

Pax Christi USA

NATIONAL CATHOLIC PEACE MOVEMENT

Help Grow the Movement!

Greetings of peace. I have just returned from Berlin, where our sisters and brothers in Pax Christi Germany celebrated their 60th anniversary! It was a great gathering of peacemakers reaffirming their commitment to nonviolence in the face of expanding German military operations. NATO is currently seeking additional German troops for the war in Afghanistan; the conference at which I spoke addressed this while calling for an alternative approach to the so-called "war on terror." Like Pax Christi USA, Pax Christi Germany rejects militarizing the global response to 9-11 and terror, calling instead for increased efforts to address the root causes of desperation that lead to acts of terror.

There is a great deal going on these days as we in Pax Christi USA continue to challenge the expanding war in Iraq, oppose a military confrontation with Iran, call for ending the use of torture, seek justice for immigrants and people living in poverty here in the United States, and much more. In this election year when so many policy choices will be made, strong leadership is crucial on many levels. Enclosed is the 2008 Ballot for Pax Christi USA's National Council. Please review the candidate's self-descriptions and short statements and then prayerfully choose those you feel would best serve our movement. The deadline for returning the ballot is June 20, 2008.

Pax Christi USA's annual gathering this summer, *The War at Abroad, the War at Home*, will be

Thursday, July 10th in Philadelphia. A registration brochure is enclosed. As you make your plans, please plan to stay in Philadelphia to participate in the Pax Christi USA co-sponsored Convention on the Common Good which will take place immediately following our gathering from Friday July 11-13 in the same location. Registration for the Convention is separate from our gathering and can be done online at www.commongoodconvention.org or by calling 800-266-0866.

June is Torture Awareness Month; on page three, you will find ways to support survivors of torture and bring an end to this despicable policy. The *Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church* states unequivocally that torture is never justified under any circumstance. Please consider organizing an event, vigil, or action in June to ensure that torture is ended and that Catholics are educated on the Church's solid opposition to this heinous practice.

Pax Christi USA continues to grow in numbers and visibility. In addition to local groups and congregations, we have reached 20,000 individual members nationwide! We can be an even stronger voice in the Church and society if we grow even more. So please consider giving a gift membership (form on page four) to someone you know. Give the gift of peace, and in doing so, help Pax Christi USA grow its numbers and help bring the Gospel message of nonviolence to new hearts across our nation. *(Continued on pg. 4)*

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Finally, I ask you to please continue to give generously to Pax Christi USA. Election years are always financially difficult as so many folks engage in the political process and support candidates and campaigns directed at changing U.S. policies. That is important. At the same time, Pax Christi USA needs your ongoing support. So please consider making an extra gift, beyond your regular membership dues, to Pax Christi USA today. Simply fill out the enclosed Pursuit of Peace Fund slip and return it with your tax-deductible check today. You can also donate through our secure Web site. And, of course, you can save paper, postage, and our staff time by becoming a member of the Sustainers' Circle for Peace with Justice by signing up for an

automatic monthly donation of as little as \$10 each month charged to your credit card. Sustaining Members provide Pax Christi USA with a vitally important and regular source of support for our ongoing work.

Thank you for all that you do to support Pax Christi USA and bring the Gospel message of peace and nonviolence to our troubled communities. I hope to see you in Philadelphia this summer where we will build a platform for the common good and make a clear and prophetic statement on the challenges that face our nation in this important election year.

In peace,



Dave Robinson, Executive Director, Pax Christi USA



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PEACEMAKING:

Day by Day

"What is power? We see that power has always been used as a force of domination. It is the power of the strong over the weak; it is the kind of power one finds in factories and even in churches. But power is valid only when it is the power of service. That is when power acquires its proper dimensions."

- Adolfo Pérez Esquivel

* This quote and hundreds more are available in Pax Christi USA's *Peacemaking Day by Day*, Volume I. To order your copy today, visit our Web site, www.paxchristiusa.org, or contact our sales department for more information at 814-453-4955, ext. 231 or sales@paxchristiusa.org.

Give the Gift of Membership! Help Grow this Movement!

A great way to support the mission of Pax Christi USA is to give a gift membership to others! Not only will you spread the word about the outstanding work of the organization, you will help grow this national Catholic peace movement—at a time when it is desperately needed.

Use this form to give a PCUSA membership as a gift to a friend, a relative, a pastor, a colleague, etc.

Gift recipient's information:

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____
 State: _____ Zip: _____

Your information:

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____
 State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____

The regular membership fee for Pax Christi USA is \$35 a year, more if you are able or whatever you can afford. We rely entirely on the generosity of our members!

Please enclose a gift membership contribution to Pax Christi USA for

___\$35 ___\$50 ___\$100 ___\$500 ___ Other Check enclosed

MC/Visa _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Please fill out this form and mail or fax to the contact information in the left-hand box below.

Contact Information:

Pax Christi USA
 532 West Eighth Street
 Erie, PA 16502
 814-453-4955
info@paxchristiusa.org
www.paxchristiusa.org

SALES AND PUBLICATIONS
 Contact: Lori Swanson Nemenz
 Phone: 814-453-4955, ext. 231
 Fax: 814-452-4784
 Email: sales@paxchristiusa.org

LOCAL GROUPS
 Contact: Johnny Zokovitch
 Phone: 352-219-8419
 Email: johnnycusa@yahoo.com

Visit www.paxchristiusa.org for more educational and spiritual resources for peace.

**PAX CHRISTI
USA**

IRAQ WAR ANNIVERSARY ACTIONS FALL DURING HOLY WEEK

Pax Christi USA, Pax Christi regions, and local groups observed the fifth anniversary of the ongoing war and occupation in Iraq with a variety of actions and events. On March 7th, Pax Christi USA, along with Pax Christi Metro DC and other Catholic organizations, held a Catholic service and witness as part of the day-long Christian Peace Witness actions. Bishop Holley of the Archdiocese of Washington, DC, presided, with Joshua Casteel, a former soldier stationed at Abu Ghraib, and Anne Curtis, RSM, as speakers. PCUSA Bishop-President Gabino Zavala wrote a column calling for an end to the war that was published in Catholic newspapers across the United States. PCUSA also released "Toward a Just and Peaceful Solution in Iraq," a policy paper that has been circulated throughout the Catholic community and became the all-time most downloaded document on the PCUSA Web site. PCUSA regions and local groups, from Harrisburg, PA, to New York City and throughout Florida, observed the anniversary with events during Holy Week, including incorporating the Iraq War as part of Good Friday Way of the Cross services and witnesses.

PAX CHRISTI PARTICIPATES IN SIGNING CEREMONY WITH COALITION OF IMMOKALEE WORKERS

Pax Christi USA National Council President Judy Coode joined other religious leaders in publicly signing a petition on the steps of the U.S. Capitol calling on fast-food corporate giant Burger King to deal fairly with the farmworkers who pick the tomatoes used in their restaurants. The Southwest Florida-based Coalition of Immokalee Workers launched the petition to end modern-day slavery in the fields. Pax Christi USA is an endorser of the campaign and encourages local groups and individuals to sign the petition if they have not done so already by going to www.ciw-online.org.

PAX CHRISTI USA REGISTERS OBJECTION TO U.S. NUCLEAR STRATEGY

Pax Christi USA joined sixteen other national religious organizations in filing formal comments at the March 2008 Department of Energy hearings in Washington, D.C. Pax Christi USA stated its opposition to the Bush administration's \$150 billion plan to update the nation's nuclear arsenal, called "Complex Transformation" or "Bombplex"

by its opponents. Father Joe Nangle represented Pax Christi USA at the hearings and delivered a statement on our behalf. Additionally, Bud Ryan of Pax Christi New Mexico registered complaints about the project at DOE hearings in New Mexico.

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE NOMINEE SPEAKS IN SIOUX FALLS

Father John Dear, S.J., Pax Christi USA Ambassador of Peace and a recent nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize, was the featured speaker at the "Growing Peace" conference in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Dear spoke to participants at the conference, hosted by the Presentation Sisters' Social Justice Team, about confronting the culture of war in our country and about how the Pentagon is the symbol of death in the world. He encouraged participants to become personally involved, to join Pax Christi, and to practice tax resistance.

PC-TALLAHASSEE CONNECTS JESUS' DEATH TO CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Pax Christi Tallahassee members gathered on the steps of the Old Capitol in Florida, remembering Christ's last walk before his execution on what is now recognized as Good Friday. Each year, PC-Tallahassee observes Good Friday by walking the Stations of the Cross and making the connection between the execution of death row inmates and Jesus Christ. Sheila Meehan, a participant in this year's event, stated: "I'm hoping for other people who may have attended for the first time and for the people who are in politics who do have the opportunity to make changes in law that they'll see the connection that I saw perhaps for the first time today between an execution of Jesus and death penalty that we give to our citizens."

PAX CHRISTI ILLINOIS MEMBER RECOGNIZED FOR WORK ON BEHALF OF PEACE

Tom Cordaro, Pax Christi USA Ambassador of Peace, will be one of three individuals honored with the Pax Christi Award during the second annual Peace Day celebration on May 3 at St. Charles Borromeo Pastoral Center in Romeoville, IL. Tom is the director of Justice & Outreach Ministry at St. Margaret Mary Parish in Naperville and one of the founding members of the Pax Christi Anti-Racism Team. The Peace and Social Justice Ministry for the Diocese of Joliet is sponsoring this event.

June is Torture Awareness Month.

Pax Christi USA closely collaborates with several groups working to end torture and encourages participation in their initiatives for June:

Jesus, Our Tortured Brother Today



1. **Torture Abolition and Survivors' Support Coalition (TASSC):** Torture survivors from TASSC will hold their annual 24-hour vigil in front of the White House from 7 AM on Saturday, June 28th until 7 AM on Sunday, June 29th. Supporters are invited to come to Washington, DC, to spend an hour or more in vigil with them or to send messages of support. See the TASSC Web site (www.tassc.org) for more information and advocacy suggestions or email Demissie (demissie@tassc.org).

2. **National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT):** "Banners Across America" is a NRCAT project to raise the visibility of religious opposition to torture in communities across the country. Congregations are asked to display a banner outside their place of worship during June, Torture Awareness month. Banners can be ordered with one of two different slogans: "Torture is Wrong." or "Torture is a Moral Issue." They come in two sizes and cost between \$100 and \$175. In addition to serving as a public witness demonstrating the religious community's resolve to end torture, the hope is that the banners will provide an opportunity for members of local congregations to talk together about the shame of torture as government policy and about the role of religious people in speaking out on this issue. See the NRCAT Web site (www.nrcat.org) for more information and to order a banner for your parish.

* To order PCUSA's prayer card, "Jesus, Our Tortured Brother Today" by Sr. Dianna Ortiz of TASSC, please see the enclosed sales brochure, visit our Web site (www.paxchristiusa.org), or call 814-453-4955, ext. 231. The item number is 540-480; the cost is \$0.50 each; \$10/100; \$80/1000 (+ s/h).

Other Resources for Action in the the Upcoming Months:

Iraq

Pax Christi USA's Web site (www.paxchristiusa.org) features a number of prayer, study, and action resources on Iraq. In particular, we want to highlight "Winter Soldier," a project of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW). "Winter Soldier" involved three days of hearings in Washington, DC, in March with eyewitness accounts of soldiers on the tragedies they witnessed both in Iraq and Afghanistan. Powerfully moving, the testimonies can be seen on IVAW's Web site (www.ivaw.org). Consider placing an announcement in your church bulletin directing people to the Web site. Panels included Rules of Engagement; The Crisis in Veterans' Healthcare; Racism and War: Dehumanization of the Enemy; Corporate Pillaging and Military Contractors; and more. IVAW's Web site also features the new film *Body of War* and offers resources for veterans on health and other services.

Jubilee USA Conference

Jubilee USA Network, of which Pax Christi USA is a member, is holding its third annual training and action conference "A World Without Poverty: Visions of Justice and Jubilee" from June 20-22 in Columbus, OH. For more information, see www.jubileeusa.org.