

Justpeace

PAX CHRISTI

International Catholic Movement for Peace

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Times of change bring opportunities

Times of change and crisis demand the attention of citizens and institutions, including the Church. Brexit, the on-going wars and conflicts driven by political and economic gain, human impact on the environment, and the challenge for ecumenical cooperation for the common good to name but a few. None of these are special to our time, as we are reminded in the intervention of Pope Benedict XV 100 years ago, to the 'Belligerent Peoples' of the First World War. A similar response to war is echoed again and again today by Pope Francis, most recently in his message to the leaders of the G20. What might a Christian compass contribute to our analysis and engagement to these crises today? We offer some reflection on these matters in this issue of Justpeace.



A Christian response to leaving the European Union

As the Brexit negotiations begin, there emerges growing concern over the complexity and comprehensiveness of the process. On the strength of a slim majority in the June 2016 referendum based on manifest distortions and lies, the whole political agenda has been shelved. Famine in Africa, war in Syria, mass migration in Europe, and Islamist terrorism are relegated to the sidelines.

Now that the enormity of the task begins to appear, some writers have said that the remainers need to find a voice to test the assertion that the referendum decision is irreversible. In this critical phase Church leaders seem reluctant to speak out on this doom-laden scenario. Surely Catholics should embark on a genuine process of discernment over what is being negotiated in our name by politicians and bureaucrats in Brussels? The 21st century has seen the rise of populism and the rejection of traditional institutions. In addition to invoking the Holy Spirit the various branches of the Christian Community need to articulate their own distinctive take on leaving the EU.

Pax Christi is an international organisation dedicated to promoting peace and the resolution of conflict by nonviolent means. It also challenges militarism and the growth of the arms trade. Arguing that war cannot be seen as a tool of diplomacy, Pax Christi has worked for the building of Kingdom values as a way to salvation for everyone. This approach contrasts sharply with the ideology of the Brexiteers. In an adversarial spirit they describe Britain's leaving as a divorce. They anticipate a punitive reaction from Brussels and flex their muscles for a tough challenge. Pax Christi, however, would urge the need to seek compromise and consensus. The concept of Christian communion implies real effort to find acceptance of thinking other than one's own and a willingness to change behaviour in consequence. 'Cogito ergo sum' becomes 'respondeo etsi mutabor' – I respond even though I may be changed. Yet, whereas real progress has been made developing the scope of international law,

Brexit would see the UK leaving the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice as a reaffirmation of national sovereignty.

Brexiters champion the 'me first' doctrine. The common good of humanity on a fragile planet has no place in the thinking of liberal capitalism and market economics. Although Pope Francis has warned against the injustice of some forms of capitalism, we are still told there is no alternative.

Security has been listed as an argument for ever-increasing expenditure on weapons and militarism. Yet weapons do not bring security; rather they consume vast proportions of national wealth. Security is the fruit of peace, not something bought with weaponry. No one would claim that the EU was a perfect system, yet the challenge is to work constructively for change from within. The British move to leave may well destabilise the whole EU, which has been described as a major success story of the age. The anticipated economic benefits of leaving should be measured against deteriorating international relations and cooperation on, for instance, global warming – the Paris accord is already under threat, and the nuclear powers are blocking progress towards disarmament.

Is the Brexit vote irreversible? Democracy does not insulate us against error. As a make-shift Christian compass I suggest the following values.

- Care for the most vulnerable as against the 'me first' mentality.
- Care for a finite planet as against acquisitiveness and greed
- Promoting human rights as against nationalism
- Tolerance of diversity as against dogmatism
- Integral human development as against capitalism.

Where is Brexit taking us? Do we want to go there?

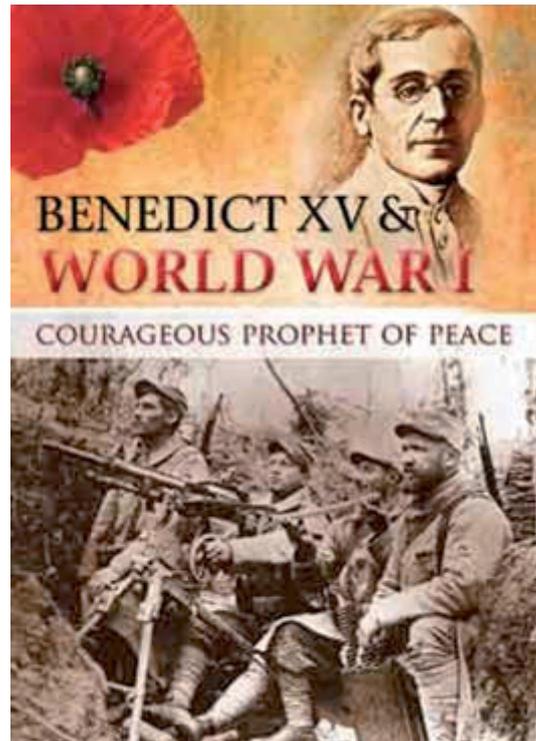
Frank Campbell, Pax Christi member, Southampton

Benedict XV's Peace Note, 1917

To mark the centenary of the First World War the French historian and documentary maker Jean-Yves Le Naour has published a series of paperbacks looking at each year of the conflict. *1917 La paix impossible*ⁱ examines the efforts made in 1917 to bring the war to an end. Le Naour details the war-weariness in France, shown by troops refusing to obey orders during the 'Nivelle offensive' in May, and the attempts of international socialists to organise a peace conference in Stockholm. The chapter entitled *La paix, nom de Dieu!* looks at Pope Benedict XV's 'Peace Note' of August. A peace initiative in the German Reichstag led by the Catholic politician Matthias Erzsberger and the peace moves made by the new Austro-Hungarian Emperor Karl,ⁱⁱ led the pope and the new nuncio to Bavaria, Eugenio Pacelli (the future Pius XII) to believe that the time was right for a bold diplomatic offensive to get the belligerent countries to the negotiating table. After preparatory work with the Germans in particular (since Germany was occupying other countries' territories), indicating a willingness to negotiate, the pope issued his note in August. He began:

'Since the beginning of our pontificate, in the midst of the horrors of the terrible war which has burst upon Europe, we have considered three things among others: to maintain an absolute impartiality towards all belligerents, as becomes him who is the common father, and who loves all his children with an equal affection; to endeavour continually to do the utmost good to all without distinctions of persons, nationality or religion, in accordance not only with the universal law of charity, but also with the supreme spiritual duty laid upon us by Christ; and finally, as is demanded by our pacific mission, to omit nothing, as far as is in our power lies, to contribute to hasten the end of this calamity by trying to bring the peoples and their leaders to more moderate resolutions in the discussion of means that will secure a just and lasting peace.'

He proposed three stages: first, the suspension of fighting; second, armaments should be reduced in an orderly fashion; third, there should be arbitration of disputes, backed by sanctions. Occupied territories would be restored and there would be free movement of peoples and the establishment of common maritime rights. There would be no demands for reparations or indemnities.



The pope and his advisers went beyond general principles and platitudes, addressing very specific issues in detail and putting forward solutions. In this way the pope, though he was unsuccessful, gives us a model for Catholic social teaching today and the diplomatic mission of the Church.

i Paris: Editions France Loisirs 2015

ii He was beatified in 2004 by St John Paul II on account of his efforts for peace

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You can read the full text of the Note to the Heads of the Belligerent Peoples here www.pas.va/content/accademia/en/magisterium/benedictxv/1august1917.pdf

Papal Challenge to G20 leaders, 2017

Pope Francis has a gift for drawing past and present experiences together in his pleas for unity and cooperation. This can be seen in his message to the G20 leaders in June:

"I proposed four principles of action for building fraternal, just and peaceful societies: time is greater than space; unity prevails over conflict; realities are more important than ideas; and the whole is greater than the part...part of the age-old wisdom of all humanity; I believe they can also serve as an aid to your reflection. Unity prevails over conflict. The history of humanity, in our own day too, presents us with a vast panorama of current and potential conflicts.

War, however, is never a solution. As the hundredth anniversary of Pope Benedict XV's letter draws near, I feel bound to ask that the world put an end to all these 'useless slaughters'... the goal of the G20 will not be possible unless all parties commit themselves to substantially reducing levels of conflict, halting the present arms race and renouncing direct or indirect involvement in conflicts, as well as agreeing to discuss sincerely and transparently all their differences. There is a tragic contradiction and inconsistency in the apparent unity expressed in common forums on economic or social issues, and the acceptance, active or passive of armed conflicts."

Update on Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty work

122 governments have now adopted a treaty to ban nuclear weapons. The 7 July 2017 decision by two-thirds of the United Nations' membership caps six years of growing momentum to take collective action where the nuclear powers have long failed to act.

The unprecedented agreement outlaws the manufacture, possession and use of nuclear weapons, is grounded in international humanitarian law, and includes steps for states that rely on nuclear arms to get rid of their arsenals. The nine countries with nuclear weapons and 30 countries that rely on U.S nuclear forces boycotted the treaty negotiations. Tragically the UK Government was one of these. In a letter to Pax Christi on 13 July the Government's Counter Proliferation and Arms Control Centre stated: "We will not sign a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons... We do not believe that this treaty will bring us closer to a world without nuclear weapons as it fails to address the key issues that must first be overcome to achieve lasting global nuclear disarmament..."

Marie Dennis, co-president of Pax Christi International, who with others represented Pax Christi International at the UN reflects: "How can we understand the nuclear powers' dereliction of their duty? One clue is behavioural. The evidence indicates that having nuclear weapons makes a government allergic to giving them up. States with nuclear weapons are even allergic to the prospect of other states uniting to make nuclear arms illegal.

The symptoms of this allergy are clear. As some 130 states put the finishing touches on a treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, the United States and the other nuclear powers appear incapable of engaging on the merits of the case that nuclear weapons are inherently unacceptable. Yet the merits are precisely what is motivating the non-nuclear majority to take responsibility where the nuclear minority has failed.

The permanent members of the Security Council still cling – in 2017 – to Cold War plans that require an unshakeable commitment to 'mutually assured' nuclear destruction and to a nuclear 'balance of terror'."

The nuclear weapons ban has been adopted. Now it needs to be signed and ratified by 50 states to enter into force.

On the occasion of the second round of negotiations, we hosted a panel discussion at the UN in New York.



Pax Christi team at UN Ban Treaty meetings

Archbishop Silvano Maria Tomasi, delegate secretary to the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development has announced that the Holy See is working to create a public opinion "convinced that the world is safer without nuclear weapons, rather than with them". The Vatican will hold a conference between 10-11 November, another step on the path towards nuclear disarmament.

What we can do

- It is important that we maintain pressure on our Government. Write to Theresa May, urging that the UK become a signatory to the Nuclear Ban Treaty when ratification begins in September. More here: <http://act.cnduk.org/lobby/GlobalBan>
- Write to your Diocesan Bishop asking that he support our Bishops' Conference in working with the Vatican to bring about nuclear disarmament in the UK and in the world. Ask that prayers be offered in each Diocese in solidarity with the meetings in Rome.
- MEDACT have produced an excellent resource – Safer World: Treating Britain's Harmful Dependence on Nuclear Weapons. Download here www.medact.org

Remembering the Reformation – towards a common mission of peace and care for creation

31 October 2017 marks the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's recorded posting of the 95 theses on the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany. A German project to mark the anniversary, *Luther 2017*, states: "While celebrations in earlier centuries were kept national and confessional, the upcoming anniversary ought to be shaped by openness, freedom and ecumenism. In 2017 we aren't just celebrating 500 years of the Reformation, but we are reminded of the Role the Reformation played in the development of the modern age. Therefore, the impulses that have effects even reaching into our modern age will gain centre stage. What started in Wittenberg changed Germany, Europe and the whole world."

A service of penance and reconciliation was held in Hildesheim, Germany in March where leaders of the Catholic and Evangelical Churches in Germany affirmed their message of *Healing of Memories – Giving Witness to Christ*.

A similar sentiment was expressed at the gathering in Lund, Sweden in October 2016 when Pope Francis took part in an ecumenical service with Bishop Munib Yunan, president of the Lutheran World Federation. Their joint statement says: "We pray to God that Catholics and Lutherans will be able to witness together to the Gospel

of Jesus Christ, inviting humanity to hear and receive the good news of God's redeeming action. We pray to God for inspiration, encouragement and strength so that we may stand together in service, upholding human dignity and rights, especially for the poor, working for justice, and rejecting all forms of violence. God summons us to be close to all those who yearn for dignity, justice, peace and reconciliation. Today in particular, we raise our voices for an end to the violence and extremism which affect so many countries and communities, and countless sisters and brothers in Christ. We urge Lutherans and Catholics to work together to welcome the stranger, to come to the aid of those forced to flee because of war and persecution, and to defend the rights of refugees and those who seek asylum.

More than ever before, we realise that our joint service in this world must extend to God's creation, which suffers exploitation and the effects of insatiable greed. We recognise the right of future generations to enjoy God's world in all its potential and beauty. We pray for a change of hearts and minds that leads to a loving and responsible way to care for creation."

Pat Gaffney. More here: www.luther2017.de/en/

Office Report

Towards a Pax Christi Scotland? Ecumenical cooperation and a commitment to deepen an understanding of active nonviolence capture the spirit of a joint Pax Christi and Fellowship of Reconciliation conference held in Perth, Scotland, in July. Inspired by the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative and Pax Christi's involvement in the Rome Appeal for Nonviolence, more than forty people gathered to hear from US-based Fr John Dear on Reclaiming Gospel Nonviolence and Lucas Johnson, Secretary of IFoR, on models of nonviolence. Justice & Peace Scotland made videos of both talks. You can find them here www.youtube.com/channel/UCUKmIIIRRX_YRS_PINBAR2A

A new initiative developed from the gathering: the possibility of setting up a Pax Christi Scotland. There are more than 45 Pax Christi members in Scotland and those who participated in the Conference felt that the time is right to test the waters with others. If we failed to inform you about the conference, please forgive us. If you live in Scotland but have not given us your email details, please send them through to info@paxchristi.org.uk and we will put you in touch with those on the planning group.



Members of Pax Christi and J&P Scotland at Perth meeting

On-line shop. Many of our publications, booklets, prayer cards, gift cards can now be bought on-line. Do make a visit to the shop and remember that we can also help you if you want to run a peace stall or book sale too. www.paxchristi.org.uk/shop/

Diary

5 September (Tue) London

No Faith in War, day of prayers and actions with faith groups in the run-up to Defence & Security Equipment International (DSEi) the Excel Centre. Pax Christi prayer time at 4.00pm. Check our website for directions.

11 September (Tues) London

Candle-lit silent vigil 7-8pm on the eve of the Defence & Security Equipment International (DSEi) arms fair. Meet in Tidal Basin Road outside Royal Victoria DLR station at 6.30pm to walk to Excel Centre. Contact Pax Christi for details.

17-23 September

World Week for Peace in Palestine & Israel: 'Voice of the young...visions for the future'. Information and resources: <http://tinyurl.com/UK-WWPPI>

23 September (Sat) London

Evensong at 3pm in Westminster Abbey to mark Romero centenary. Address by Lord Rowan Williams. Tickets via Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/evensong-to-commemorate-the-centenary-of-the-birth-of-blessed-oscar-romero-tickets-35349736012>

24 September (Sun)

Ecumenical Peace Sunday organised by Fellowship of Reconciliation. Resources for churches available: <http://www.for.org.uk/peacesunday/>

2-5 October (Mon-Fri)

Nonviolence Works! Pope Francis has called nonviolence 'a style of politics for peace'. Explore what that might mean with Marie Dennis, Co-President of Pax Christi International and leader in the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative, and Maria Stephan, senior policy fellow at the US Institute of Peace, expert on civil resistance and conflict prevention. A series of seminars sponsored by Pax Christi and university hosts. Details later from www.paxchristi.org.uk

Monday 2 October: Amigo Hall, St George's Cathedral London. Open event 2.30-5pm Info & RSVP: Pax Christi, info@paxchristi.org.uk

Tuesday 3, Leeds Beckett University, Leeds. Open event 6-7.30pm (tbc) Info & RSVP: Bookings here <https://tinyurl.com/ybx62pxj>

Wednesday 4, Newman College Birmingham. Open event 5.30-8pm Info & RSVP: David McLoughlin, D.B.McLoughlin@staff.newman.ac.uk

Thursday 5, University of Liverpool. Open event (time tbc).

8-16 October (Sun-Sun)

Week of Prayer for World Peace. Leaflets from maggiembrizzi@yahoo.co.uk, 07817 803263.

14 October (Sat) Solihull

Birmingham Diocesan Justice and Peace Assembly 'Peace, Pope Francis and the call to active nonviolence'. Speakers Pat Gaffney and James Trewby (Columbans) 10.30am-4.15pm at St Peter's Catholic School, Whitefields Road, Solihull B91 3NZ £8/£5. Bring lunch. Register at www.birminghamjandp.org.uk or email Janet Vaughan bham.jandp@gmail.com

21 October (Sat) London

Taking Action on Militarism – speakers and workshops 10am-5pm at Friends House, Euston Road organised by Quaker Peace and Social Witness and ForcesWatch. Book a free place: www.forceswatch.net

2 November (Thurs) London

Celebrating 35 years of the Christian Peace Education Fund. Gathering and reception at Maria Fidelis School, Euston 5.30-7.00pm with Pax Christi President, Archbishop Malcolm McMahon.

14 January 2018

PEACE SUNDAY



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

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

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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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