



Where Is God in Gaza?

By Philip J. Harak, Ed.D.

All of the religious people I have known and read believe that prayer is important. I know it is vital in my life. Saint Teresa of Avila wrote that prayer is “an intimate sharing between friends.” Ignatius of Loyola saw prayer as a personal encounter with God, advocating a direct conversation with God, much like speaking to a friend. His Spiritual Exercises encourage us to find God in all things and let prayer shape our actions. Saint Paul believed that prayer was not separate from daily life. Paul urged Christians to “pray without ceasing” as an ongoing awareness of God’s presence (1 Thess 5:17).

There are many ways to pray. Consistent among most methods is one’s humble acknowledgement that it is we who are answering God’s continual invitation. A good disposition is to open ourselves to God’s presence, encouraging us to a fuller discernment and surrender of our own will, and alignment with God’s.

Within contemplative and imaginative prayer, we can more fully appreciate how God views all creation. How does God see us and others here and in the world? I believe each of our own prayerful

connections with God will help us to discern how God may view the realities of Palestinians, especially since October 6, 2023.

Yet with all the problems in our own life and the world, should we Christians be concerned about their plight? What, if anything, would Jesus want us to do? We Christians believe that from Its infinite love and compassion for us, the Trinity Incarnated Itself in human form, beginning like us, a helpless infant.



Pope Francis prays at Palestinian-made Vatican creche, with Jesus wrapped in a keffiyeh (AP News)

Perhaps if we foster a deeper appreciation of God as manifest in children, we may be moved to receive God’s will and respond more confidently.

Pax Christi advocates prayer, along with study and action, as foundational in our efforts to live and build the Peace of Christ. In this column, we will recall how Jesus felt about children. As we

Continued on page 2

Pax Christi MA, Meet PCAN

By Mike Moran

What ever happened, you may wonder, to the team of mostly Pax Christi MA members who produced the January 27, 2024 virtual forum *Building a World Without Nuclear Weapons*, with Marie Dennis, Dr. Ira Helfand, and Archbishop John Wester?

We’ve now grown into a broader group called PCAN (Pax Christi New England Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons), modeled on and pronounced “Pea Can,” like ICAN (the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons), which brought us the TPNW (Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons).

Here, in a nutshell, is the backstory of that transformation. As we brainstormed last year about how we could follow up our forum (which attracted over 1,100 live viewers from 26 countries and over 2,000 more later views on our

Continued on page 7

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.

Where Is God...

Continued from page 1

are all children of God, and therefore one family, part of our study will be to identify a few deep-seated obstacles to that important awareness. Because all children need proper and healthy adult modeling and guidance, we will ponder our responsibility to act on behalf of our family of God. Finally, we will conclude with practical ways in which we can pray to better discern how God may be calling us, within our own life circumstance and ability, to act as part of the universal Body of Christ.

God's Love of Children

In Matthew and Mark, Jesus brought a child into the midst of His disciples and told them that "...unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." He further asserted that we must humble ourselves like the child and that "whoever receives one child as this in my name receives me" (MT 18:1-5; Mark 9:36). Jesus clearly identifies with children.

Shortly after in both gospels, adults brought children towards Jesus so that he could bless them. Jesus sternly rebuked His disciples when they initially blocked those children. He told them to allow the children to see him, for the "kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (MT 19:14; MK 10:14). In Luke, He goes further. He warns those who do harm to children, saying that it would be better for the perpetrator if they were thrown into the sea tied to a millstone (Luke 17:2).

We must prayerfully ask what

Jesus' reaction would be to the reality that the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), since October 2023, under Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's direction and with US military aid currently totaling \$11 million *every hour*, has intentionally killed tens of thousands of children, women, and other noncombatants. As of this writing, U.S. President Trump has promised to bypass the Congress and immediately send Israel an additional \$8 billion for missiles and other weaponry to further eradicate Palestinians and to continue leveling Gaza for his stated goals of annexation and ethnic cleansing.



Palestinian woman embraces the body of her niece (World Press)

As recent statistics tell us, approximately 70% of our population and our armed forces identify themselves as "Christian." What is this majority Christian nation and military witnessing to the victims in Palestine, and to the world, about our version of Christianity? What "light of the world" (John 8:13) are we actually promoting?

Intergenerational Obstacles to Loving as Jesus Commanded

An old adage states that "A fish cannot discover water." This is a

powerful reminder that we should always be open to questioning what seems normal, or what is "common sense." St. Ignatius wrote of its spiritual counterpart, using the term "presupposition." This is a fundamental attitude towards all others, in which, with God's grace, we choose to see God's created goodness before anything else. Or before what anyone else tells us about that person, or people.

One of the reasons Jesus asks us to emulate the children in our discipleship is because their unjaded interrogation helps uncover what is fundamental. What if we call back to our own child-like trust of God, and ask that kind of penetrating question? For instance: How can we follow Jesus' new commandment to "love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34) at the same time as we support their killing in mind, heart, and money?

For those interested in deepening their research on this issue, please see the "Resources" section of our website, <https://paxchristima.org>. There you will find short summaries and references to important scholarly research on Jesus' radical New Way of confronting evil by brilliant, but

Grants from PCMA to Local PC Groups

Local groups may apply for grants of up to \$250 to support projects which are in keeping with Pax Christi's mission by asking PCMA treasurer Nancy Carapezza for an application form: Pax Christi MA, Good Shepherd Parish, 99 Main Street, Wayland, MA 01778; or npez@comcast.net

seldom studied, biblical scholars like Walter Wink. You will also find how art and media have promoted inaccurate and damaging portrayals of Jesus' clear, courageous, and revolutionary way to resist evil in ways ordained by the Trinity.

You will also see how another scholar, Miguel De La Torre, critically examined Jesus' ministry as being one from a marginalized person under brutal Roman occupation. De La Torre also recounts the current-day outraged reactions to the accurate physical portrayal of the historical Jesus as a Western Asian, instead of the European blond, blue-eyed one. Would we Christians have reacted differently if we had been raised to see the historical Jesus in physical similarity to a Palestinian?



Deesis mosaic of Jesus at the Hagia Sophia (Getty Images)

Here I will highlight one salient finding in my own study. Arabs are practically universally portrayed in our entertainment media as subhuman, evil, ignorant killers. Also, the corporate news media ignores the human suffering of the *millions* of Palestinians who have lived under brutal Israeli occupation for the past nine decades. Such nonrepresentation is a form of injustice, and, by its ignoring, serves to dehumanize them to viewers. I believe this underlying Arab bigotry lends itself to a more indifferent, or even deserving, reaction to the slaughter there.

We certainly have a history of such an attitude towards darker skinned people. I did not hear or read of any local or unified Catholic opposition to Israeli Defense Minister, Yoav Gallant, calling Hamas militants "human animals." I also noticed the same silence when Israeli President Isaac Herzog stated last October that "It is an entire nation out there that is responsible for the attacks by Hamas," clearly implying collective responsibility and punishment of all Palestinians.

An Israeli official posted on a social media account that "there are no innocent civilians there in Gaza." Collective population punishment is a crime against humanity and violates what even Just War followers use as one of their conditions for a just war. The IDF's relentless and ruthless extermination of civilians is also one of the facts that prompted Amnesty International to recently indict Israel on the charge of genocide. They join several countries and nearly 700 scholars and organizations worldwide in that charge.

A Christian's Choice

What does a Christ-follower do when world leaders execute and support these mass killings? The proudly Catholic Mr. Biden's presidency supported all this. Fr. Charles McCarthy wrote, on January 22, 2025, that the laws of the Torah, and the pages of the Old Testament, approve of killing children. But he emphatically reminds the Christian that there is "no place in the Gospels that the Jewish Messiah, Jesus, says or implies that a disciple of His can morally kill children" (www.emmanuelcharlesmccarthy.org)

Christian Zionists and other political factions here and abroad certainly support Israel's actions. A challenging component of our discipleship is the willingness to suspend certain allegiances and ideologies and to open our mind and heart to what may be initially hidden to us. This is precisely where humble prayer and presupposition enters.



Gazans return to ruined homes 2025 (Human Rights Watch)

With an open disposition, we may hear the anguished cries of Palestinian children, or of parents who stand on a pile of rubble, knowing their children and family are buried beneath. If we find ourselves fearful of being labeled "antisemitic" for questioning Israel's actions, will we pray more deeply to sense where Jesus currently is in this destruction? Or will we allow ourselves the comfort of inaction or ignorance to avoid opposition?

Prayer-Based Action

We return to our earlier question: What, if anything, should we do about the Palestinian extermination? First, we Christians must answer honestly and courageously Jesus' essential question to Peter and to us today, repeated in each of the Synoptic Gospels: Who do I say that He is? If we assert that Jesus is the Word of God made flesh, then as followers we must hold Jesus' teachings as primary. Not those of a human leader, intellectual,

ideology, political party, stereotypes, or our reliance solely on corporate or social media news sources which inform our heart and mind. Such actions lead us to idolatry.

Each one of us has the opportunity of nurturing a deeper journey with God through several actions. Since Jesus said that “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58) and that he came to “fulfill the law” (Matthew 5:17), we followers can use His words and actions in the New Testament as the biblical basis of our scriptural study. Like any good relationship, we need to frequently set aside time to become aware of God’s presence in and around our life.

Of course, we avail ourselves of the sacraments, of open and honest prayer study groups, and consider using some of the spiritual leaders’ suggestions in order to deepen our relationship with God. For instance, Ignatius advocated for praying scriptural passages by imaginatively placing ourselves within a scene, employing our five senses to deepen our bodily experience of God’s presence. As we journey with Jesus, we can ask what God wants us to do about Palestine, confident that God will supply us with the love and grace necessary and consistent with the “talents” we have been gifted.

St. Paul reminds us of the metaphor of the Christian community composing the body of Christ (e.g., 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, 4-5). Not all of us have the same function, but let us work in harmony to serve the greater community, and *all* of God’s humanity and creation. Our website offers active steps. On behalf of our family in Palestine, some of the body may call

representatives. Others may join discussion groups and write letters. Some may stand out in witness and protest. Others may contribute money to the several organizations that are desperately trying to attend to the critical physical and behavioral needs of the people there.



Archbishop Henning Protesters (photo by Paul Edward Gingras)

Individual responsibility in choosing whom to follow and how to act is critical. Jesus taught and lived the Way to the Kingdom and to eternal life. How could any of the atrocious actions against Palestinians and others in history have been committed *by only the one person* calling for fascism, imperialism, and other forms of domination? Imagine if all Christians refused to carry out orders to kill, or refuse to build weaponry? What if we used our intellect to best determine how to enact Jesus’ clear teachings, instead of finding ways of invalidating and thereby avoiding them? Would we be more or less in line with the Kingdom of God if we sought to comfort and heal our nation’s enemies—most especially, the children?

Editor’s note: Please go to <https://paxchristima.org> for more comprehensive information on Prayer, Study, and Action.

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

Seeking “True Justice and Peace” in Palestine

By Jeanne Connerney

Four days after Christmas, dozens braved the cold to stand in front of the Holy Cross Cathedral in Boston. They held signs and banners with slogans such as “Ceasefire Now” and “Save the Children of Gaza,” while a volunteer handed out flyers headlined “Pope Francis Calls for A Ceasefire; Why Won’t Archbishop Henning?” The mass that Sunday marked both the Feast of the Holy Family and the start of the 2025 Jubilee Year.

The protest was held in response to Henning’s silence in the wake of an urgent letter from Pax Christi Massachusetts two weeks earlier. It urged the archbishop to join Pope Francis in condemning the ongoing violence in Gaza and in calling for a ceasefire in the Middle East. The letter also asked for a meeting to discuss the issue.

The response of the archbishop, conveyed to me via a phone call with his advisor, Msgr. J Bryan Hehir, was that he was not prepared to call for a ceasefire and was too busy to meet with us.

Amid a fragile ceasefire deal reached in mid-January, we sent a second letter to the archbishop on January 24. Besides repeating our request for a conversation, the letter asked that he lead local parishes in praying for a permanent end to hostilities, take a collection for desperately-needed humanitarian aid in Gaza, and issue a statement on the archdiocese website which shows respect for Palestinian lives.

The website contains a statement from Cardinal O'Malley issued on October 11, 2023, which condemns the events of October 7, offers sympathy for those killed, and claims, "There is no room for moral ambiguity on this issue. Resisting such terrorism and aggression is the moral duty of states."

What the statement fails to mention is that this event was not an unprovoked act of terror and that the conflict did not begin on October 7. Since the creation of Israel 77 years ago, Palestinians have been displaced, murdered, and ethnically cleansed by Israel, all in violation of international law. Nor did it mention that 81% of Gazans are refugees who were expelled from their homes by Israel and who had been living in what was described as "an open-air prison." Israel controlled the borders and severely limited the delivery of food and humanitarian aid well before 2023.

While on a smaller scale, Palestinians had also participated in the ongoing cycle of violence since 1948. Then Operation Al-Aqsa Flood unleashed horror in southern Israel when 1,139 people were killed and approximately 250 taken hostage on October 7.

Subsequently, Israel's disproportionate military response murdered at least 62,000 people in Gaza over 16 months, 70% of whom were women and children; injured well over 100,000; and displaced over 90% of the population. Almost the entire infrastructure of the region was destroyed, including schools and almost all hospitals. Most food and medical aid shipments were prevented from crossing the borders, and the population was on the brink of starvation.

Unicef called Gaza the most dangerous place in the world to be a child. More children under the age of 2 were killed by Israel in the 16 months following October 7 than in all of Israel in the last forty years. Several newborns froze to death due to lack of adequate shelter, and thousands more children died due to lack of access to medical care. A new acronym was created by medical workers: "WCNSF (Wounded Child No Surviving Family)," and over half of Gazan children said they wished they were dead.

Faced with these horrors, Pope Francis continued to issue calls for a ceasefire and condemned violent acts by Israel as "cruelty, not war." The Archdiocese of Boston, however, remained silent, neither calling for an end to extreme suffering, nor posting a word of sympathy.



Archbishop Henning speaks with Claire Schaeffer-Duffy (photo by Paul Edward Gingras)

During the December 29 Mass, Henning did not call for a ceasefire. Instead, he led the congregation in praying for Mary's intercession throughout the world, especially in the Holy Land, after "a very horrific year of terrible violence." He continued, "By your grace, may we seek true justice and peace for one another."

His statement is a beginning and offers an opportunity for the archbishop to exercise the

responsibility of his position, distinguish himself from his predecessor, and show that he values Palestinian lives as much as Israeli lives. It's disappointing that to date, the second letter has yielded neither action nor response from the Chancery at a time when moral voices are needed more than ever. We continue to pray that Archbishop Henning will partner with Pax Christi in our attempts to "seek true justice and peace" and create a world aligned with the teachings of Christ.

-Jeanne belongs to the St. Susanna Parish PC local group in Dedham.

Finding Hope in the Rubble

By Jeanne Allen

We are reading a lot about Gaza in this issue, but it is one of the fundamental issues of our times—a genocide funded, and arms supplied, by our country.

My own Gaza journey started with an invitation to fast in solidarity with the Palestinian people (Leahy Fast for Palestine), which of course led to other actions: informational leafleting to passersby, working to get a ceasefire resolution passed in my city, twice-weekly standouts, writing to politicians

A nurse friend and I were particularly struck by the horrific things happening to the healthcare system in Gaza. In Gaza hospitals, clinics, ambulances, healthcare workers (HCW) and patients are deliberately and directly targeted. Over 1000 HCW have been targeted, arrested, tortured, and killed by the Israeli Army. Doctors are forced to perform amputations and other surgeries without anesthesia. Starvation is

being used as a weapon. Thousands have died from lack of supplies to treat chronic conditions like cancer, diabetes, heart disease. How can your heart not cry out seeing photos of a patient, in a hospital tent, IV in his arm, being burned alive by Israeli Army bombardment? All this is against the Geneva Convention and the Declaration of Human Rights. Yet the U.S. medical establishment, most politicians, and many church leaders have been silent.

We decided to approach all the hospitals in the Connecticut River Valley and ask their administrators to meet with us so we could educate them about the situation and then request them to speak out against these horrors. The Hippocratic Oath taken by physicians and nursing's Nightingale Pledge insists: "First, do not harm." Failure to speak up is a rejection of professional ethics and complicity with the genocide.

With no response from many, or outright rejection from others, we decided to call them out with public protests at the hospitals. One of our banners proclaims, "If we were in Gaza, this hospital would be rubble." At each event, protesters from local organizations have shown up, and speakers have drawn the connections between what's happening in Gaza and our own needs here—housing, education, health care.

Sometimes we've attracted the press, sometimes counter protesters, sometimes just hospital security. Some people engage us in discussion; a few have stood with us for a time; we get honks, peace signs, and sometimes curses and the finger.

Here in western Massachusetts,

much of the work is being done by groups that cut across religious, age and cultural boundaries. It has been wonderful to meet people who are quite different from myself. We support each other when the bleakness threatens to overwhelm us. Our actions strengthen us. I am inspired by the resiliency of the Palestinian people and pray that in this Jubilee Year our hope will come to fruition.



Protesters Peter Kakos and Nick Mottern (photo, Jeanne Allen)

-Jeanne is PCMA board secretary.

Pax Christi MetroWest Update

By Jan Leary

In response to a January email blast invite to attend a Zoom group discussion about the conflict in Palestine, ten Pax Christi and local area individuals signed up.

From their responses it was apparent that one group of individuals was somewhat new to the conflict in Palestine/Israel, while a second group has been involved with this issue for years. So, it was decided that two groups are necessary. Both are open to newcomers.

The first group - those interested in learning the history and context of why October 7 happened, resulting

in the Israeli genocide against innocent Palestinians - will spend four meetings via Zoom discussing the workbook, *Steadfast Hope: The Palestinian Quest for Just Peace*. Following that discussion, this group will decide next steps.

The second group - those who have been involved in the P/I issue for years - will focus on networking and where support and action can be provided ASAP.

All are welcome. For more information, please contact Jan at: MetroWest4Palestine@gmail.com

-Jan coordinates PC MetroWest.

Pieta 2024

By Peter Kakos, Northampton, MA, November 22, 2024

From the back of the only wall left of her bombed out soul,
Shrouded on pulverized concrete dust,

She carefully steps forward,
holding in her helpless arms
Her adored nine-year-old boy,
under a torn bed sheet,
Grown morbidly thin by the
hollow diet of famine.

Legs, limp at the knees across one arm,
His face, once bright-with-hope,
Cradled in the other, closest to her
still-beating heart.

Her gaze as vacant, her life as
good as dead without her only
begotten son.

Her penetrating eyes demand the
world stop turning a blind eye
To this ghastly procession of the
mothers of Gaza,
Each cherishing the fading warmth
Of their loves' body.

Beholding her priceless Pieta, the
heavens scream a fury for the ages.

-Peter Kakos is a UCC minister.

Pax...Meet PCAN

(continued from page 1)

website) in 2025, the 80th anniversary year of the US atomic bombings in Japan and a Catholic Jubilee year, Abp Wester arranged for Dr. Helfand to meet in Rome last April with Cardinal Michael Czerny, Prefect of the Vatican's Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development, whose mandate includes human rights, justice, and peace

When Ira asked how we could best amplify the powerful calls for nuclear disarmament by Pope Francis and Archbishop Wester in his 2022 pastoral letter, the Cardinal suggested that the Vatican may be willing to receive evidence from us of how American Catholics feel about nuclear weapons and what they and others have done to promote their elimination. He also raised the idea of nine separate meetings that the Pope might convene with bishops of each nuclear-armed state.

Fast forward a few months, and a subset of our PCAN leadership team has met several times via Zoom with Cardinal Czerny's Dicastery colleague, Dr. Alessio Pecorario. The result of these conversations is a brief survey soliciting messages from North Americans (in the U.S. and Canada) regarding nuclear weapons and best practices toward abolishing them.

Many of you will soon receive this survey by email and/or through your local parishes. Information about this project will also be posted on PCMA's website: <https://paxchristima.org/> Our team will share the responses we receive with the Dicastery, some of which will be posted on their website: <https://www.humandevlopment.v>

[a/en.html](#) Dr. Pecorario expects them to help inform activities yet to be planned by the Vatican around the anniversary dates of the bombings in Japan, August 6 in Hiroshima, and August 9 in Nagasaki.

PCAN hopes our survey findings will help advocates like us to better promote the teachings of Pope Francis and Archbishop Wester about the urgent need for nuclear disarmament among Catholic hierarchy, laity, and beyond, and generate momentum to achieve the ambitious goal of a world without nuclear weapons by 2030.

In the course of our work since last year's forum, we became aware of several related projects worthy of our support, two of which are described below. -Mike Moran



Urakami Cathedral (St. Kateri Institute)

Nagasaki Bell Project

During a visit to Nagasaki in 2023, James L. Nolan, Jr., a sociology professor at Williams College in Williamstown, MA, met a parishioner of the city's Catholic Urakami Cathedral who suggested to Nolan that American Catholics donate a bell to replace the bell in the church's left tower which was destroyed by the atomic bomb in 1945. The bell in the right tower was found almost intact and is still in use. Nolan, whose book *Atomic Doctors* describes in part the wartime experience of his

grandfather, an ob-gyn radiologist who served the Manhattan Project and witnessed the early ruins of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, took up the challenge. In an email to CCAN member Barbara Allaire, Professor Nolan described this project as a "nonpolitical... expression of our (American Catholics) solidarity with the Nagasaki Catholics, and our respect and admiration for their faithful endurance through many years of suffering and persecution. Their story is an inspiration." Over \$62,000 of the \$125,000 total estimated cost has already been raised. To contribute, visit <https://stkateriinstitute.org/nagasaki-bell-project/> -Mike Moran

Hiroshima Commemoration Project

On February 27, The Center for Nonviolent Solutions in Worcester, spearheaded by local activists (and CCAN members) Claire Schaeffer-Duffy and Charlie Washburn, launched a statewide "Hiroshima Commemoration Project" with a free public screening of the documentary film *The Beginning of the End of Nuclear Weapons*, about the historical background of the TPNW. This project aims to establish local study circles during the spring for faith communities and secular groups to educate themselves about the urgent need for nuclear disarmament. Ideally, local and international pilgrimages for nuclear disarmament will follow during the summer, to coincide with Hiroshima and Nagasaki commemorations. CCAN colleagues Mike Moran and Christopher Spicer Hankle will promote the project and encourage similar actions in western and eastern Massachusetts respectively.

-Mike Moran edits this newsletter.

St. John's Prep P.C.

By Matt Spearing, Faculty Advisor

Faculty advisor Danielle Poche is on parental leave, so my colleague Samira Tella and I have been holding down the fort for peace prayer on Tuesday mornings. Students have been helping to select prayers they bring to the group and share in spirit.

The students have selected prayers like Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB, Prayer for the Decade of Nonviolence:

<https://educationforjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2003-02-26-Prayer-for-the-Decade-of-Nonviolence-for-Children.pdf>

Holy Cross P.C.

Marty Kelly, Associate Chaplain

In November, five members of the College of the Holy Cross Pax Christi chapter, along with Associate Chaplain Marty Kelly, joined representatives from regional Catholic colleges and universities for a conference at the United Nations in New York to commemorate the annual World Day of the Poor.

Instituted by Pope Francis in 2017, the World Day of the Poor is intended to invite the Church to pray and reflect on our care for the poor in our midst, which is at the heart of the Gospel. The conference was sponsored by Caritas Internationalis and Catholic Relief Services and included a presentation on the state of global relief work, a vocations panel to help students consider careers in the field of humanitarian aid, and a tour of the United Nations.

As the spring semester began, Pax

Christi has focused on immigration concerns, prompted by recent Executive Orders. We gather weekly to become more informed and aware of all that is happening, and to find hope in this community on campus.



*Holy Cross students at UN, NYC
(photo courtesy of Marty Kelly)*

Westfield State University P.C.

Colleen Mollica, Campus Minister

The mission of the Albert and Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center is to support religious and spiritual life and to promote interfaith understanding at Westfield State University. The Center seeks to promote respect for and understanding of diverse religious traditions and to help students relate their moral and religious traditions to their personal choices and service to society.

In response to Pax Christi's invitation to create a world that reflects the Peace of Christ through exploring, articulating, and witnessing to the call of nonviolence, the Center has begun offering a weekly 5-minute, non-denominational Pause for Peace as a way for our students and community to come together in silence to create a more peaceful campus, community, and world. s issues of race, discrimination, segregated housing, economic

inequity, health disparity, and high rates of Black male homicide and incarceration.

Pause for Peace meets every Tuesday of the semester at 12:30 p.m. at the Interfaith Mediation Gazebo, weather permitting, or in the Lower-Level Lounge inside the Interfaith Center. Participants are invited to take a breath and use the time and space to pray, meditate, or simply breathe.

Participants have shared that they are grateful that we can hold space for them in this way. Others have shared that they take the opportunity for five minutes of stillness from wherever they are on campus in solidarity. We are delighted to bring hearts and minds together as we seek peace.

P.C. La Salette

By Karen Brennan PCLS

Members of the Pax Christi group at the National Shrine of Our Lady of La Salette, Attleboro, MA led an interactive presentation, "Blessed Are the Peacemakers," at the November 21, 2024 meeting of WINGS (Women in God's Spirit) at St. Teresa of the Child Jesus Church in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. About 35 women attended.

Referencing both Scripture and Tradition, presenter Elaine L'Etoile invited participants to reflect upon and discuss in small groups their Christian vocation to be peacemakers in a world rife with conflict. During the ensuing large group discussion several participants shared experiences of their peacemaking efforts in the context of their families, personal relationships, and workplaces. The second part of the presentation placed the existential threats posed

by nuclear weapons as a critical life issue. Karen Brennan led a discussion in which participants identified life issues, including widespread availability of guns, poverty, lack of adequate healthcare, abortion, and the possession of nuclear weapons.

Karen and Elaine shared their personal experiences as children and young people living through the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 and the Three Mile Island (1979) and Chernobyl (1986) nuclear accidents. Participants then viewed a YouTube recording of a brief TED talk on the dangers of nuclear weapons by Dr. Ira Helfand.

Following brief silent reflection, the presenters introduced the Pax Christi “Pray, Study, Act” model for peacemaking. Participants received handouts with various prayers for peace and were directed to several websites as prayer resources. Thanks to a grant received from Pax Christi Massachusetts, each participant received her own copy of Archbishop Wester’s Pastoral Letter “Living in the Light of Christ’s Peace: A Conversation Toward Nuclear Disarmament” to learn more about the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Finally, Linda Taylor presented participants with opportunities for action, including petitioning Congress (Linda made available stamped postcards addressed to Rhode Island Senators and Representatives with a suggested script) and joining a local Pax Christi chapter in Rhode Island or southeastern Massachusetts. The very positive reactions of WINGS members (“This really made me think”; “I want to become involved”) encouraged La Salette P.C. to offer the program to additional parishes this spring.

Rhode Island P.C.

By William Waters, PCRI

Every fall, Pax Christi Rhode Island is invited onto the University of Rhode Island campus by the URI Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies to participate in their International Day of Peace, along with other Rhode Island peace groups. PCRI members bring banners and leaflets promoting nuclear disarmament and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This is a great opportunity for PCRI members to interact with large numbers of URI students. For the most part, the students are friendly and appreciate the outreach to them on their own campus.



PCRI table at URI (photo, Bill Waters)

One important goal for PCRI is to encourage young people to get involved in the peace movement. Certainly, young people have an enormous stake in nuclear disarmament, one of three existential threats that we all face, along with global warming and Artificial Intelligence. PCRI members have also brought the urgent nuclear disarmament-TPNW message to college students on or near the campuses of: Brown University, Rhode Island School of Design, Johnson and Wales University, Providence College, and Roger Williams University.

Lessons in Love by Martin & Dorothy

Deacon Bill Toller & Jane Virgilio

On Monday, January 20, 2025, 35 people gathered at Mary, Mother of Hope Church in Springfield to remember the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King on his national holiday. The event was sponsored by Greater Springfield Campaign Nonviolence (CNV), which includes PC Western MA, for a 10th consecutive year. The flyer celebrated “the legacy of two visionaries who dedicated their lives to equality, peace, and the dignity of all people.”

We began with a beautiful prayer by longtime CNV member Gwen Miller, who challenged us to be faithful “anyway,” despite our own political or personal struggles, as Dorothy and Martin always were. CNV chair Jane Virgilio then gave a powerful talk on the connection between Martin and Dorothy, highlighting Pope Francis’ 2015 talk to Congress, when he identified four great Americans who represent our Christian values of inclusion, nonviolence, solidarity and equality: Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Merton, Martin Luther King, and Dorothy Day.

While much is known about Dr. King, the legacy of Dorothy Day remains unknown to many. Their legacies intersect in principles, focus, and practices. Both lived by Jesus’ commands to love God and one’s neighbor. Both were concerned with redeeming the enemy. Day’s enemies were perpetuating violence; King’s were white supremacists, who violently and systematically impeded Blacks, Indigenous, and People of Color from their civil rights and racial equality. Day’s relative privilege allowed



Pax Christi

2025 Spring Retreat



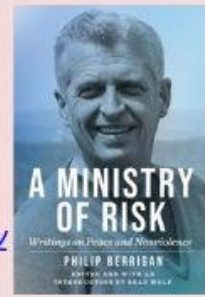
***“Hope for the Long Haul
Finding Our Place in Poetic Time”***

**Saturday, April 12, 2025
St. Thomas the Apostle Church,
1076 Thorndike Street, Palmer, MA**

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

Please join Brad Wolf as we find ways to discover "Hope for the Long Haul," using poetic time, reverie, and resistance to help us continue performing the works of mercy in a fast-changing, threatening world. With Philip Berrigan and others as reference, we can place ourselves within the story, perhaps *the* story, and thereby find the strength and spirit to continue, no matter the setbacks, no matter the odds.

Brad Wolf is a former prosecutor, professor, and community college dean. He is executive director of Peace Action Network of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, co-coordinator of the [Merchants of Death War Crimes Tribunal](#), and current chair of the US Organizing Committee for the [People's Tribunal on the Korean Victims of the 1945 Atomic Bombings](#). Brad was recently the editor of [A Ministry of Risk](#), a book on the collected writings of Philip Berrigan.



+++++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.

To register click here and follow the instructions <https://tinyurl.com/5dbu674m>

Or mail this 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 For information: paxchristima@gmail.com

Co-sponsored by the  & St Susanna Parish, Dedham

her to choose voluntary poverty; King was born into involuntary poverty. Through nonviolence, both brought love, humility, courage, faith, passion, and perseverance to a broken world.

We next saw the award-winning “Revolution of the Heart: the Dorothy Day Story,” by noted documentary filmmaker Martin Doblmeier. The 57-minute film showed the courageous life of a woman dedicated to living nonviolence, caring for and standing with the poor and marginalized. PCMA board and CNV member Mike Moran shared a beautiful piece by Dorothy on Martin’s death in 1968 from her newspaper, *The Catholic Worker*.

Then, we joined hands and sang together “We Shall Overcome,” as led by legendary folk singer Pete Seeger on YouTube. It was an evening of reconnection and renewal that I will never forget.

-Bill is a PCMA board member; Jane chairs Greater Springfield Campaign Nonviolence.

A Boost of Hope and Joy *By Jeanne Allen*

Shivering in sweaters, fleeces, and jackets due to a heat-less hall, 60 stalwart peacemakers met on November 2, 2024 at St. Susanna’s Parish in Dedham for “Cultivating Peace, Creating Joy-No Matter What.” PCMA’s annual assembly. Another 18 joined in virtually from home. Frida Berrigan dove into our theme with insight and humor. First, she centered us in the

immensity of the challenges we face: the horrors of the war in Gaza; nuclear saber-rattling, climate change, a broken electoral system, a bloated military-industrial complex, etc.

What brings her hope? Phoenix Project, a group of Israeli and Palestinian youth developing an actionable Middle East Peace plan. The costly solidarity of activists putting their lives on the line for the homeless, for Palestinians, for immigrants. Nihon Hidankyo’s 2024 Nobel Peace Prize. Planting garlic.



Jeanne gives family Peacemaker Award to Jennifer Brunault

After a simple but tasty lunch, we held our annual business meeting and presented three 2024 Peacemaker Awards, to: Barbara and Jim Allaire, for their long-time peace and justice work at Sacred Heart/Our Lady collaborative in Newton; Pastor Lauren Holm, for 10 years of leading Greater Springfield Campaign Nonviolence; and the Brunaults (Jennifer, James, and Josiah), an ecumenical, interracial Holyoke family who work for peace in their Pax Christi, Catholic Worker, disabilities advocacy, and raising their child, who schools them in his intuitive application of gospel nonviolence as well!



Maria, Edgar, Jeanelle, Frida

The intergenerational afternoon panel of Maria Udalova (high school nuclear disarmament and climate activist), Jeanelle Wheeler (post-college, she grew up in the local peace community and is an activist in education, climate justice, and immigrant/refugee needs), and Edgar Hayes (middle-aged farmer, also an elder and lay pastor in the Hudson River Presbytery) addressed the questions of what drew them to peace work and what sustains them. They then dialogued with Frida. We hope the day’s joy, hope, and action followed us home. (Full version: <https://paxchristima.org/past-events/>)

Pax Christi MA Board of Directors 2024-2025

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

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS

Sr.Linda Bessom (Somerville); Ann Capoccia (Newton); Irene Desharnais (Jamaica Plain); Pat Ferrone (Needham); Kathy Hubert (Walpole); Mike Moran (Palmer/Newsletter Editor) Sr.Rita Raboin (Somerville); Linda Taylor (North Attleboro); Bill Toller (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 8th and June 14th.

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
Contact for meeting info

Boston (Citywide) P.C.

Sr. Rita Raboin, SNDdeN
Paulist Center, 5 Park St
Boston, MA
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
Our Lady of Victory
Centerville, MA 02632
Contact for meeting info

Central Mass P.C.

Brian and Samantha Ashmankas
52 Mason Street
Worcester, MA 01610
Brianashmankas86@gmail.com
Contact for more information

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

Metro West P.C.

Jan Leary
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
Mtgs 3rd Tuesday, 7:00 PM
Chapel of Reconciliation

Newton P.C.

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

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
Matt Spearing
978-774-1050 Ext 350
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
parferrone@gmail.com
Contact for meeting info

Western Mass P.C.

Jeanne Allen
10 Sutton Place
Easthampton, MA 01027
(413) 270-5880
jallen10sp@gmail.com
Mtgs 2nd Friday, 7:00 PM*

*(NOTE: Virtual meetings are
noted with an asterisk*)*

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 (135 Shearer Street, Palmer, MA 01069)

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