

# Justpeace

## PAX CHRISTI

International Catholic Movement for Peace

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70 years on from the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and nuclear weapons are still with us. In this issue we look back at the deep regret of a US military Chaplain who was involved in the bombings and forward to concrete opportunities that could move the world away from the nuclear scourge. We also offer news of the most recent Catholic Church statements on nuclear weapons which should spur us to action to prevent a new generation of nuclear weapons here in the UK.

### A time of hope

At the international ICAN Campaigners Meeting in London in July, there was a sense of real, practical hope. How could this be so, in a time when most commentators point to increasing fear and regression on all fronts, from Ukraine to the USA?

Three different things come to mind as grounds for hope.

Firstly the people. Anti-nuclear weapons campaigners are famous for perseverance. They have to be, and just because of that, some of us are quite old. But the demographic profile of this movement is changing in the right direction, to reflect the real world where the most active people are young, and they are working with us. The young world is taking up our message.

And secondly, it is indeed the world. No longer do the campaigners in the nuclear weapons states have to struggle on alone. There is global awareness of a global problem. Civil society in the non-nuclear-weapons states is pushing governments to be actively involved, to have the courage to take on the inequitable technocratic powerbase of the nuclear nations and demand, in the name of humanity, that they honour their treaty obligations and lay down their weapons. To hear this message from representatives of such a diversity of nations was truly inspiring and really useful from a campaigning point of view.

Thirdly there is practical progress. A series of conferences, at Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna, have opened the problem to the world, and succeeded in changing the agenda from national security to humanitarian consequences. As everybody begins to understand the catastrophic consequences for humanity of even a limited nuclear conflict, it becomes totally unacceptable that some nations should retain their nuclear weapons.

So far, in effect, the nonproliferation treaty (NPT) has been implemented only by the non-nuclear states. Faced with this, and encouraged by very many civil society and national inputs (including the Holy See) at the Vienna Conference, the Austrian Government pledged, in a short, well-reasoned statement, to “follow the imperative of human security”, calling on “all states parties to the NPT to renew their commitment” and to “fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons”. And further “to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders in efforts to stigmatise, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons”

The dynamics of the NPT, as seen in its recently completed five yearly Review Conference, are radically changed. On one hand there is a kind of chaotic stagnation. No agreed statement emerged after four weeks of talking. On the other is the fact that no fewer than 112 nations have signed up to the Austrian pledge, renamed for obvious reasons the Humanitarian Pledge. We don't know how this is going to work out, but the cautiously drafted words quoted above are welcomed by most as commitment to development of a new treaty to ban nuclear weapons.

How could this succeed, in the face of the intransigence of the



Martin Birdseye at the Vienna Conference on Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons

nuclear nations, which has blocked progress on the existing draft Nuclear Weapons Convention for many years? We have the precedents of the chemical and biological weapons treaties and, perhaps more importantly, the development of the successful Anti-Personnel Mines and Cluster Munitions treaties. This experience shows that creation of a legal framework to ban the weapons will have an increasingly powerful effect, even on the nations that could not initially participate in negotiations.

How will it be done? The process has to be accessible to all and blockable by none. The initially participating nations, in fact the great majority, will find a way, empowered as they are by their globally interconnected civil society movements.

What can we do? The moral case against nuclear weapons, linked closely with the humanitarian case, is the most fundamental and also the key to permanent abolition. We have clear and recent Catholic teaching on this point. Support from the Holy See at the Vienna conference and at the NPT Review Conference was unequivocal. A first step would be to make sure that people know this.

We live in a nuclear weapons state, currently in the process of renewing its deterrent capability, so there may seem to be little prospect of the UK getting constructively involved at this stage. But you can ask your MP why not. We have a great deal to gain, politically and economically. You can tell him/her that you want the UK to sign the Humanitarian Pledge. Ask if they personally could endorse it, as an indication of their own positive attitude. Ask them when “our” part of the NPT (i.e. Article VI) will be implemented by real progress towards disarmament.

ICAN (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons) is a global coalition of organisations working for a treaty banning nuclear weapons. The ICAN website is a first source for anyone working for a treaty ban. Look there for the facts that you need. Look there, in the list of UK partner organizations (which includes Christian CND and Pax Christi UK), for where to get involved. Look there for new hope.

**Martin Birdseye is a Pax Christi member and represents Pax Christi in ICAN and on the No Trident Replacement Working Group. He has also created the Nuclear Morality Flowchart.**

## Reflection - I was there, I was wrong

*Fr George Zabelka was a Catholic chaplain in the US arms air force and was chaplain to those who dropped the nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In the years that followed he reflected deeply on his actions and became drawn to work for peace through nonviolent means. Fr Zabelka died in 1992. Below are extracts from a talk he gave to Pax Christi USA in 1985.*

Now, brothers and sisters, on the anniversary of this terrible atrocity carried out by Christians, I must be the first to say that I made a terrible mistake. I was had by the father of lies. I participated in the big ecumenical lie of the Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox churches. I wore the uniform. I was part of the system. When I said Mass over there I put on those beautiful vestments over my uniform. (When Father Dave Becker left the Trident submarine base in 1982 and resigned as Catholic chaplain there, he said, "Every time I went to Mass in my uniform and put the vestments on over my uniform, I couldn't help but think of the words of Christ applying to me: Beware of wolves in sheep's clothing.")

As an Air Force chaplain I painted a machine gun in the loving hands of the nonviolent Jesus, and then handed this perverse picture to the world as truth. I sang "Praise the Lord" and passed the ammunition. As Catholic chaplain for the 509th Composite Group, I was the final channel that communicated this fraudulent image of Christ to the crews of the Enola Gay and the Boxcar.

All I can say today is that I was wrong. Christ would not be the instrument to unleash such horror on his people. Therefore no follower of Christ can legitimately unleash the horror of war on God's people. Excuses and self-justifying explanations are without merit. All I can say is: I was wrong! But, if this is all I can say, this I must do, feeble as it is. For to do otherwise would be to bypass the first and absolutely essential step in the process of repentance and reconciliation: admission of error, admission of guilt.

I asked forgiveness from the Hibakushas (the Japanese survivors of the atomic bombings) in Japan last year. I fell on my face there at the peace shrine after offering flowers, and I prayed for forgiveness—for myself, for my country, for my church... Each one of us becomes responsible for the crime of war by cooperating in its preparation and in its execution. This includes the military. This includes the making of weapons. And it includes paying for the weapons.



Fr George Zabelka

As a Catholic chaplain I watched as the Boxcar, piloted by a good Irish Catholic pilot, dropped the bomb on Urakami Cathedral in Nagasaki, the center of Catholicism in Japan. I knew that St. Francis Xavier, centuries before, had brought the Catholic faith to Japan. I knew that schools, churches, and religious orders were annihilated. And yet I said nothing.

*This article is excerpted from a speech George Zabelka gave at a Pax Christi USA conference in August 1985 and is reprinted from July 2011 issue of Plough.com. Two 15-minute films with interviews with Fr Zabelka and others who were involved in the bombings of Hiroshima.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xSbdgBlmwc> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywVJ6nnwEvl>

### Useful websites and resources

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: [www.cnduk.org/home](http://www.cnduk.org/home)

Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: [ccnd.gn.apc.org/](http://ccnd.gn.apc.org/)

International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons: [www.icanw.org/unitedkingdom/](http://www.icanw.org/unitedkingdom/)

Nuclear Education Trust : [www.nucleareducationtrust.org](http://www.nucleareducationtrust.org)

Nuclear Morality Project: [www.nuclearmorality.com](http://www.nuclearmorality.com)

Nuclear Information Service: [www.nuclearinfo.org/](http://www.nuclearinfo.org/)

## Recent church statements

*"Nuclear deterrence and the threat of mutually assured destruction cannot be the basis for an ethics of fraternity and peaceful coexistence among peoples and states..."* Message from Pope Francis to the Vienna Conference on Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, December 2014.

*"If it is unthinkable to imagine a world where nuclear weapons are available to all, it is reasonable to imagine, and to work collectively for, a world where nobody has them."* Statement from Archbishop Bernardito Auza, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, to NPT meeting, April 2015.

*"We must move beyond the division of our world into*

*nuclear and non-nuclear weapons states and ensure that all states make good their commitment to negotiations on the enforceable elimination of nuclear weapons. An End to Nuclear Weapons", statement supported by twenty seven interfaith-leaders, including Archbishop Malcolm McMahon, our President. A version of this was published in The Times in March 2015*

You can find the full texts of these statements, and more about Pax Christi's work on nuclear issues here at: <http://paxchristi.org.uk/campaigns/security-disarmament/nuclear/>

## The Nuclear Education Trust (NET)

In August 2005, NET a UK charity was set up to advance understanding of arms control and disarmament, defence and security, with an emphasis on nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, through education and research. NET funds CND's Peace Education work, which aims to empower young people with knowledge on peace and nuclear issues, supporting independent thinking and encouraging debate.

Since 2006 CND Peace Education has talked to over 20,000 students and is featured in the top ten of downloads from the Times Education Supplement having been downloaded 600,000 times. There are four education packs available free of charge.

In 2012 the Trustees decided to commission research work and the following reports have been published:

- British military attitudes to nuclear weapons and disarmament
- UK defence needs and international nuclear disarmament responsibilities : An inquiry
- Trident alternatives review and the future of Barrow

10 years on NET has done commendable work with the limited financial resource available. The website is given above. I have been a NET Trustee for the last three years and can't thank my fortune for the opportunity of learning and working with a very dedicated and committed group of people outside of Pax Christi!

*Fausta Valentine*

## Pax Christi International

Holly Ball from our Executive Committee writes: "Thanks to those members who have donated to the PCI 70th Anniversary appeal. Money raised will be used to support the outcomes of the World Assembly over the next five years. We've raised £1,736 so far, and would like to raise £4,000 by the end of this anniversary year. Thank you!"

The World Assembly in Bethlehem was a powerful experience for the 160 people from around the world who took part. The UK delegation included Pat Gaffney, Chris Cole and Holly Ball on behalf of the Executive Committee. Ellen Teague, Sue Scott and Heather Kiernan participated as members of Pax Christi with Ann Farr, a member of the International Board. Meetings were alive with deeply informed discussion and inputs from members and all joined in exposure visits to refugee camps, to the Jordan Valley, Hebron and East Jerusalem. Daily reports were posted by Ellen Teague on the Independent Catholic News website.

One purpose of meeting in Bethlehem was to offer support and solidarity to our partners in the region. We met with both Palestinian and Israeli peace and human rights groups in addition to the exposure visits. The Assembly issued a statement on Palestine which includes the following points:

- Pax Christi International supports Palestinians in their nonviolent struggle to end occupation and Israelis who stand for human rights and international law, including as applied to Palestinians.
- With the new Israeli government's refusal to turn 22% of the land of the former Palestine Mandate into the new state of Palestine, the UN must implement UNSC Resolution 242, by which Israel is required to withdraw from the territories occupied since 1967.
- Since the Israeli government continues to allow the building of new settlements and the enlargement of existing settlements, both of which are violations of international humanitarian law, all collaboration with occupation must end.



*Pax Christi vigil in Manger Square to commemorate Nakba Day*

- Pax Christi International encourages Palestinian and Israeli human rights and peace organizations to continue their work for a just peace in the Middle East based on human rights and international law and proclaims its solidarity with these groups... Without hope and vision and solidarity neither the oppressed nor the oppressor can find a way out of violence, war and a culture of death. To stand for life is Pax Christi's international responsibility.

All reports can be found here: <http://paxchristi.org.uk/2015/05/17/news-of-our-world-assembly-in-bethlehem-palestine/>

## Diary

### 3-17 August London

The Pax Christi Icon and display will be in St Patrick's Chapel, Westminster Cathedral.

### 6 & 9 August (Thurs & Sun) London

Join Pax Christi for the annual vigil outside Westminster Cathedral: 10-5pm on Hiroshima Day and 1.30-5pm on Nagasaki Day

### 6 & 9 August (Thurs & Sun) Liverpool

Pax Christi Liverpool will hold a stall and Pax Christi display at Liverpool Met Cathedral

### 6 August (Thurs) London

Christian CND walk starting at 8am from Whitehall Gardens (where a group will be holding a vigil and fast). The walk will go via Westminster Abbey to the Pax Christi cathedral vigil, to the Japanese Embassy, then CND's Tavistock Square ceremony at 12 noon, finally to an interfaith service at Friends House, Euston Road at 2.30pm. [www.ccnd.gn.apc.org/events](http://www.ccnd.gn.apc.org/events)

### 8 August (Sat) London

Guided walk along the Central London Peace Trail with Bruce Kent and Valerie Flessati. Meet by Gandhi's statue in Tavistock Square WC1 at 10.30am. email [info@abolishwar.org.uk](mailto:info@abolishwar.org.uk) if you'd like to take part.

### 9 August (Sun) London

Service in memory of Franz Jägerstätter. 6.30pm Sacred Heart Chapel, Horseferry Road, SW1P 2EF. Speaker Chris Gabbett, Principal of Trinity School, Leamington Spa. Followed by interfaith walk to the Buddhist Peace Pagoda at Battersea Park.

### 1 September (Tues) London

Vigil in the series 'Pray and Fast for the Climate'. Muslim Welfare House, Seven Sisters Rd, N4

### 19 Sept (Sat) Newcastle

'Wall will Fall. God has broken down the dividing walls.' 12-4pm at St Thomas' Church, Haymarket. Workshops, market place, worship 3-4pm, film 'Open Bethlehem', refreshments. Enquiries: [pjhl13@gmail.com](mailto:pjhl13@gmail.com)

### 20 September (Sun) London

Children's Mystery Walk along the London peace trail. 12-5pm. Children get a puzzle book and a passport to stamp at the different sites along the way. Most suitable for ages 5-11. Download flyer with further information: [www.abolishwar.org.uk](http://www.abolishwar.org.uk)

### 21 Sept (Mon) Bexhill

Peace Vigil from 12 noon -1pm Bexhill beach, opposite the Clock Tower, West Parade. Quiet reflection, interfaith prayers and songs to mark UN International Peace Day.

### 26 Sept (Sat) London

Pax Christi day conference on 'Women and peacemaking - personal and political: finding energy today, following the women of 1915'. 10.30-5pm at Bloomsbury Baptist Church, 235 Shaftesbury Avenue, WC2H 8EP. Speakers and discussion on Peacemaking and... Global Solidarity / Politics / Personal Life / Militarism. Co-sponsored by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Details on Pax Christi website.

### 26 Sept (Sat) Leeds

Half-day conference about Palestine 10.30-1.30pm Oxford Place Centre, Oxford Place. Organised by Leeds Pax Christi and the Justice and Peace Commission. Book a place: [jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk](mailto:jandp@dioceseofleeds.org.uk)

## News from the office

**At our AGM** in June we are delighted to affirm Joe Burns from Leeds as our new Treasurer. Joe has a 40-year involvement in J&P work and is currently undertaking some work for J&P in Leeds Diocese. He has a background in business analysis and project management so brings lots of skills to the Executive Committee.

Three women received the Neve Shalom - Wahat al Salam Peace Medal from our President, Archbishop Malcolm McMahon at our AGM. Anna Kobayashi who has campaigned for many years against the arms trade and nuclear weapons and is an active member of CCND, Trident Ploughshares, the Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp and supporter of Catholic Worker groups. Sue Scott, a founding member of the Midlands branch of the Neve Shalom - Wahat al Salam support group and a keen supporter of the Palestinian cause as well as the beatification of Franz Jägerstätter. Sheila Gallagher, founder of the North London J&P network in the early 80s and more recently founder of the Chipping Barnet Food Bank. Sheila has also been a trustee of the Christian Peace Education Fund for more than 10 years.

Fr Ziad Hillal was our guest speaker spoke of the work of JRS in Aleppo, Homs and Damascus where work is undertaken with Jesuits, women religious and 300-refugee-volunteers to provide food, medicine and pastoral and social support to the thousands of displaced people. If you would like a CD of his talk contact the office and read more here:

<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=27619>

**Peace Education news.** The next Peace Education Network skills share workshop, Fly Kites not Drones, will be in London on 15 October. Full details will be available in due course at [www.peace-education.org.uk](http://www.peace-education.org.uk).

**Fr Kevin Mortimer RIP.** It is a rare priest at whose requiem Pax Christi get special mention! Fr (Canon) Kevin Mortimer who died in May was such a rare person! A real Bristolian Fr Kevin had been encouraged to follow his priestly vocation by Fr Bruce Kent when working for the Post Office in London in the 1960s.

My life was changed when in 1970 he responded to a request from the then Monsignor Kent to bring some 'young people' to the Pax Christi International Congress in November 1970. One of my abiding memories of that wonderful introduction to Pax Christi was Fr Kevin singing West Country songs in the chaplaincy bar.

During more than 40 years of ministry Fr Kevin served in most parts of the Clifton Diocese, including as the Director of Religious Education. As a walking priest, he often took young people on walking visits to Corrymeela and Rostrevor in Northern Ireland. When we hosted the International Route in 1990 he was a most encouraging source of help and advice.

In conclusion I quote from Mgr Gabriel Leyden's homily 'No one heard an unkind word from Kevin. He was a prayerful priest and his closeness to the Lord helped him accept his Motor Neurone Disease.... May Kevin's gentle soul rest in peace.' *Mark James*



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<http://www.twitter.com/PaxChristiYouth>

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## Pax Christi – Our Values

Pax Christi members live by the biblically inspired values of **Peace, Reconciliation, Nonviolence.**

These values are supported by the witness of peacemakers down the ages and the experience of the Pax Christi community.

Pax Christi is rooted in Catholic Christianity but is open to all who are in sympathy with its values and work.

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