program, recruitment turned to garnering co-sponsoring organizations. Sixty-six of them drew 1167 registrations.

Jeffries, who helped recruit Rotary International and Massachusetts Peace Action as co-sponsors, described the effectiveness of the event as "tremendous" and said "It underscored the power of a common foundation in faith and evinced the profound role of prayer." Nine hundred attendees represented more than 40 states and 26 countries.

Organizers now seek a benchmark of 10,000 views of the program on YouTube this Lent or soon afterward. Peter Metz, the group's chair, has produced a calling card to thank everybody, and on it is embedded a QR code to access the event recording, also posted here:

<https://paxchristima.org/january-27-forum-building-a-world-without-nuclear-weapons-an-urgent-imperative/>

-C. R. Spicer is a Human Rights Commissioner in Somerville, MA.

## Building a World...

By Linda Taylor



Peter Metz, an ardent advocate of eliminating nuclear weapons, addresses the 8th grade religion class at St. Mary-Sacred Heart School in North Attleboro, MA on September 28, 2023. That evening, he addressed a group of about 30 adults at the National Shrine of Our Lady of La Salette in Attleboro. Both talks covered the threat posed by nuclear weapons, the military/geopolitical situation, moral perspectives, and specific actions we can take to address the situation. The later event is here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2LP\\_vcOIXc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2LP_vcOIXc)

## St. John's Prep P.C.

By Matt Spearing, Faculty Advisor



We meet before school every Tuesday to pray for peace in the lobby of our Br. Edward Keefe, C.F.X. Academic Center. Our focus this year has been on reaching peace in Israel-Palestine, the climate crisis, and the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Two of our most active students are Andrew Ruocco '24 and Noah Sennott '24. Andrew has been a

leader of the Young Republicans club and Noah a leader in our Young Democrats club. Due to the rise of dehumanizing vitriol spreading in our country related to politics, they decided to form a new club called the Civic Debate Club. Above is a picture of them with author David Brooks, who recently spoke on campus.

## Holy Cross P.C.

Marty Kelly, Associate Chaplain



The Holy Cross College chapter of Pax Christi has continued to create a space for conversation on issues of faith and justice each Thursday night on campus. Led by Co-chairs Janelle Clancy '24 and Edwin Ryan '25, along with four members of the executive board, the group has consistently drawn 10-15 students weekly. Some of the topics we have discussed in recent months include the war in Israel/Palestine, immigration, gun violence, and addressing housing and food insecurity in our local Worcester community.

Some meetings were enriched by outside or campus speakers, including a representative from Catholic Relief Services. To begin Lent, our group chose to spend a meeting centered in prayer, with a guided Ignatian Examen in the chapel that invited us to consider themes of justice. This semester, we look forward to considering actions we can take to live out our values and important conversations to bring to campus.





# Pax Christi Spring Retreat



**Saturday April 20, 2024**

**Our Lady of Fatima Shrine**

**101 Summer Street, Holliston MA 01746**

**Registration begins at 9:30am**

**Program 10:00 am to 3:30 pm**



**“Mary on the Margins”**  
Using Mary’s Magnificat as the text for our prayer, Srs. Marie-Thérèse “Tess” Browne and Rita Raboin will reflect with us on Mary found in the Scriptures and beyond, her place in history and cultures. How do we reflect about her posture before God and others, from her humble beginnings to the Cross and the eventual Pieta! Our time together will include presentations, guided meditation, group sharing, and space for solitary reflection and prayer. Participants are asked to bring a picture, statue, or some symbol of Mary to create an ambiance of her spirit among us .

Sr. Marie-Thérèse “Tess” Browne, S.C.N. (Sisters of Charity of Nazareth), is a long-time practitioner in Social Justice ministry both locally and nationally and a great supporter of Pax Christi. Being a sister of Charity of Nazareth, she tries to live out charity rooted in justice, to care for the earth, and to be in solidarity with oppressed persons, especially women. She is a member of St. Katherine Drexel Parish in Boston. She was awarded the 2023 Bishop Augustine Healy Award from the Archdiocese of Boston Office of Evangelization and Discipleship, Black Catholic Communities .

Sr. Rita Raboin, Sister of Notre Dame de Namur, served 36 years of in Brazil as a community organizer, popular educator and advocate in the Amazon Region. She returned to the United States in March of 2018 and has ministered to recently arrived immigrants in the Boston Area. Notre Dame Sisters developed an outreach to migrants on the border in Phoenix and Rita volunteers there two weeks each year. She is an active member of Pax Christi Boston, the Pax Christi MA Board, and also a member of the Faneuil Hall Reconciliation Project which is a part of the New Democracy Coalition

+++++Registration Form+++++ clip and return

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Donation\* \$40.00 (including lunch) High School and College Students with ID Free**

**I am a retreat sponsor and will donate an additional tax-deductible gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to help defray the cost of the Retreat.**

**Mail Registration and check, made out to “Pax Christi MA” to:**

**Pax Christi Massachusetts Good Shepherd Parish 99 Main Street Wayland, MA 01778**

\*Scholarships available [www.paxchristima.org](http://www.paxchristima.org) For information: [paxchristima@gmail.com](mailto:paxchristima@gmail.com)

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

# Pax Christi MA Assembly: Racism

By Jeanne Allen

Amid an installation of memorial stones and banners honoring victims of mass shootings and flags recalling past Peacemaker awardees, the 2023 Pax Christi Massachusetts hosted 35 participants in person and 12 via Zoom at its Annual Assembly, at St. Susanna parish in Dedham. We were welcomed by PCMA board member and parishioner Pat Ferrone and pastor Fr. Steve Josoma. A moving land acknowledgement, led by Craig Simpson, recognized the forced removals of the original Massachusetts, Wampanoag and Nipmuc inhabitants and pledged to honor the diverse peoples still on the land, led. Our able emcee was PCMA co-coordinator Fr. Rocco Puopolo.

Keynoter Rev. Kevin Peterson spoke on “Renaming Faneuil Hall: The Role of Public Theology.” Through personal piety (prayer, worship, etc.) we become intimate with God. It is a vertical relationship, foundational to our being, and transferrable to the public square. It inspires us to be committed to the wellbeing of our neighbor and leads us to action, a “force of sacrificing service.” “Living a sacred life **must** impel us to creating a better society.” This is a horizontal relationship, tethering us to the needs of the “least of us.” This combination of vertical and horizontal forms the cross, which we must embrace.

Public theology must be actionable and serviceable, including not only feeding the poor but advocacy so they may no longer BE poor. Rev. Peterson cited the importance of *agape* in the public square: not just the motivation, but the means of our actions.

One example of public theology is the effort to rename Faneuil Hall. Peter Faneuil was not only a slave owner, but also a slave trader. The removal of his name from the hall would be a first step in dismantling racism; removal/repair, to be followed by reparations and beyond that to reconciliation. Renaming the



Rev. Kevin Peterson (WBUR)

hall should be a democratic process, reinforcing that we are all made in God’s likeness. With education and public actions, there has been a gradual shift from 72% of the area population opposed to the name change in 2019 to 52% in favor now and a Boston City Council resolution to change the name and work to “repair past and present harm done to Black Americans via systemic racism.”

After lunch came our Annual Meeting, comprised of an annual report, treasurer’s report, election of the Board of Directors, and bestowal of the annual Peacemaker Award on Anne Gagnon of Springfield for

her lifelong service to the marginalized through Pax Christi, Greater Springfield Campaign Nonviolence, Sandwiches for the Homeless, and many other ministries.

Our panel of afternoon speakers challenged us yet again. After a moving story by Rev. Andre Bennett of his baptism into American racism, he asserted, “you have to see my color, or you won’t be able to see my pain.” Rev. Valerie Copeland stated that racism is “not just embedded in our society, it is a narrative we export globally.” She talked about the **creation** of the concept of “whiteness” in the early 1600’s to make slaves (blacks) more “other” and “less than.” “Racism is not Blacks’ to fix,” she asserted, because they did not create it. She also claimed that if we are all the Body of Christ, we must all “suffer when others suffer.”

Sr. Linda Bessom then spoke of her own awakening to the depth of racism and white privilege and her actions in that sphere.

Small group discussions and sharing with the larger group after morning and afternoon speakers offered attendees many options to become actively involved in dismantling racism: join the Renaming Faneuil Hall movement; work for antiracist zoning laws; support HR3956 to deracialize the state corrections system; and join Massachusetts Catholics for Indigenous Rights:

<https://www.facebook.com/people/Massachusetts-Catholics-for-Indigenous-rights/100079256453446/>

-Jeanne is PCMA Secretary.

## In Memoriam: Sally Markey, 1941-2023

By Sr. Jane Morrissey, SSJ

[Sally was a beloved member of the Pax Christi MA board and of the western MA Pax Christi local group for many years. Her quiet but tenacious voice for peace continues to inspire her countless friends to loving service and action. -Ed.]



Dear Sally and family and friends,  
How did you do it?  
Embody the Word  
in each encounter,  
make of it a parable  
in your own Gospel-  
story of minute  
and bearably understood  
joy that a child could  
consume as bread for every  
day while drinking in the blood-  
red sky we all dream as  
the Embrace of Easter  
Rising?  
Pax Christi!

-Sr. Jane is a longtime friend of  
Sally and the Markey family.

Sally's full obituary is here:  
<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/name/sally-markey-obituary?pid=205397741>

## Roca, Boyle, King

By Deacon Bill Toller

On January 15, 2024, over sixty folks gathered at Mary, Mother of Hope Church to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his teaching and practice of Gospel nonviolence. Co-sponsored by Greater Springfield Campaign Nonviolence (CNV), Sisters of St. Joseph, Pax Christi, WNEU School of Law Center for Social Justice, and JustFaith, the event marked our 8<sup>th</sup> year of honoring Dr. King. Programs focused on Bryan Stevenson (Just Mercy), gun violence, racism, and more.

New chair Jane Virgilio gave updates on CNV's efforts to transform the community. Next, Pastor Willard Cofield led us in a short prayer and the Hokey-Pokey." The point was that as you do this dance, you become "all in." That was Dr. King's commitment to ending racism via nonviolent means.

We then watched a gripping TED talk by Fr. Greg Boyle on radical kinship in his work with gang members in and outside of prison: we are all connected; or, as Saint Mother Teresa put it, "we belong to each other."

Next, we introduced Christine Judd, VP of Institutional and Individual Advancement, at Roca (Spanish for "rock"), who has worked with young adults in the Springfield area for over ten years. Roca's mission is "to be a relentless force in disrupting incarceration, poverty, and racism by engaging the young adults, police and systems at the center of urban violence in

relationships to address trauma, find hope, and drive change." Chris and her colleague, Ron Mitchell, outlined how Roca fulfills that mission. Their



Christine Judd (Roca, Inc.)

success rate of over 70% was shown in videos of graduates and an innovative program with DA Gulluni. The audience gave them a standing ovation.

Before a closing prayer by CNV founder Sr. Jane Morrissey, Bill reminded us of Dr. King's last words: "Okay. I will." For each of us the question is: "will we?"

-Bill is a PCMA board member.

### Pax Christi MA Board of Directors 2023-2024

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Co-Coordinator:<br>Philip Harak<br>6 Geryk Ct.<br>Southampton<br>MA 01073<br>413-478-7542<br><a href="mailto:philharak@yahoo.com">philharak@yahoo.com</a> | Co-Coordinator:<br>Fr. Rocco Puopolo, s.x<br>101 Summer Street<br>Holliston<br>MA 01746<br>202-997-8049<br>(email page 12) |
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| Treasurer:<br>Nancy Carapezza<br>13 Red Barn Road<br>Wayland, MA 01778<br>508-740-4500<br><a href="mailto:npez@comcast.net">npez@comcast.net</a> | Secretary:<br>Jeanne Allen<br>10 Sutton Place<br>Easthampton, 01027<br>413-270-5880<br>(email page 12) |
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#### OTHER BOARD MEMBERS

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Sr. Linda Bessom (Somerville);<br>Capoccia (Newton);<br>(Jamaica Plain);<br>(Needham);<br>(Walpole);<br>(Palmer/Newsletter Editor) (Somerville);<br>Attleboro); | Ann<br>Irene Desharnais<br>Pat Ferrone<br>Kathy Hubert<br>Mike Moran<br>Sr. Rita Raboin<br>Linda Taylor (North<br>Springfield); |
|---|---|

QUARTERLY BOARD MEETINGS are held virtually at 9:00 AM and are open to all PCMA members. The next two will be held on March 9 & June 8, 2024.

## Local Groups

### **Berkshire P.C.**

Carolyn Zablonty  
P.O. Box 14  
Mill River, MA 01244  
[berkshire.pax.christi@gmail.com](mailto:berkshire.pax.christi@gmail.com)  
Contact for meeting info

### **Beverly P.C.**

Sr. Linda Bessom, SNDdeN  
(857) 236-1370  
[linda.bessom@sndden.org](mailto:linda.bessom@sndden.org)  
Contact for meeting info

### **Boston (Citywide) P.C.**

Sr. Rita Raboin, SNDdeN  
Paulist Center, 5 Park St  
Boston, MA  
[rita.raboin@sndden.org](mailto:rita.raboin@sndden.org)  
Contact for meeting info

### **Cape Cod P.C.**

Francoise Rocher  
77 Old Post Road  
Centerville, MA 02632  
(508) 771-6737  
[paxchristi-cc@comcast.net](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:rndpsx@hotmail.com)  
Mtgs 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](mailto:mkelly@holycross.edu)  
Meetings and activities geared to  
college calendar

### **Metro West P.C.**

Jan Leary  
[janleary@aol.com](mailto:janleary@aol.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  
[sheilmatthews@aol.com](mailto:sheilmatthews@aol.com)  
Mtgs 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, 7:00 PM  
Chapel of Reconciliation

### **Newton P.C.**

Ann Capoccia  
573 Washington Street  
Newton, MA 02458  
(617) 527-7360  
[anncapoccia@verizon.net](mailto:anncapoccia@verizon.net)  
Mtgs 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday, 7:00 PM

### **Rhode Island P.C.**

Margo Murphy  
(401) 861-6988  
[margomurph@aol.com](mailto:margomurph@aol.com)  
Madeline Labriola  
(845) 691-8015  
[mlabriola@mac.com](mailto: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  
Matt Spearing  
(978) 774-1057  
[mspearing@stjohnsprep.org](mailto:mspearing@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  
[patferrone@gmail.com](mailto:patferrone@gmail.com)  
Contact for meeting info

### **Western Mass P.C.**

Jeanne Allen  
10 Sutton Place  
Easthampton, MA 01027  
(413) 270-5880  
[jallen10sp@gmail.com](mailto:jallen10sp@gmail.com)  
Mtgs 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday, 7:00 PM  
Elms College, Chicopee

*(NOTE: Meetings of some groups  
are virtual due to Covid concerns)*

*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 send changes or additions to Mike Moran: [moran3@comcast.net](mailto:moran3@comcast.net) (135 Shearer Street, Palmer, MA 01069)*

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[www.paxchristima.org](http://www.paxchristima.org)