Not long ago Pope Francis was given by the City of Aachen the Charlemagne prize for his contribution to the ideals of post-World War 2 Europe.

He took the opportunity to speak out plainly: ‘I dream of a Europe that cares for children, that offers help... to those newcomers who have lost everything’. He went on, ‘What has happened to the Europe of humanism, the champion of human rights - the Mother of great men and women who upheld, even sacrificed their lives, for the dignity of their brothers and sisters?’

Jean-Claude Juncker, European Commission President, responded: ‘You have filled our hearts with new courage’. That was well said. Today few have any idea about the history of the European Union or what its prime purpose is. Many would believe that it is a primarily trade mechanism.

Few would know who represents them at the European Parliament. Most of us know more about the Highway Code than we do about the post-WW2 structures of Europe.

The purpose in the minds of the Founders was to promote and ensure peace in Europe. Trade was only a means of ensuring that kind of peace. The founding Fathers (an absence of Founding Mothers unfortunately) knew their history. Three major European wars in less than a hundred years: 1870, 1914 and 1939. It was to put an end to such wars that Jean Monnet, Robert Schumann, Paul Henri Spaak and others created the European Coal and Steel Community in 1950. Then, in 1957, with the Treaty of Rome, came the Common Market itself. In 2012, when the European Community was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, the then President said that the EU was ‘an unrivalled way of binding our interests so tightly that war becomes impossible’.

The Community started with six countries. Now there are twenty-eight full members. There are other forms of association for states not ready for full membership. But the original vision is, or ought to be, still there. The Founders had in mind not just one region of peace but saw themselves as building the global community. Said Jean Monnet in his diaries: ‘The European Community is only a stage on the way to the organised world of the future’. Indeed chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, signed in 1945, provided for regional communities as part of the UN structure.

We today, especially in Pax Christi, can be under no illusions. There is a lot of peacemaking educational work still to do. Ignorance about both the European Union and the United Nations is widespread. Yet both were founded primarily as building blocks of peace.

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Pax Christi was of course founded at the same time, with the same inspiration arising from the devastation of war. In this case it was a French woman, Marthe Dortel-Claudot, who took the first steps to create an organisation which would end old rivalries, build bridges especially with Germany, and make a Europe of Peace possible.

Bruce Kent, Vice President of Pax Christi
Why should the United Kingdom stay in the European Union?

The UK is a rich and powerful country, an important centre of trade and finance, and a nuclear power. Through the Commonwealth of Nations, to which more than 50 member states belong and around 30 per cent of the world population, it has links to countries throughout the entire world. Since 1973 it has also been a member of the European Community, now numbering 28 countries with 508 million inhabitants - around 7 per cent of the world population. The UK is in a position to choose which of its connections should be strengthened or broken off. Shortly its citizens will vote on whether the country should stay in the EU.

The EU is in a deplorable state. ‘What has happened to you, the Europe of humanism, the champion of human rights, democracy and freedom?’ asks Pope Francis. The EU struggles for a common refugee policy, to combat terror, and for a way out of national debt, unemployment and bureaucracy. So why stay a member of the EU? Perhaps for the sake of the others, perhaps because it is in the interest of the other 27 EU countries that the United Kingdom remains. Admittedly, it is not particularly fashionable these days to take into account the interest of others.

As with any organisation, the EU would be weakened by the withdrawal of a strong member. EU-Europe would be smaller and the challenges would be harder to overcome. On top of that, the country that left would still face the same problems it did as an EU member.

National solutions - e.g. cutting oneself off, as demanded by right-wing parties in many EU countries - will not do justice to the modern global challenges: from climate, to justice, to peace.

Many features of the EU are not shared by all its members. The Financial Transaction Tax, which eleven countries wish to introduce, is one of these. An amalgamation of economically strong and weak countries, which the EU is, cries out for distributive justice. It cannot be allowed that, for example, Greece still had to receive weapons deliveries from Germany despite its looming debt crisis, or that the EU destroys agricultural markets in poor countries through its exports. If the first phase was aimed at the economic development of the EU, it must now be about justice. As citizens we can exert pressure. Justice creates peace.

In 2012 the EU was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The Nobel committee saw the EU had a stabilising role in the transformation of Europe from a continent of war to a continent of peace. The greatest achievement of the EU was its ‘successful struggle for peace and reconciliation and for democracy and human rights’. Here too the EU faces new tasks: how can a peace be created in Europe that includes all European states? For the sake of peace in Europe, put up with the hard times, be open to a new European outlook and stay in the EU!

Wiltrud Rösch-Metzler, Pax Christi Germany
(Translated by Mike Duggan)
www.paxchristi.de

Resources

Referendum hustings: a guide for meetings and individuals.

The Catholic Church in the European Union (COMECE) has an interesting website and here is a press notice on the theme Europe needs to be a constructive actor for peace in the world http://bit.ly/1rVlLD4. Their report on Peace and Europe’s Vocation is to be published on 31st May.

(PCOMECE was founded with the approval of the Holy See on 3 March 1980. It was preceded by the European Catholic Pastoral Information Service, 1976-1980.)

Pax Christi International (PCI) and Europe - short background on Pax Christi’s growth/role http://www.paxchristi.net/our-work/regions/europe. PCI has representation at the European Union and the Council of Europe where it is able to bring the experiences and concerns of its members worldwide into the European arena.


What has the EU done for us? Peace. Article by Andrew Williams co-editor of Lacuna, who teaches at University of Warwick http://bit.ly/1sdklEU. May 2016.
In today’s world democracy is under fire and war is dominant again on our TV screens. Repressive states and authoritarianism are on the rise. European values such as human dignity, democracy, the rule of law and human rights can no longer be taken for granted. These values have firm historical roots in the UK. Even though UK citizens sometimes refer to ‘Europe’ as something outside their country, historically speaking, European values might not have been the same, nor as firmly rooted, if it wasn’t for the UK’s historical contribution to their entrenchment in European collective thinking. The community of values that the European Union aims to be, is a joint legacy of all its members, including the UK.

PAX believes it’s a good thing if people who share these values, cooperate to nourish and promote them. It’s a good thing in the first place in our own countries, which has brought us peace for more than 70 years now. Let’s not forget that this fact was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. But it’s also a good thing in the rest of the world, especially our neighbouring countries, in the Middle East and Northern Africa, but also in Central Europe (Ukraine), where violence, conflict and war has become a fact of daily life again. Several generations in Europe grew up with the self-evident assumption that Europe is a peaceful continent, that peace is the natural state of affairs for the future. Is this a dangerous illusion, also for UK citizens? We need only to look at our recent history, as well as to the mentioned wars that currently surround Europe, to understand that building peace is not a one-time accomplishment. We continually and collectively need to invest in it. Jointly.

To say that this is not always an easy job, is an understatement. And to say that everything the EU does is a straightforward reflection of the values the EU says it stands for, would be a grotesque misrepresentation of reality. Hypocrisy, cynicism, lack of leadership and dividedness are but a few of the characteristics of EU policies at home and abroad. As PAX, with our advocacy presence in Brussels, we have been close witnesses to quite a few EU failures when it comes to its foreign and defence and peace building policies.

But where old fashioned geo-political power politics, blunt nationalism, military adventurism and diplomatic cynicism seem to take over international politics, it would be a very bad sign if the UK were to withdraw from the one and only, world-wide unique initiative to overcome such historically-proven, destructive tendencies in human behaviour. This is not naïve. On the contrary, we should acknowledge that European cooperation has been effective realpolitik in maintaining peace on a large part of the continent for decades.

We need the UK in, to keep this European peace project alive. We need the UK in, to maintain its relevance as an important peace actor in the world. We need the UK in, to ensure it has enough leverage to make a difference.

Erik Laan, Head of Public Affairs, Pax for Peace, Netherlands

www.paxforpeace.nl/

Pilgrimage and peace gathering

Pilgrim Cross to France. 25-29 August 2016. In 1946 Pax Christi took part in a pilgrimage for peace, which involved carrying crosses, from different parts of France and other countries in Europe, to Vézelay in Northern Burgundy. There were fourteen crosses which are now in the Basilica in Vézelay. This initiative inspired others and in 1948 the Student Cross pilgrimages began. This year, the 70th anniversary of the first peace pilgrimage, a walk is being organised from Auxerre to Vézelay. It will entail two days of walking and a day in Vézelay. Travel will be by train from Paris to Auxerre with return from Sermizelles, near Vézelay. Travel costs will be in the region of £150 and overnight accommodation around £60.00 (not confirmed). This is being coordinated by Ian Smith who can be contacted at pilgrimpoet01@btinternet.com. There is also a Facebook page with details of the route, maps and costs here. pilgrimcross.wordpress.com/2016/04/18/the-route/

Read more about Pax Christi’s history and Vézelay here http://bit.ly/1YUSJ1g

International meeting for a fair peace: ‘Peoples be united; be human!’ 26-29 October 2017.

This is the theme for a gathering next year organised by the Dioceses of Arras, Lille and Cambrai in France to commemorate the disaster of the First World War and to commit to peacemaking for the future. There are more than 1,000 military cemeteries in this region. Events, including times of prayer, pilgrimage, workshops and talks will be held in Notre-Dame de Lorette, reflecting on the failure of European Churches to stop the escalation of violence before and during the FWW and on the opportunities for Churches to work for peace today. Pax Christi International is one of the sponsoring groups.

Why not organise a group from your own diocese or parish?
More details can be found here http://centenairepourlapaix.fr
**Diary**

**14 June (Tue) London**
Come and meet Pax Christi partners Rania Murra, Director of the Arab Educational Institute, and Dr Shahnaz al-Far. General Director of Education, Ministry of Education Bethlehem. Theme: **Promoting interreligious understanding and harmony between Christians and Muslims.**

**7pm at St Peter and Paul Church, Amwell Street, Rosebery Avenue EC1R 1UL.** Open to all, this meeting is co-hosted by CAFOD and Pax Christi.

**18 June (Sat) London**
Making the best use of social media. Workshop 10.30am-5pm at Friends House, Euston Rd, NW1. To register go to [http://tinyurl.com/hhbb46y](http://tinyurl.com/hhbb46y) £10 (£5 concessions)
info: christians@nduk.org

**27 June (Mon) AWE Burghfield**
Faith gathering at Mearings Gate as part of the month of nonviolent action at AWE Burghfield. Pax Christi will lead the 1.00pm time of prayer/action. Contact the office if you can come and help, or have ideas.

**28 June (Tue) London**
History and Hope: what is the future for Palestinian Christians? With Fr Jamal Khader from Bethlehem University where he teaches Peace Studies. 6.30pm at St James’ Church, 197 Piccadilly. Open to all, but please book via Embrace the Middle East, [http://bit.ly/1TrJ5mv](http://bit.ly/1TrJ5mv)

**10 July (Sun) London**
Campaign Against the Arms Trade international gathering before Farnborough International airshow (11-17 July). There will be plenty of opportunities for action against Farnborough. Contact Sarah Reader at action@caat.org.uk or call 020 7281 0297 to book a place for 10 July.

**13 July (Wed) London**
Stop Trident Mass Lobby of MPs. The vote in parliament on Trident replacement may take place this autumn. Come and tell your MP why you want them to vote to Stop Trident. Pax Christi and the Network of Christian Peace Organisations will lead a liturgy/prayer time before the Lobby.

**15-17 July (Fri-Sun) Swanwick, Derbyshire**

**6 & 9 August (Sat & Tues) London**
Annual Pax Christi vigils for anniversaries of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the Piazza, Westminster Cathedral. These will be from 10am-5pm each day. If you would like to help out please contact the office.

**9 August (Tues) London**
Annual memorial service to mark the execution of Franz Jägerstätter 6.30pm in the Crypt chapel of Westminster Cathedral.

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**Office news**

**Pax Christi Survey.** With this mailing you will have received an invitation to take part in our survey. We have created this as a tool to help in our planning in the years ahead. The Executive Committee and office team have begun a discernment process that will take us to 2019. Please do take the time to look at and respond to the survey. This is for Pax Christi members only.

**Pax Christi Annual General Meeting.** This was held in Leeds on 21 May and you can see reports on the News Reports page of our website. Holly Ball was elected as Chair. We said farewell and thank you to Anne Dodd who has served as Chair since 2010 and was an Executive Committee member before that and to Ann Dekker who has served on Exec since 2010. They will both remain active in their support and commitment to Pax Christi.

**Introducing Holly Ball.** Holly has been a Pax Christi member since she moved to the UK in 1992. She served six years on the Exec, standing down in 2001, and remained on the Finance Committee until she was re-elected to the Exec in 2014.

Holly attended the Pax Christi international gathering in Assisi for the 50th Anniversary in 1995, and the 1999 international conference in Amman, Jordan and Jerusalem. She returned to Jerusalem and the West Bank for the 70th Anniversary celebrations in May 2015.

Holly’s professional background is in fundraising. She was CAFOD’s Head of Fundraising for nine years, and worked for Christian Aid before that.

Holly has a deep commitment to peace and the nonviolent life. She said: ‘After a long association with Pax Christi, it is a privilege to now serve as the National Chair. We have a great office team, a strong Exec and a dedicated membership, and I look forward to working with all of them.'

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

- Please send me information on:
  - Membership
  - Publications
  - Legacy

- I enclose a donation of £ ………. to support your work

Name: ..........................................................................................................................
Address: ....................................................................................................................
Tel: ...............................................................................................................................

Return to Pax Christi, St Joseph’s, Watford Way, Hendon, London, NW4 4TY
Tel: 020 8203 4884 email: info@paxchristi.org.uk www.paxchristi.org.uk

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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.

Pax Christi, St Joseph’s, Watford Way, Hendon, London, NW4 4TY
Tel: 020 8203 4884 email: info@paxchristi.org.uk www.paxchristi.org.uk

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**Rome Conference on Nonviolence and Just Peace.** You may have been following reports of this is the church and national press. In April Pax Christi International and the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace co-hosted this unique event which delivered an Appeal to the Catholic Church to Re-commit to the Centrality of Gospel Nonviolence to Pope Francis. Valerie Fiessati, Chris Cole and Pat Gaffney from the British section took active roles in planning and facilitating this gathering. You can read something about the conference here [http://bit.ly/26gSFOH](http://bit.ly/26gSFOH) and our next issue of Justpeace will be dedicated to the challenges and opportunities it creates.

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