Pax Christi

Peace Sunday

14 January 2018

‘Migrants and Refugees - seekers of peace’

Pope Francis - World Peace Message 2018

Promoted by Pax Christi with the support of the International Affairs Department, Catholic Bishops’ Conference, England and Wales
Ideas to help the celebration of World Peace Day in your parish

Before Peace Sunday

If you have a Pax Christi parish contact or Justice and Peace group in the parish, enlist them in helping to prepare for the day. Invite them, and those who prepare liturgy/children’s programmes, to use the materials in the booklet. These resources can help you prepare a Mass, vigil, or holy hour for peace.

The week before Peace Sunday (Sunday 7 January) put a notice in your parish newsletter/website to remind people of the day and theme. Make a link to the Pax Christi Peace Sunday webpage.

Arrange for the Nonviolent Jesus prayer card to be given out on Peace Sunday.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is celebrated between 18-25 January and the theme for 2018 is That All May be Free. This is an ideal theme to link with Peace Sunday and materials for the Week can be found here: https://ctbi.org.uk/resources-for-week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2018/

Peace Sunday could be the beginning of a year of reflection and action for peace. Ideas in this booklet and other resources from Pax Christi can support your own plans and initiatives.

Your help is essential to us. Please consider taking a collection to support the work of Pax Christi

All written materials may be reproduced with acknowledgement. They are also available on the Peace Sunday page of our website www.paxchristi.org.uk.
© Fr Rob Esdaile for liturgy and scripture reflections.

Timeline for 2018

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The 51st World Day for Peace, with the title, Migrants and Refugees - Seekers of Peace, will be observed in England and Wales on 14 January, 2018, the 2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time (Year B). The readings for the Sunday Eucharist are 1 Samuel 3.3-10,19; Psalm Ps 40 (39).2, 4, 7-10; 1 Cor 6.13-15, 17-20; Jn 1.35-42.
Introduction to the Liturgy

The Bishops of England and Wales invite us to make today a day of prayer for world peace, using the theme proposed by Pope Francis: *Migrants and Refugees - Seekers of Peace*. Sadly, we are so used to images of those driven from their homelands by warfare or famine that we risk being desensitised both to their pain and to their aspirations. Yet these are our brothers and sisters: they seek what we all seek - food and shelter, a safe home and hope for the future. So at the beginning of our Eucharist today let us ask Christ for the grace to recognise him in the refugee and the stranger and to remove the barriers in our hearts which make us view others as a threat and a danger, rather than as fellow seekers after peace.

Lord Jesus, you were cast out and rejected so that we might be included. Lord have mercy.

Christ Jesus, friend of the sinner and the outcast. Christ have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you call us to be seekers of the peace of your Father’s Kingdom. Lord, have mercy.

Introduction to the Readings

First Reading *(1 Samuel 3.3-10, 19)*

Samuel, the hero of our first reading, is a ‘nothing’. Given over to the Temple by his own mother as a thank-offering, he is gradually being trained up by the old priest, Eli, as a servant in the sanctuary in Shiloh. Yet God speaks to him, the least and the last. God calls him by name and awakens a sense of his calling: ‘Speak, Lord, your servant is listening’. If we will but listen, God will do the same to us. We are the Prophets of God’s Kingdom, in which all belong as brothers and sisters.

Second Reading *(1 Cor 6.13-15, 17-20)*

It’s easy in our culture simply to switch off when we hear St Paul denouncing sexual impropriety in Corinth. But then we would miss the reason why he demands such reverence for our bodies: each one of us is the Temple of the Holy Spirit; and the whole of our being must be put at the service of the Gospel.

Gospel *(Jn 1.35-42)*

‘What do you want?’ asks Jesus. The two disciples clearly want to belong; want to have something to believe in, someone to place their trust in. ‘Where do you live?’ Jesus’ invitation to us is precisely the invitation to dwell in his house - and to open the doors of that house so that others, including migrants and refugees, may also belong.

Homily Notes - First Reflection

The story of Samuel is a beautiful tale of awakening and the whole process of growing up. If you know the wider story then you will remember how this little child was so longed for by his mother, Hanna, the answer to so many years of waiting for a child. Given that yearning, it is almost inconceivable to us that Hanna then presented that same son, in early childhood, to the Temple, and yet that is what she did. We meet the young boy there in our first reading. He sleeps in the sanctuary but he does not yet know the Lord or recognise God’s voice. And hence his clumsy childish efforts to be helpful by repeatedly waking up the old priest, Eli, (‘Here I am, since you called me!’) until the Elder realises what is going on and teaches Samuel what to say: ‘Speak, Lord, your servant is listening’.

A pretty little story meaning nothing? Not in my view. I think it offers us a most profound reflection on our humanity. Despite his odd upbringing, Samuel has this one great gift: he knows in the core of his being that he was longed for; and therefore he knows that he is lovable, before any adventures in loving come his way. Leaving home, even in childhood, is not the trauma that we might expect, because he is already at home with himself.

We might stop there. Yes, a nice image of human development, which might give us each some food for thought sometime. Do I have that profound gift of knowing that I was always wanted? Or am I scarred by being told I was ‘a mistake’? Did others communicate to me that I brought joy, or did I learn too early on that I was a burden? And have I discovered along the way how to be free, willing and generous in helping others - or have I stayed needy, cold, closed or defensive? Have there been ‘Elis’ on my road, wise men and women who have shown me how to live well and how to choose? Whatever my story so far, have I now found my voice to speak with God?

Yes, we could stop there, though our account of faith might begin to look like a therapy session (sometimes a temptation for spirituality in our self-absorbed day and age). But maybe Samuel’s story is actually more of a challenge to ourselves than we first realise. Samuel becomes a prophet because he learns to hear and trust God’s calling of himself. First he learns to move beyond his own impulses and desires in a life of willing service. ‘Here I am since you called me’. But then he discovers something more: deep openness to the One who is love, justice, mercy and the source of hope. ‘Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.’ And thus begins the ministry
that leads at last to encounter with God’s Chosen One, the shepherd, David, whom he anoints as King.

This Sunday is kept as Peace Sunday in England and Wales, when we are invited to reflect on the message of Pope Francis for the World Day of Prayer for Peace. Pope Francis’ message this year is particularly striking. ‘The Migrant and the Refugee’ are ‘Seekers after Peace’, he says.

Certainly, fleeing violence is often the ‘push-factor’ which makes them risk everything to leave their homeland. Yet the media rarely view them as anything but trouble. They are spoken of as threats, a danger to both our national identity and our security. The assumption in the popular imagination is, all too often, that they are by definition ‘extremists’. In a few cases that will sadly be the case (though most are merely seeking to survive). However, whatever religious or political views they may hold, there can be little doubt about the extremity of their need once they are on the road.

Without being naïve, the Christian starting point is to acknowledge that these are our brothers and sisters. But once we do that things change markedly. We are set free to recognise that their needs and their desires are not so very far from our own. And then we might grasp that they could be more gift than threat, potential partners in the search for peace in our broken world.

Two prayers are all that are needed to begin the journey to prophetic living - a way of being that literally ‘makes sense’ and offers meaning to our neighbours: ‘Here I am since you called me,’ and ‘Speak, Lord, your servant is listening’. Pray those prayers, really pray those prayers, and together we will we find our own prophetic voice, becoming Christ’s sign, and working with our neighbours, new and old, to seek together the peace he wills for all the world.

Homily Notes - Second Reflection

‘What do you want?’ A hundred years ago perhaps the most widespread answer to that question would have been the one word, ‘hope’. At the beginning of 1918, an exhausted nation with a run-down wartime economy and the scars left by 700,000 dead desperately needed reconstruction. The Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, promised to build ‘a land fit for heroes’ - though, for many, what followed the Armistice fell far short of those heroic hopes. Not prosperity but the Slump was the ‘Peace Dividend’ that followed the Great War.

‘What do you want?’ is still a valid question after the passage of another century. And what would our answer be today? Perhaps we’d have lots of very different answers. Certainly, no simple slogan like ‘a land fit for heroes’ could sum up such diverse aspirations as have been expressed since the Brexit referendums (to name but one issue facing us as a nation as we enter 2018). Our attitudes today to other challenges facing us – be that migration and the status of refugees (the issues Pope Francis has raised for us as a focus for this Peace Sunday), or the housing crisis, war and peace, the future of senior care, education funding - are also splintered, competing, even irreconcilable. Perhaps we need to step back from the individual issues and re-engage with the original question.

‘What do you want?’ That is always (I suggest) Christ’s first enquiry of us, just as soon as we have noticed him or had him pointed out (‘Look, there is the Lamb of God’). It’s the same question which he asked those two of John’s disciples as they followed him along the road; the same question which he asks in every generation. To meet Jesus and to hear his Gospel is to find our whole values system and way of life called into question: What do we want? What are we looking for? Where do we invest our energies in the hope of finding meaning, a reason for living?

The believer’s answer to Christ’s question is itself another question: ‘Teacher, where do you live?’ But notice the nature of Jesus’ next reply: ‘Come and see’. He answers the search for faith not with a theory or a formula, a doctrine or a dogma. He answers with an invitation to visit his home and to spend time with him. Which is all fine and dandy, the normal
way in which a friendship is begun and grown. But then we find ourselves asking: ‘Lord, where is your home? Where do you live?’

Our good Catholic formation then kicks in, maybe. We know the answer to that question. Christ lives in the Church, the Tabernacle, the Liturgy: These are Christ’s home. (And, please God, they are!) And yet that answer is incomplete; perhaps not even the first response he’d give us himself. Often enough in the Gospels he says where he is to be found: among the blind, the lame, the homeless; those sick, naked, imprisoned, shamed or persecuted - which in our current world certainly includes the migrant and the refugee. ‘Whatsoever you do to the least of these, that you do unto me’.

‘The two disciples went and saw where Jesus lived and stayed with him the rest of that day.’ Time wasted well in the Lord’s company; time given to prayer and stillness, unencumbered by our ‘to do’ list of tasks and goals and timelines: it sounds idyllic (and it is essential). Yet prayer is not enough. Time must be ‘wasted well’ with the hidden Christ, too - the outcast and rejected, the hurting and the awkward: this too is the way to knowledge of Christ’s heart and of our own. It’s not about choosing one or the other: both the prayer-time and the social action are required to find our voice and learn to say with Andrew, ‘We have found the Messiah’.

That’s the way to discover our own heart too, just as his encounter with the Lord revealed to Simon his true character: ‘You are Rock – roughcast, unpolished, flawed, true grit!’ And the better we know and own the gift that it is ours to give the more we are led back to Christ’s own initial question: ‘What do you want?’

On this Peace Sunday the need to answer Christ’s question ‘What do you want?’ is vividly underlined once more. Today we ask ourselves again: What is our vision for our world? What hope have we to offer to the brokenness around? And what does the hidden Christ - the one who ‘just about gets by’ on the margins of our world - the migrant, the displaced person, the refugee, - want, too?

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**Prayers of the Faithful**

**Priest:** As brothers and sisters, as members of Christ’s Body, the Church, let us pray with the freedom of the Children of God for the freedom and dignity of all.

Let us pray for ourselves, that like the young Samuel we may learn to pray both, ‘Here I am, since you called me,’ and ‘Speak, Lord, your servant is listening’. And that our lives may thus become a sign of God’s love in the world.

Lord in your mercy: **HEAR OUR PRAYER.**

Let us pray for the whole Church’s witness to peace and justice. May our lives proclaim the dignity of every person as a temple of the Spirit and a child of God.

Lord in your mercy: **HEAR OUR PRAYER.**

We pray for the young, that they may find in Christ what they are looking for - a place to belong, a challenge to use their gifts in the service of others, a way to build a more just world, and the joy of Gospel living.

Lord in your mercy: **HEAR OUR PRAYER.**

As we mark the centenary of the end of World War One, may we never lose the ability to be shocked by the waste of lives, of talent and of money which is always involved in warfare and in preparations for war-fighting.

Lord in your mercy: **HEAR OUR PRAYER.**

We pray for those forced to leave their homes because of conflict or need - for migrant workers and for refugees. May they be kept safe on their travels and find friendship and welcome in their places of exile. [and/or name a particular situation where people are being driven from their homeland that is in the news at the moment …]

Lord in your mercy: **HEAR OUR PRAYER.**

May God bless richly all who work for justice in our world; on all who live prophetically and take risks for peace. We ask God’s blessing today especially on the work of the international Catholic Peace Movement, Pax Christi.

Lord in your mercy: **HEAR OUR PRAYER.**
Celebrating peacemaking

‘... may we dedicate ourselves prayerfully and actively to banishing violence from our hearts, words and deeds, and to becoming nonviolent people, and to building nonviolent communities that care for our common home...’

Pope Francis, World Peace Day 2017

Being a ‘voice for peace’ is something to be celebrated. These good news stories of peacemaking remind us that change can happen, through the will and energy of ordinary people.

- In July 2017 122 countries voted at the UN to adopt the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty. Ratification began in September. The banning of nuclear weapons is grounded in international law and sets out steps for states to get rid of their nuclear arsenals. The Holy See was one of the first states to ratify the Treaty.

- The 2017 Nobel Peace Prize went to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). Pax Christi has been a member of this Coalition for years. Their work, supported by ordinary people around the world, helped to bring about the Nuclear Weapon Ban - showing that the majority of the world’s people have a common voice in challenging nuclear policies.

- During the last few years the Family Mass congregation at Blackfriars Oxford has been raising money for the work of the Dominican Sisters in war-torn Iraq and Syria, and supporting various local homeless projects. So when the government agreed to take a limited number of Syrian families from UN refugee camps, it seemed a good opportunity to take some practical action which combined these two areas of concern. With Dominican encouragement, and after consulting locally and nationally with e.g. Asylum Welcome and Caritas, we applied for approval from the Home Office to sponsor a family; this has just been granted. Now, with a house generously leased to us at below market rent, a committed group of people to provide all kinds of professional and personal support, and the whole congregation willing to help with their prayers, and finances if necessary, we hope to welcome a Syrian family by Christmas.

Learning from others

Here, Pax Christi members share how they helped celebrate Peace Sunday in a parish.

We created a peace display in the space under the altar in church with white-flowered plants and a simple dove image. We produced a Keeping in Touch newsletter which was handed out after the weekend Masses to let people know how to stay involved, and we provided peace-themed bidding prayers which were used at the Masses. Collection envelopes for Pax Christi were available at each Mass.

Theresa Alessandro, Leicester

Some young people from the parish handed out envelopes as members of the parish arrived for Mass. Eleanor read the Pax Christi bidding prayers. Following the sign of peace the young people gave out the new prayer cards to everyone in the congregation.

Anne Peacey, Chesterfield

I spoke after the Masses drawing on the excellent script available on the Pax Christi website. The bidding prayers were used and one of the other prayers was printed in the parish newsletter. We made the full text of the World Peace Day Message available and the 50 copies all went! One nice surprise - Pax Christi is now included in the Parish Planned Giving Special Collections. There was more positive feedback on Pope Francis’s key messages than has ever been heard in previous years.

Anne Dodd, Abingdon

Let us commend to God’s mercy all who are sick (especially "") that they might be restored to health; and all who have died (especially "")

May they be gathered, with people of every race and language and way of life, into the joy of God’s Kingdom.

Lord in your mercy: HEAR OUR PRAYER.

In silence, let us place before the Lord all that is in our hearts ...

Final Prayer: Eternal, ever-loving God, here we are since you called us. Speak Lord, your servants are listening, and hear our prayers for our broken world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
‘Choose Life - Drop the Knife’ is the message of St Mellitus parish in London. Responding to increased knife crime they have partnered with the charity Word4Weapons, police and council officials to explore how the area can be made safer for young people. Hosting a knife disposal bin and helping to search for knives hidden in a neighbouring park are among their plans.

Two young women, Ella (only 13!) from Lytham and Clare from Coventry have become Peace Journalists with Pax Christi International. They took part in online training and then went on to interview refugees in their area. The articles they wrote about the refugees’ situation were shared on the Pax Christi International website. You can read them here: https://paxchristipeacestories.com/refugee-stories/

Voices of refugees as recorded by Pax Christi’s Young Peace Journalists

‘I strongly believe that with the education my colleagues and I are receiving now, we will one day be able to go back and offer good leadership to the people and country of South Sudan.’

Daniel has as a refugee lived in Kenya for almost 20 years. His message is that people should never take their freedom and peace for granted and see refugee life as desirable at whatever cost.

‘The war in Syria will not finish just by killing someone or by assassinating anyone or any leader. It will just finish by peaceful transition of power from the government of Assad to a different government. From my point of view that is the only way a peaceful solution will be achieved.’

Mohammad is a 22 year-old from Aleppo, Syria who arrived in the UK in 2016.

Prayers

Living Lord, in a dark hour you spoke of the gift of peace. We seek that gift for ourselves. Grant us, we pray, the inner serenity which you alone can give, that we may become messengers of peace to a strife-torn world.
Leader: Give peace in our time, O Lord
Response: Give peace in our hearts, O Lord

We pray for all who suffer for their fidelity to the calling to be your witnesses; all who suffer for trying to live by the truth they have received and all who are slandered, ill-treated, falsely imprisoned or tortured. Crucified and risen Lord, may they, sharing your anguish, know that they will also share your victory.
L: Give peace in our time, O Lord
R: Give peace in our hearts, O Lord

Lord, we pray that you may hold us fast amidst all the evils of this world that at the last we may enter into the peace and joy of your kingdom.
L: Give peace in our time, O Lord.
R: Give peace in our hearts, O Lord.

Lord, we are your gathered people, come together to be one with refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people whose lives have been dislocated by war, famine and injustice. By our presence here we express our solidarity with them in their search for a new life, a new home, a new promise.
Leader: Lord, we are your gathered people, come together to be one with refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people whose lives have been dislocated by war, famine and injustice. By our presence here we express our solidarity with them in their search for a new life, a new home, a new promise.

All: Lord, clear our eyes that we may see the suffering of the refugee. Open our ears that we may hear the cries of those deep in despair. Release our feet that we may walk on paths where some comfort may be spread. Unloose our tongues that we might speak your words of hope and love. Give us open hearts that we may be truly hospitable to the stranger in our midst.

Minnesota Council of Churches prayer resources 2009
We believe that Jesus was a refugee, had to flee to save his life, with Saint Joseph and Saint Mary, had to leave for Egypt. He was a refugee. Let us pray to Our Lady who knew the pain of refugees. Let us be close to these people, sharing their fears and their uncertainty for the future and alleviating their pain with concrete measures.

Mary, mother of refugees, pray for us, asking that the Lord sustain those people and institutions who work with generosity to assure a welcome to refugees, recognise their dignity, and give them reasons for hope.  

Words of Pope Francis

A responsorial prayer

Response: Help us to sow the seeds of peace and justice

Side1: In a world crying out for love but still filled with too much hatred and violence...
Side2: In a country that speaks of equality but often fails to live up to that promise...
Side1: In our communities in which some people are considered worth less than others...
Side2: In our churches where we often neglect Jesus’ teaching of compassion...
Side1: In our families when words or deeds hurt each other...
Side2: In ourselves, when we are tempted by the world to desire more and to neglect what really matters...

from The Way of Peace: Exploring Nonviolence for the 21st Century, Pax Christi USA

God, You are the source of human dignity and it is in your image that we are created. Pour out on us the spirit of love and compassion. Enable us to reverence each person, to reach out to anyone in need, to value and appreciate those who differ from us, to share the resources of our nation, to receive the gifts offered to us by people from other cultures.

Grant that we may always promote the justice and acceptance that ensures lasting peace and racial harmony. Help us to remember that we are one world and one family. Amen.

Australian Social Justice Council

Prayers and activities for children

Come and see... what makes for peace

What you will need:
Coloured pencils/pens
String and paper-clips

What to do
In the Gospel passage for today Jesus invites the disciples to ‘Come and see...’ Invite the children to think about some of the things Jesus took the disciples to see/hear about. Ask them: do these things help us to think of what Jesus taught us about PEACE?

Say this prayer together
Dear God, when we look around at our world we sometimes see fights and wars. Help us to try to bring peace to every situation. Help us to take one small step for peace today, in the way we treat each other, our families, our friends, and teachers. Help us to be really involved in making peace. Amen.

Give each child a PEACE activity card. On one side ask them to put a word beginning with the letter outlined, that reminds them what PEACE is.

Now invite the children to think about these words and to see if they can make up a sentence and draw a picture of how THEY are a peacemaker.

When the cards are all ready, hang them with paperclips on the string and invite family, friends, and other members of the parish to ‘Come and see...’
Story-telling for peace

Make available to your children’s liturgy team / local school / parents in the parish, these two excellent CTS books: *Saint Martin of Tours* and *Saint Francis of Assisi*. Beautifully illustrated, they tell the stories of these peace saints in an accessible and attractive way. Both available from Pax Christi: http://paxchristi.org.uk/product-category/children/page/2/

There are more stories in this online resource from our *Teach Peace Pack* www.peace-education.org.uk/teach-peace

Suggested songs

*L* = Laudate (Decani Music)  
*CH* = Celebration Hymnal for Everyone with Supplement (McCrimmons)  
*LHON* = Liturgical Hymns Old & New (Kevin Mayhew)

A touching place, John Bell - *L* 882  *CH* 115  *LHON* 198  
Here I am Lord, Daniel L. Schutte - *L* 865  *CH* 285  *LHON* 376  
Dona nobis pacem cordium/Give us peace of heart, Taizé - *L* 904  
All creatures of our God and King - *L* 694  *CH* 15  *LHON* 103  
Peace Child, Bernadette Farrell - Go Before Us, OCP Publications  
Bearers of Peace, Bernadette Farrell - *Laudate supplement*  
A new commandment - *L* 920  *CH* 4  *LHON* 133  
For the healing of the nations, Fred Kaan - *L* 886  *CH* 179  *LHON* 262  
Lord, make me a means of your peace, John B. Foley - *L* 899  *LHON* 449  
The World Peace Prayer, Marty Haugen - *CH* 350  
When I needed a neighbour - *L* 888  *CH* 800  *LHON* 730

Article for a parish magazine: The War to End All Wars

by Fr Rob Esdaile, Parish Priest of Our Lady of Lourdes, Thames Ditton, Surrey

The road beyond resentment

2018 sees the centenary of the Armistice which marked the end of the First World War in Europe. That war was often described idealistically in Britain as ‘The war to end all wars’ – but of course it didn’t. Indeed, the terms imposed by the victors at Versailles in 1919 were felt in Germany as a humiliation; and that resentment became a seed-bed where the poison of Nazism grew.

So one lesson which we might draw after the passage of a hundred years is this: if you want peace, never humiliate your enemies. If you want peace, try to hold onto a trust in their fundamental humanity regardless - even if you cannot see it now and have come to view them as the most inhuman and ‘unforgivable’ of aggressors. The peacemaker has to be willing to do the ‘Soul Work’ that leads beyond bitterness and revenge. Otherwise, the only way to ‘get even’ is to lower yourself to your oppressor’s level. Resentment can only ever lead you back to the unresolved conflict - because that is precisely the meaning of the word: *Resentire*, to feel again the hurt and hate of yesterday and let it be our jailer.

The logic of the Cross versus the logic of Pilate

That much is simply common sense, if we wish to move beyond retribution to reconciliation and eventually, perhaps, to the prospect of new friendship and respect. But Christians are surely called to something more than this pragmatic approach to conflict resolution. You might have thought that in a ‘Christian’ continent, just that one simple saying of Christ, ‘Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you’ (Mt 5.24), would have barred the road to the horrors of trench-warfare. However, it is the whole ministry of Jesus which stands silent and defiant before Pilate’s cynical violence. Our Messiah seeks out a donkey, not a warhorse, on Palm Sunday; tells Peter to put away his sword in the Garden (Jn 18.11); prays for his executioners (Lk 23.34); and his whole career before that fateful Holy Week had been spent reaching out to those seen as ‘the enemy within’ - public sinners, lepers, the possessed ...
That is the path to peace, the risky dialogue with people who seem not at all like us (and whose views perhaps we loathe). That is the path to peace, the rejection of easy sloganising and of the ridiculing of the enemies we’re taught to hate. For this much is always true: these are our sisters and brothers. Like ourselves, God’s image and likeness is ‘in their DNA’, And there we have the measure of the tragedy of war: it is always fratricide, though we pretend it otherwise, in order to plan and then sustain our rage.

**Pope Francis on the First World War:**
“From that event we learn that entrenchment in one’s own positions only leads to failure. Now is not the time, then, to build trenches but instead to work courageously to realise the founding fathers’ dream of a united and harmonious Europe, a community of peoples desirous of sharing a future of development and peace.”

**Naïve realism?**
It’s easy to dismiss this take on Christian ethics as too other-worldly and naïve to be worth more than a pitying glance. And yet it is a highly realistic take on the types of war being fought or threatened today. We all of us live with the possibility of nuclear destruction - and the rhetoric of Trump and Kim Jong Un in recent months has seemed to take us closer to the abyss than anything since the Cuban Missile Crisis. But it is not only our own nuclear ‘Weapons of Mass Destruction’ which are ethically unusable in modern conflict. The destructive power of contemporary ‘conventional’ weaponry makes claims that violence is ‘proportional’ to the good achieved by military victory untenable. Promises of ‘non-combatant immunity’ (another key concept in ‘Just War’ theory) also become virtually meaningless. Meanwhile, the diversion of resources to purchase weaponry already kills before a shot is fired, with the sick left untended and the poor uneducated. And the flood of small-arms destabilises whole societies.

**The fight to end all wars**
And so we face as Christians this ‘call to arms’ (if you’ll forgive this warlike metaphor). Our fight must be to end all wars. For warfare is ‘the road to nowhere’ and ‘unworthy of our humanity’ (as Pope John Paul repeatedly insisted). So let this **Peace Sunday** (14 January 2018), when the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales ask us to reflect on the Pope’s World Peace Day message, be a moment not only of prayer but of recommitment to the path of he who said: ‘Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons and daughters of God’. We need to join with others to take actions that foster peace, locally and globally. Pax Christi, the international Catholic Peace movement, can provide resources, contacts, ideas and inspiration to empower each of us to move beyond past tragedies to a future of peace and justice for our children. Contact Pax Christi at St Joseph’s, Watford Way, London NW4 4TY or www.paxchristi.org.uk

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**Useful websites**

Migrant and Refugees Section is a Vatican office directed by Pope Francis. Stories and information: [https://migrants-refugees.va/](https://migrants-refugees.va/)


Catholic Nonviolence Initiative: [www.nonviolencejustpeace.net/](http://www.nonviolencejustpeace.net/)

Jesuit Refugee Service UK: [www.jrsuk.net](http://www.jrsuk.net)

Campaign Against Arms Trade: [www.caat.org.uk](http://www.caat.org.uk)

CAAT works to challenge UK arms sales that fuel conflicts and provoke migration around the world.

Housing Justice operates a hosting scheme in London, providing temporary accommodation for homeless migrants and refugees. They are always in need of volunteer hosts. [www.housingjustice.org.uk/Pages/Category/work-with-migrants](http://www.housingjustice.org.uk/Pages/Category/work-with-migrants)


Peace encyclicals and World Peace Day messages: [tinyurl.com/encyclicals-messages](http://tinyurl.com/encyclicals-messages)

Resources from Pax Christi

For Lent
*The Way of the Cross with reflections drawn from the First World War Conscientious Objectors.* Compiled by Valerie Flessati with prayers by Fr Derek Reeve. Price £2.50


For services of Remembrance in 2018
Two poems on Remembrance by Fr Rob Esdaile

A poster set from the Northern Friends Peace Board
http://www.nfpb.org.uk/posters

Pax Christi’s guide to peacemaking, remembrance and the First World War centenary

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