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Peace Sunday - 17 January 2016

'Overcome indifference and win peace'

Dear Father,

In his World Peace Day message this year Pope Francis invites us to reflect on how we can hope for peace without working to challenge the causes of violence and injustice in our world today. Time and again Pope Francis has spoken of our 'throw-away culture' which dehumanises and destroys the human person, whether through war and conflict or economic injustice. On Peace Sunday, which we celebrate in England and Wales on Sunday 17 January, we have an opportunity to learn from this message and put our faith into action.

In Pax Christi we know that peace is to be worked at, and we are greatly heartened by the outpouring of empathy and action that surrounds the current crisis we face of refugees fleeing war and conflict. But unless we combine this with work to stop the causes of war - the global arms trade and our part within it; the billions spent annually on war and war preparations - we will not win peace. Our Peace Sunday booklet, enclosed with this mailing, explores this theme through liturgy, story and action. These and other resources, including the full World Peace Day message, will also be available on our website.

In Pax Christi we aim to support individuals, families and parishes in their own work for peace. In 2015 we welcomed more than 100 new members to our movement and reached thousands more through our events and publications.

Among other things we have

- Produced and distributed widely a General Election briefing to encourage faith groups to engage with local MPs and raise questions about the arms trade, military spending and the Trident nuclear programme.
- Hosted Fr Ziad Hilal from JRS Syria for talks and radio interviews on the current situation there, and continued to engage our members in advocacy, prayer and fasting for an end to the violence and a political solution for Syria.
- Run 53 events in schools and at youth events, and created two new resources for schools: a General RE resource on *The work of Christian peacemakers*, and *Fly Kites not Drones*, a web-based project to help children here learn about human rights and the effect of armed drones in Afghanistan.
- Hosted a national conference on *Women & Peacemaking - Personal & Political*, drawing on the inspiration of women peacemakers of 1915 and learning from the creativity of women peacemakers today.

Pax Christi undertakes all this work with only 4 staff members and volunteers, and without the benefit of charitable status. Pax Christi has made a deliberate choice not to be a charity in order to have the freedom and flexibility to take action which might otherwise be limited by constraints placed on charities. This makes your support all the more valuable. I recognise your past generosity and ask you to support us again this year.

With every blessing and good wishes,

+ Most Rev Malcolm McMahon OP, National President of Pax Christi British Section

www.paxchristi.org.uk