

Statement from Pax Christi International in support of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in the United States

Members may be following the case of the Women Religious in the US. On 12 June, leaders met with Cardinal William Levada, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), and Archbishop Peter Sartain. They state that this was an open meeting where they were able to express their concerns. The Conference will meet in August to determine its course of action in response to the CDF assessment.

The Holy See's recent disciplinary action against the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) has greatly saddened members of Pax Christi International around the world. Women religious in the United States have been deeply committed to promoting the peace of Christ. They are at the heart of our movement, proclaiming with clarity and love the possibility of a world without war, a future beyond dehumanising violence.

The Sisters' ministries to people on the margins of our world is often lived out in situations of immense violence. We have seen their compassion in local neighbourhoods across the United States; in war-torn communities of South Sudan, El Salvador, Cambodia and beyond; in situations of repression and horrific human rights violations. We have seen them respond with wisdom and courage to trafficked women and children; to domestic violence; to rape as a weapon of war; to torture and abuse in prisons on every continent; to people uprooted by war or poverty.

US women religious are making peace inside and outside centres of power. Locally, nationally and internationally, they are tireless advocates for the dignity of human life and the protection of the whole earth community. Their commitment to

accompany those who have been discarded and forgotten; to listen with care to their stories; to act with compassion; and to address the roots of injustice and violence in the light of the Gospel make the Sisters immensely credible in the public arena among people of faith and good will. Network, founded by Catholic Sisters 40 years ago, gives daily witness to that credibility. LCWR gives it careful, collective expression.

Pax Christi International has also been enriched by the deep spirituality and wise theological insights of US women religious. These Sisters and other Catholic women, with excellent theological training and rich experience in grass-roots communities dealing with terrible violence, are helping to articulate a new theology of Catholic peace-building.

To this great Gospel witness of US women religious, we believe that LCWR has made a faithful and extremely valuable contribution. Catholic women everywhere are grateful to these mature Catholic women leaders. Pax Christi International women and men, lay people, religious, priests and bishops around the world hold them in the highest regard. We believe that their experience of faithful discipleship has much to offer the institutional Catholic Church in terms of building right relationships, inclusive process, respectful dialogue, theological reflection and the ability to honour the gift of diversity.

We pray that, rather than scrutiny, humiliation and reprimand, the Holy See will give the LCWR and women's religious communities in the United States the respect and gratitude they so richly deserve. For this, Pax Christi International members around the world will be praying.

Office news

New Exec members. We welcome Paul McGowan and Emma Atherton on to the Committee following their election at the 2012 AGM. Read more about the AGM on our News Reports page of the website.

Pax Christi ICON of Peace has begun its 100 days for Peace Olympic journey around London. The ICON has become a most wonderful resource, with an ability to communicate a powerful message of peace and reconciliation. Forming a 'ring

of prayer for peace' during the Olympics, the ICON will be present in eighteen parishes and two Cathedrals. Read more on the Olympic Peace Legacy section part of our Events page on the website.

Help with Hiroshima and Nagasaki vigils. Please contact the office if you are able to offer an hour or two on either 6th or 9th August to help look after the stall, hand out leaflets, speak with passers-by. Call 020 8203 4884.

Keep peace alive. Remember Pax Christi when making or updating your will

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Tel: 020 8203 4884 email: info@paxchristi.org.uk www.paxchristi.org.uk

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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Justpeace

PAX CHRISTI

International Catholic Movement for Peace

Justpeace No 289 July-August 2012

ISSN0287-7647

Remembering Hiroshima and beyond...

We are approaching the anniversaries of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Much is in place to spur on the process of nuclear abolition: solidarity actions grow between countries that have been victims of nuclear war and for those who still possess nuclear weapons treaties and conventions are in place, ready to be used. Furthermore, links are made ever more clear about the opportunity costs of nuclear weapons and what might be done with those resources in terms of the eradication of poverty and care of the environment. As the statement by Mgr. Chullikatt quoted overleaf shows, there is clear teaching from our own Church on the matter. At the same time concerns about nuclear proliferation are real, not least with our own Trident programme, as a recent Government spending decision reveals. Some of this is dealt with in Martin Birdseye's article.

Every few weeks we hear talk of 'pre-emptive' war against Iran to prevent its development of nuclear weapons. This is terrifying and must be challenged as illegal and immoral, as would be Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons. We share some responses that Pax Christi has been making to this development. Please use the material in this Justpeace to raise awareness in your own church and with your local MP, to make the connection between what happened in Japan



Ann Farr from Pax Christi UK and Sr Filo Hirota, International Executive member, at peace memorial in Buhl, Germany.

67 years ago and what we are trying to prevent ever happening again. What we need is the right political will and prophetic leadership.

Pax Christi and Nuclear Disarmament – Next steps to abolition

Do not doubt that one day we will abolish nuclear weapons. Goodness and common sense exert a continuous pressure which in the end must prevail over fear and closed minds. Nor should we be too discouraged by the Trident renewal project. It is a vast and powerful enterprise, already underway, but is patently foolish and looking increasingly so to many people, including some of the military. On a recent visit to the US Embassy (with Christian CND on the Embassies Walk) we heard the opinion that the UK might be the next to disarm unilaterally, just for practical economic and political reasons.

But for this to happen, and to ensure that it happens for the right and therefore lasting reasons, we have to be there at every stage with our unique contribution to the debate. Currently I attend two meetings on behalf of Pax Christi: the No Trident Replacement Core Group (NTR), and ICAN UK.

NTR is a liaison committee of the many organisations opposed to renewal of the UK nuclear deterrent. ICAN is the International Campaign for Abolition of Nuclear Weapons. As such it has a highly focused objective and is genuinely international. ICAN also has a highly focused campaign strategy, promoting the International Convention on Nuclear Weapons. This is a draft UN treaty, similar to those already existing for chemical and biological weapons, anti-personnel mines and so on.

ICAN identifies four strong cases against nuclear weapons: humanitarian, security, environmental, and economic. We welcome the increasing emphasis on the humanitarian case, evident at the recent Vienna meetings* and also to be the

subject of a forthcoming conference in Oslo. In some respects the humanitarian case covers the same ground as the moral case, but this is obviously not the whole story. The moral case is based on intrinsic autonomous values which in themselves could make nuclear weapons completely unacceptable.

The UK might be the first to disarm, but if it is just for economic or even sound military reasons, what then? Where then is the potential for us to put some moral pressure on the rest of the world? The very idea of seeking security through genocidal weapons has to be rejected by all of humanity. This can be seen as a necessary stage in social evolution. In much the same way as we rejected slavery as being morally abhorrent, so that collectively we can never go back to it, we will also abolish nuclear weapons.

And what of the prophetic role of our Church? The right message is there, consistently now, but the delivery appears reticent, effectively muted or lost in other priorities. Is it then the sole responsibility of Pax Christi to deliver this message? Of course not, but I think we do need to refine our approach. We have to devise policy and strategy which will enable us to mobilise many more people and all the moral resources that should be available to oppose nuclear weapons.

I hope we can have the most useful and helpful involvement with ICAN, NTR and the many other groups and organisations that are with us on this issue.

Martin Birdseye

[*NPT Prepcom and ICAN fringe meetings]

Averting war with Iran – from Pax Christi UK

We produced this in February and used it as the basis of letters to David Cameron and William Hague. In a response from the Counter-Proliferation Department we hear that the UK 'takes its obligations to the NPT seriously... one of our submarines now carries no more than 40 warheads'! At the time of writing talks are taking place in Moscow between Iran and China, France, Germany, Russia, the US and the UK. A conference on a WMD-Free Middle East is scheduled to take place in December and is being co-sponsored by our own Government.

We must face the unresolved issue of Iran's civilian nuclear programme, to which it is entitled, and the fears that this will develop into a nuclear weapons programme, which would violate the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Iran has not, unlike North Korea, withdrawn from this Treaty. But this is not an issue to be judged on its own. Signatories to that Treaty, including Britain, promised to eliminate their own nuclear weapons. Further, in 1996 the International Court of Justice ruled that there is an obligation on nuclear weapon states to negotiate the abolition of nuclear weapons and to bring such negotiations to a successful conclusion.

In solidarity with the people of Iran and all peoples potentially threatened by nuclear weapons through accident, misunderstanding or deliberate use, we suggest the following as a way forward.

That the British government lead through example by:

- ceasing its preparation of a new generation of nuclear weapons. Far from negotiating elimination of these weapons Britain is planning to build yet another generation of nuclear weapons to follow Trident, at a cost of billions of pounds which would be far better spent on the real needs of our people.
- showing the transparency it seeks in Iran by allowing international inspections of our own nuclear plants and facilities.
- lifting sanctions on Iran when we see signs of progress.
- employing every diplomatic means both nationally and through the EU and the UN to make the possession of nuclear weapons by any state illegal.

- calling on Israel officially to admit having a nuclear arsenal, the existence of which is beyond any doubt.
- working to demilitarise the region through a sustained programme of conventional and nuclear disarmament and in particular to create a Nuclear Weapons Free Middle East. This is to be discussed at the forthcoming UN Middle East Nuclear Free Zone conference which all countries should support. Such a Zone will mean that nuclear-armed ships from other states do not patrol in the Middle East area.
- supporting efforts to establish common regional structures that ensure the security needs of all states to build a common, sustainable security.

We affirm the words of Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations speaking in 2011. *"Proliferation is a real and serious challenge. However, non-proliferation efforts will only be effective if they are universal. The nuclear-weapon states must abide by their obligations to negotiate the total elimination of their own arsenals if they are to have any authenticity in holding the non-nuclear states to their commitments not to pursue nuclear weapons..."*

Extracts from the Pax Christi International statement:

...NPT obligations regarding nuclear disarmament by nuclear weapons states must... be fulfilled in return for compliance with non-proliferation obligations. Every effort must be made to bring Israel, India and Pakistan into the NPT or into other discussions about nuclear disarmament, including negotiating a nuclear weapons convention. Pax Christi International strongly supports the creation of a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Middle East... Pax Christi International urges religious leaders, including Catholic religious leaders around the world, to reject resoundingly the possibility of military action in response to Iran's nuclear programme and to make clear our collective and urgent responsibility to rid the world of nuclear weapons, which are at the root of the current crisis.

Resources

Ethics of Nuclear Deterrence – new facility at www.nuclearmorality.com

Martin Birdseye reports a significant step forward with the Nuclear Morality Flowchart project. The decision flowchart, to enable people to resolve for themselves the ethics of nuclear deterrence, is now available as an interactive on-line facility. It is now possible for anyone to go to the project website, work through the problem on-screen and then log their solution, along with comments, if they so wish. The flowchart is thus available to the whole

world – we hope to build a global scorecard of considered opinion.

Updates on Pax Christi responses to Iran and on other nuclear-related issues will be posted on the Security and Disarmament page of our website www.paxchristi.org.uk

Weekly articles on security and disarmament produced by Professor Paul Rogers from the department of Peace Studies at Bradford University on the Open Democracy website. www.opendemocracy.net/paul-rogers

Useful facts and figures and good film-clips can be found on the International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons site icanw.org.uk



Speaking tour with Fr John Dear, SJ. The cost of peace – violence of the nonviolent Jesus



A Jesuit priest, peacemaker, retreat leader, and author, John travels the world teaching the active nonviolent message of Jesus as epitomised in the lives of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr, and Dorothy Day.

He served for years as the director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the largest interfaith peace organisation in the US. John has travelled the war zones of the world, been arrested some 75 times for peace, led Nobel Peace prize winners to Iraq, given thousands of lectures on peace across the US. In 2007 he was Pax Christi's guest in the UK and

speaker at the National Justice & Peace Conference. John writes a weekly online column for the *National Catholic Reporter* at www.ncronline.org

Speaking Schedule

- Friday 24th August - Monday 27th August Greenbelt Festival, Cheltenham
- Monday 3rd September – 7.00pm St Chad's Cathedral, Grimshaw Room, Birmingham B4 6EU
- Tuesday 4th September – 7.00pm St John's, Standishgate, Wigan WN1 1NX
- Wednesday 5th September – 7.00pm Temple Hall, St John's, York YO31 7EX
- Thursday 6th September – 7.00pm St Joseph's Church, Sunderland SR4 6HP
- Friday 7th September – 7.00pm St Benedict's, Garforth, Leeds LS25 1PXL
- Monday 10th September – 7.00pm London Catholic Worker, Mattison Road, London N4 1BG

The tour is supported by Myddelton Grange, London Catholic Worker, Pax Christi UK and National Justice and Peace. For more information go to www.myddeltongrange.org.uk

Diary

6 & 9 August (Mon & Thurs) London
Annual Pax Christi vigils for anniversaries of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Piazza, Westminster Cathedral. From 10.00am-5.00pm each day. If you would like to help out please contact the office.

6 August (Mon) Coventry
6.00pm service in Chapel of Unity, Coventry Cathedral. Reflections, music and readings. All welcome.

6 August (Mon) 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 1.30pm (following the annual 12 noon Hiroshima Day ceremony in the square). The trail goes down to Trafalgar Square, Whitehall and Westminster, and ends at the Imperial War Museum. Drop out before the end if you need to.

9 August (Thurs) London
Annual memorial service to mark the execution of Franz Jägerstätter in the Crypt Chapel, Westminster Cathedral, at 6.30pm. Followed at about 7.45pm by the peace walk to Battersea Park Peace Pagoda for the floating lantern ceremony.

18 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. (See 6 August above.)

24-27 August (Fri-Mon) Cheltenham Racecourse
Greenbelt Christian festival of talks, music, worship and lots more, with speakers this year including John Dear SJ, Mary Grey, John Bell, Giles Fraser, Ciaran O'Reilly and Ben Griffin of Veterans for Peace, Canon David Porter and lots more. Pax Christi will have a presence at the Festival. Bookings and more information here www.greenbelt.org.uk

23 September (Sun) London
Children's Mystery Walk along the London peace trail – with puzzle books and clues. Best for 6-11 age group. Starts at Friends House, Euston Rd, NW1 at 11.00am. Details: Movement for the Abolition of War 020 3397 3019, info@abolishwar.org.uk

29 September (Sat) Herts
Untold Stories from Israel-Palestine: a call to action and peace. Day led by Pat Gaffney, 11.00am-3.30pm at Niland Conference Centre, Rosary Priory, Bushey Heath. £10 donation. Email: bookings-finance@nilandcentre.co.uk Tel: 020 8950 4000

1-8 October (Mon-Mon) Lebanon
A visit to Lebanon – encounters with faiths, history and the realities of today. Led by Revd Andrew Ashdown, Wider Horizons in association with Christians Aware. www.wider-horizons.org Email: andrewashdown@talktalk.net

3 November (Sat) Gateshead
Peace and Justice in the Holy Land. Share the lived experience of a Palestinian Christian and an Israeli human rights worker. Conference 9.30am-3.45pm at St Joseph's Parish Centre, NE8 1LX, next to Gateshead bus and metro interchange. Initiated by North East Ecumenical Accompaniers; co-sponsored by Pax Christi and other organisations; attended by church leaders. Bring packed lunch. £6 fee/£3 concessions. Details: jsadler@christian-aid.org or ahanlon@cafod.org.uk

Northern Dioceses J&P visit to the Holy Land 11-18 March 2013
Leeds and Hexham & Newcastle J&P Commissions are planning a pilgrimage which will be organised by Palestine Pilgrimage, offering an insight into daily life in Palestine with visits to the Aida Refugee Camp, Hebron, Nablus, Bethlehem, Jerusalem and more. Airfare from Manchester airport and half-board accommodation in Bethlehem and excursions cost approx £1,200. There are limited places so early booking is recommended. For information and booking forms contact: Shelagh Fawcett, Leeds Diocesan J&P Commission, Hlnsley Hall, 62 Headingley Lane, Leeds LS6 2BX. Email: shelagh@leedsjp.org.uk

If you want to organise a local event, the Pax Christi Peace Planner <http://www.paxchristi.org.uk/map.html> can suggest significant dates to choose and what focus to give it.