

Pax Christi

Peace Sunday

19 January 2020



Promoted by Pax Christi with the support of the International Affairs
Department, Catholic Bishops' Conference, England and Wales

Ideas to help the celebration of Peace Sunday in your parish

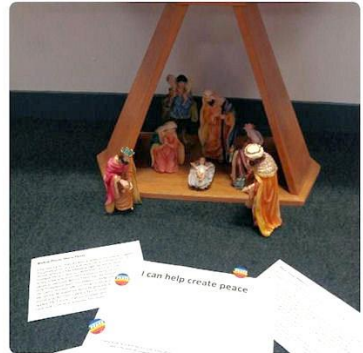
Before Peace Sunday

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 this booklet. These resources can help you prepare a Mass, vigil, or holy hour for peace.

The week before Peace Sunday (**Sunday 12 January**) put a notice in your **parish newsletter/website** to remind people of the day and theme (when known). Link to the Pax Christi Peace Sunday webpage.

Arrange for the new **prayer card** to be given out on Peace Sunday.

The **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** from 18 - 25 January this year takes the theme 'Unusual Kindness', reflecting on how our Christian faith leads us to see all 'others' as sisters and brothers. Resources for 2020, prepared by Christians from Malta and Gozo, can be found here <https://ctbi.org.uk/resources-for-week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2020/>



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. Cover illustration by Sr Sheila Gosney rjm

The 53rd World Day for Peace, will be observed in England and Wales on 19 January 2020, the 2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time (Year A). The readings for the Sunday Eucharist are Isaiah 49.3, 5-6; Psalm Ps 39.2, 4, 7-10 (resp.vv. 8-9); 1 Cor 1.1-3; Jn 1.29-34.

Introduction to the Liturgy

The Bishops of England and Wales invite us to keep this Sunday as a day of prayer for world peace and to reflect on the theme chosen by Pope Francis for the annual World Peace Day (yet to be announced). The day has a particular ‘flavour’ this year because we pass so many significant anniversaries in the coming months: the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, marked by Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January; the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe - marked by a special Bank Holiday on May 8; then again, in August, the 75th anniversaries of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the 75th anniversary of Japan’s surrender. All a long lifetime ago and yet all events which continue to mark our history; events which show both the human capacity for inflicting evil and the human capacity to resist evil.

But these events also invite us all to examine the roots of violence in our culture today and, especially, in our own hearts. They call us to conversion, to a rejection of the logic of violence and to a commitment to rebuild what has been broken in ways which lead to peace.

Suggested Penitential Act

Let us ask Christ to lead us to that conversion.

Lord Jesus, you suffer in the suffering of each of your brothers and sisters.
Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you rejected the way of retaliation, praying for your persecutors and forgiving your executioners. **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, in your brokenness on the cross you bring healing to our world.
Lord, have mercy.

Introduction to the Readings

First Reading (*Isaiah 49.3, 5-6*)

The Prophet Isaiah discovers a second calling within his calling. It is not sufficient to be God’s obedient servant. He must also be the means by which

the exile is led home, the scattered are gathered and the outsiders are brought into the story of Israel. As for him, so now for us: we must be the light of the nations, that God's salvation may reach the ends of the earth.

Second Reading (1 Cor 1.1-3)

Beginnings matter, not least in letters. Today we hear St Paul beginning his First Letter to the Corinthians. What he wishes his friends is 'grace and peace' - a peace that is the gift of God, a grace that brings new hope to our world. That is the gift we are called to receive - and called to share.

Gospel (Jn 1.29-34)

Last Sunday's Gospel told us what Jesus saw after his baptism - a dove descending, the sign of God's favour on his Son. Today, in John's Gospel, the Baptist tells us what he saw: the same dove coming to rest on Jesus as the sign of the power through which Christ would in turn baptise us with his Spirit and make us witnesses to the Good News he brings.

Homily Notes - First Reflection



A dove descending: that is what John the Baptist saw as he looked over the crowd on the bank of the Jordan; a dove like the dove released by Noah after the forty days of flood which (according to the great story told in Genesis chapter 8) destroyed all life on the face of the earth. In the Noah myth, the dove returned to the ark after its first flight bearing a sprig of olive, the sign of new life. And a week later the dove then flew off again; flew the Patriarch knew not where; flew away, never to return. Yet on the Jordan bank the prophet saw the dove descending to remain, *resting* on the one that John had first recognised and then proclaimed:

'Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.'

The dove that comes and goes we know well: those blessed and all-too-fleeting moments of peace and calm after turmoil; those times in life when (at least in our little orbit) God is in his heaven and all's well with the world. And we are used to the departure (whether sudden or gradual) of that sense of well-being, when the oasis of rest is left behind and soon seems as insubstantial as a mirage in our memory. Yet John's text says this Dove came to rest on Jesus; and John's whole Gospel is the proclamation that in Christ this Dove came to dwell forever in our midst. This is the Gospel of the

Incarnation that we have just celebrated at Christmas: that the Word was made flesh; that the Spirit is, hereon in, tangible, enduring, inseparable from this world and from our lives. That is our faith.

This Dove came not to leave but to be poured out ever more abundantly (like a flood, in fact!) on those baptised by Jesus with the Holy Spirit. This Dove came to descend again like tongues of fire on those who dare to believe in the Gospel of Jesus and in his Risen Life; on those who let themselves be gathered by the love that would not hate; on those who have met the mercy that would not retaliate. This Dove came down that the disciples - *us*, here and now - might become the Dove; might be the sign of Christ's peace, '*a peace that the world cannot give*' (as John's Gospel goes on to tell us: Jn 14.27); might be that enduring presence in our broken world.

What did John the Baptist think he was doing there at the Jordan? We Roman Catholics easily misunderstand, imagining a sort of old-style Saturday morning queue for the confessional, snaking its way out from Jerusalem, each person reciting their sins and then returning to *just where they were before*, suitably chastened by his fiery preaching and his 'baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins', but otherwise unchanged.

But we miss the detail provided by ancient tradition: John baptised on the *far* side of the Jordan, at Aenon near Salim (Jn 3.23, 26). The people weren't being invited to dip their finger in the holy water stoop as the pious act of individual penitents. They were being invited to come and stand as a nation where Joshua and his followers had stood before they entered the Promised Land by crossing the Jordan. They were invited to start again from the very beginning, freed from past mistakes and betrayals, and to do things differently this time.

Radical grace offers a different world. Radical faith trusts that the Spirit will make that world possible. And today, on this *Peace Sunday*, we are asked yet again to decide. Will *we* begin again? Will *we* offer that new beginning, that different way of doing things, to our world? Will *we* break the cycles of hatred and retaliation which disfigured the last century through two world wars?

0



It is not that we are in a 'steady state' universe. Seventy-five years ago the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki vaporised (together with the bodies of their victims) the lie that 'non-combatant immunity' can ever be maintained in modern warfare. Yet new generations of hypersonic missiles threaten to undermine the balance of terror between the main nuclear weapon states. At the same time, India and Pakistan point nuclear devices at each other across the disputed territory of Kashmir, North Korea has sought immunity from attack by developing its own nuclear deterrent, and other regimes also claim the right to hold these awful weapons, while Britain continues to plough billions into a project to keep 'our' deterrent at sea.

It is ironic, too, that the contemporary River Jordan resembles in places a muddy puddle, rather than the major watercourse used by John the Baptist for his ritual ablutions. Here as elsewhere, water extraction and climate change are putting both natural resources and international relations under pressure. It is often said that the next global conflict will be fought over water, not oil.

Like the dove sent out by Noah after the flood, the Dove of Peace today seeks somewhere to rest; and seeks, too, the olive twigs that might betoken a different future and a new hope. It is surely our task as followers of the Lamb of God, the innocent victim who rejected the way of violence and so took away the sin of the world, to provide that resting place and to nurture those olive twigs of peace wherever they may grow.

Homily Notes - Second Reflection

On January 27, *Holocaust Memorial Day* will mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camps and the final frustration of Hitler's 'Final Solution'. Then, in a probably rather more festive mood, our first May Bank Holiday this year has been moved from the customary Monday to the following Friday, May 8, celebrating the 75th anniversary of *Victory In Europe Day*, the ending of the Second World War on European soil. Later in the summer, on the Feast of the Transfiguration, we shall remember another 75th anniversary, that of the first use in warfare of an atomic bomb, followed three days later by the bombing of Nagasaki, on August 9, and then, finally the Japanese surrender on *VJ-Day*, August 15.

These will perhaps be the last major international commemorations of these anniversaries with living witnesses participating. Hereafter, the memories of the horrors will be wholly entrusted to us, to generations who were not there. What stories will we tell? Will our focus be on 'our' victory? Will we

cast our ancestors as the unalloyed angels of light fighting the powers of darkness? Will it be gratitude for *'those who gave their tomorrows that we might enjoy our todays'* that we put front and centre? When it's a matter of commemorating the victims of Nazism and Fascism it is easy enough to see our nation's cause as 'just' without raising awkward questions about our own colonial legacy or examining the mechanisms that caused the collapse of liberal democracy and the triumph of demagoguery (concerns which have become worryingly topical today in many countries).

But Christians ought to feel the need to ask deeper questions. How did this evil come to be visited on our continent and on our globe? How did people learn to hate their neighbours so easily? How did we come to accept that the deliberate slaughter of non-combatants, whether through carpet-bombing or ultimately through the use of nuclear devices, was an acceptable tactic? The End (the ending of the war) justified the Means, so we're often told. But Catholic ethics never allow the use of a human person as a means to an end. Somewhere along the line we surrendered that principle amidst the events of 75 years ago.



Cobble stones in German streets remind residents of the Jewish neighbours who once lived there.

At some point in our reflections the word 'Sin' needs to make an appearance - not just to categorise the undoubted war-crimes of Hitler's henchmen but to characterise the whole enterprise of planning for war. Pope St John Paul II often used to speak of war as *'una strada senza uscita'* - a road without exits or (as we might better put it in English) *'the road to nowhere'*.

The proper response to sin is repentance. Yes, firstly, let us allow ourselves tears of regret for *all* the victims of the wars of the last century, be they fighting men or civilian bystanders, the leaders or the led, guilty or innocent; so many wasted lives. Then, beyond regret, comes a commitment to learn lessons - not simply *'lest we forget'* but also *'never again'*: never again this waste of life, of human ingenuity, of natural resources; never again the reduction of neighbour to enemy, an object of hatred, unworthy of respect.

Does that sound naïve? Does it sound disloyal? Does it disturb you to hear someone speak in these terms - as though we are criticising 'our' dead or rehabilitating 'our' past enemies when we push past the military honours and the pomp and circumstance to the No Man's Land of Grief?

Something which is true of both World Wars, on our European continent at least, is that they were fought between nations which all claimed (at least historically) to be 'Christian countries'. Somehow, participants failed to hear the implications of St Paul's greeting to the Christians of Corinth, *'who are called to take their place among all the saints everywhere who pray to our Lord Jesus Christ; for he is their Lord no less than ours. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace and peace'*. (1 Cor 1.1-3)

Yes, *'he is their Lord no less than ours'* - no matter who 'they' may happen to be, friend or foe, Christian or not. That is the basis for Catholic reflection on our world in its brokenness. That is the uncomfortable truth implicit in the Gospel. But the Second Song of the Servant in the Book of Isaiah, the other text we have heard today (Isa 49.3, 5-6), is also applicable to our situation and shows us our calling in the face of the pressures and prejudices that lead to war: *'It is not enough for you to be my servant ... I will make you the light of the nations so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth'*. It is not enough for us to mind our own business and do our duty. We have also to become bearers of light to our neighbours.

Will we take up that challenge as followers of Jesus of Nazareth, the one who commands us to love our enemies and to do good to those who persecute us? Because if we won't who will? If not even the Gospel of the Resurrection can inspire us to change our reflexes and our responses to violence and to the planning of violence, then where can a more peaceful future be conceived, nurtured and brought to fruition?

Suggested songs

L = Laudate (Decani Music)

CH = Celebration Hymnal for Everyone with Supplement (McCrimmons)

LHON = Liturgical Hymns Old & New (Kevin Mayhew)

Thou whose almighty word - **L 887 CH 738 LHON 689**

For the healing of the nations, Fred Kaan - **L 886 CH 179 LHON 262**

Let us build a house, Marty Haugen - **L 458**

Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love, (Ghana), adapted Colvin - **L 241 CH 318**

There is a longing in our hearts O Lord, Anne Quigley - **L 941 CH 915**

Tell out my soul, Timothy Dudley-Smith - **L 880 CH 684 LHON 644**

Will you come and follow me, Bell & Maule - **L 877 CH 812 LHON 740**

Here I am Lord, Daniel L. Schutte - **L 865 CH 285 LHON 376**

Lord, make me a means of your peace, John B Foley - **L 899 LHON 449**

Christ be our Light, Bernadette Farrell - **L 883 CH 891 LHON 439**

The World Peace Prayer, Marty Haugen - **CH 350**

Prayers of the Faithful - some suggestions

Priest: It is Christ who is the Light of the Nations, and he asks us to bring that light to places of shadow and darkness. Let us pray for ourselves and for the world in which we are his witnesses. The response to each intercession is: **Christ, be our light.**

That Christ may open our eyes to see where the Spirit is at work in our world today, opening up new paths of peace and hope.

Let us pray to the Lord: **Christ, be our light.**

For our own homes, our families, our parish community; that the grace and peace Christ came to bring may reign over us, so that the stranger may find welcome and the hurting may find comfort in our company.

Let us pray to the Lord: **Christ, be our light.**

For all Christians, that we may recognise that it is the same Gospel that we hear, the same Lord that we worship, and the same peace to which all are called. For God's blessing on this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. And for the ministry of Pope Francis as a servant of communion.

Let us pray to the Lord: **Christ, be our light.**

For our political leaders, that they may seek to find a shared understanding and achieve reconciliation in the face of divisions of every kind. And for our nation, that we may work to achieve a just peace across the world.

Let us pray to the Lord: **Christ, be our light.**

For a rejection of violence as a solution to human conflict: that the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima may lead to new efforts to remove the threat of nuclear destruction; and that the young may reject the illusion that carrying a knife makes them safer on our streets.

Let us pray to the Lord: **Christ, be our light.**

For the Prophets of our day who, like John the Baptist, both name what is wrong and witness to hope; for all who take risks for peace and justice. We ask God's blessing today especially on the work of the international Catholic Peace Movement, *Pax Christi*.

Let us pray to the Lord: **Christ, be our light.**

Let us commend to God's mercy all who are unwell (especially.....) that they might be restored to health; and all who have died (especially.....). May they dwell for eternity in the light of God's face.

Let us pray to the Lord: **Christ, be our light.**

In a moment of silence, let us place before the Lord our own thirst for peace.

Final Prayer: Father, as the Spirit descended like a dove on your Son at his baptism, so grant that the same Dove of Peace may open up paths to a just peace for all in our world today. To you we make these our prayers, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Peace Prayers

I bow to the sacred in all creation.

May my spirit fill the world with beauty and wonder.

May my mind seek truth with humility and openness.

May my heart forgive without limit.

May my love for friend, enemy and outcast be without measure.

May my needs be few and my living simple.

May my actions bear witness to the suffering of others.

May my hands never harm a living being.

May my steps stay on the journey of justice.

May my tongue speak for those who are poor without fear of the powerful.

May my prayers rise with patient discontent until no child is hungry.

May my life's work be a passion for peace and nonviolence.

May my soul rejoice in the present moment.

May my imagination overcome death and despair with new possibility.

And may I risk reputation, comfort and security to bring this hope to the children.

Mary Lou Kownacki, Pax Christi USA

Blessed are those who refuse the lie
that one life is worth more than any other,
for theirs is the future of humanity.

Blessed are those who have stared long into the abyss,
for theirs is honesty beyond grief.

Blessed are those who resist retaliation,
for the earth will never be won by force.

Blessed are those who would rather die for truth
than live with compromise,
for the truth will outlive all lies.

Blessed are those who forgive the unforgivable,
for they have seen the darkness of their own souls.

Blessed are those who know themselves truly,
for they have seen themselves as God sees them.

Blessed are those who are provocatively nonviolent,
for they are following the path of the son of God.

Blessed are those who choose to receive violence but not to give it,
for the future is born out of such choices.

Blessed are you when you stand up for truth
and hell itself decides to try and destroy you.
You're not the first and you won't be the last.

I'm telling you now, nothing makes any sense
unless you learn see it differently,
and then choose to live that alternative into being.

Paraphrased by Simon Woodman, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church

Prayer activities for children

These prayer activities are suitable for quite young children. For secondary school or youth groups you can find adaptable assemblies and activities on the Pax Christi website.

Elements of Peace

A series of mix-and-match lesson plans covering topics such as Turn the other cheek, Love your enemies, Solidarity, Sowing seeds of peace, Being a peacemaker and more.

<http://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-education/lessons-workshops/elements-of-peace/>

Assembly for 2020 World Peace Day

<http://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-education/assemblies/>

Prayers All Round

Invite the children to sit in a circle and introduce the activity: We are going to pray for each other. **Ask them** what we can say to God when we are praying for someone. You could help the children get started if needed, by wondering aloud if we might start with 'Lord, thank you for...' or 'Dear Jesus, please can you...'

Welcome a few of the children's ideas. **Remind** them that Jesus tells us that *everyone* is our neighbour - and that we pray for people we don't even know sometimes because we try to care about everyone, like Jesus does.

Explain that now we are going to pray for each other in our circle. Each of us is going to pray for the people sitting on either side of us. It doesn't matter whether we know them, our 'prayer-friends', well. Our prayers will flow all round the circle.

Invite the children to close their eyes if they'd like to, and repeat a simple prayer after you, thinking of their prayer friends. You can use the one below and adapt it by adding some of the ideas the children suggested earlier.



*Thank you Jesus for my prayer friends. Thank you for loving them.
Be with them if they have any worries.
Bless them and their families.*

Suggest a few moments of silence for the children to add some words of their own 'in their hearts'.

Ask the children to open their eyes and then explain that the prayer time is finished.

Being a peacemaker

You will need:

Pens for colouring in;

Sufficient copies of the children's peace card produced by Pax Christi (see illustration) or materials for making cards.

Invite the children to think about a time when they had a falling out with friends or brothers and sisters: What happened? What did they say or do? What did others say or do?

Draw attention to any general themes: sharing, fairness, being first or last, being right or wrong. Help the children to name some of the feelings expressed, without judgement: feeling angry, upset, wanting revenge, sadness, feeling sorry, like nobody cares, not wanting to back down, wanting to hurt someone back...

Encourage them to think about how they *made peace* and became friends again. Did they say or do something that helped make peace? Did the others say or do something that helped? Was it easy or hard? Did they make peace straight away or later?

Mention some of the words and actions that help: apologising, smiling, deciding to act differently, inviting someone into a group, finding a compromise, taking time to calm down, sharing, asking for help...

Ask the children to think of someone in their life who they think is good at being a peacemaker. What are some of the reasons why they are thinking of this person? Highlight any themes - there will probably be some overlap with things already mentioned.

Invite the children to make a card to thank this person for being a good peacemaker. If they haven't thought of a someone yet, they can prepare the card and be ready to give it to someone when they see good peace-making happening!



Article for a parish magazine: 'Little Boy and Fat Man'

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

75 years ago the Manhattan Project perfected the first viable nuclear fission device, tested in the desert of New Mexico on July 16, 1945 at a site named 'Trinity'. Three weeks later, on the Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ, a simpler uranium weapon called 'Little Boy' was dropped with devastating impact on Hiroshima. Then three days after that the more complicated plutonium weapon that had been tested at Trinity, this type code-named 'Fat Man', was dropped on Nagasaki.

Three Generations of Learning to Love the Bomb

The age of nuclear terror had begun. However much we might pretend, like Stanley Kubrick's *Doctor Strangelove*, to have '*learned to stop worrying and love the Bomb*', nuclear terror is the only adequate description of the last three-quarters of a century, during which the nuclear-weapon states rapidly

gained the capacity to destroy human life on this planet many times over. Several times we have come within a whisker of a nuclear exchange, most famously during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 but also more recently when defective software, misunderstood military manoeuvres or even crashes involving nuclear-armed aircraft have nearly brought the USA and the USSR (latterly the Russian Federation) to the brink.

Now India and Pakistan have nuclear missiles pointed at each other across the disputed territory of Kashmir, while North Korea has joined China, Israel, France and the UK in possessing a nuclear arsenal. This nuclear proliferation presents a much less predictable range of potential flashpoints than did the old Cold War stand-off between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Small wonder that the 'Doomsday Clock' (the measure of nuclear threat set since 1947 by the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*) is currently set at two minutes to Midnight, its highest ever threat-level. Yet most of us hardly give a thought to the nuclear threat or to the level of expenditure required to maintain it.

Blasphemous Names, Blasphemous Dates

My purpose here is not to rehearse yet again the arguments for and against the replacement of the UK's Trident submarines (though I personally believe their purchase to be morally unjustifiable, economically unsustainable and militarily inept) or to make any directly political point at all. Rather, I'd simply like to invite you to reflect on the names chosen by those first thermonuclear scientists for their weapons - '*Little Boy*' and '*Fat Man*' - and on the theological elements introduced into the saga by calling the test-site Trinity and by dropping the first atomic bomb on the Feast of the Transfiguration. Because there's a whole implicit anthropology and theology here.

A little boy that could kill so many children; a fat man with such murderous intent: this is where the logic of total war took those scientists on the Manhattan Project. After witnessing the experimental detonation of the first '*Fat Man*' device, the Project's director, J. Robert Oppenheimer, said that the words of Vishnu in the Hindu holy text, the *Bhagavad Gita* came to mind: '*Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds*'. He too it was who named the test site

'Convinced as I am that a world without nuclear weapons is possible and necessary, I ask political leaders not to forget that these weapons cannot protect us from current threats to national and international security. We must consider the catastrophic impact of their use, especially from a humanitarian and environmental standpoint, and reject heightening a climate of fear, mistrust and hostility fomented by nuclear doctrines.'

Pope Francis, Nagasaki, November 2019

'Trinity', apparently with reference to the poet John Donne, maybe alluding to the line: *'Batter my heart, three-person'd God'* - a joke of sorts about the nature of the device they had made, which used conventional explosives to drive the plutonium core towards the device's heart and 'go critical', triggering the fission chain reaction.

What a blasphemy to liken this destructive power to the Christian Creator, the One who is love and whose whole energy is communion! How much greater the accidental blasphemy (for meteorological reasons of cloud-cover and wind direction rather than theological ones) of dropping the Hiroshima bomb, with its light *'brighter than a thousand suns,'* on the day when Christians recall Christ's face transfigured, made glorious, whiter than any fuller's bleach could muster, and remember the heavenly voice that directed the three apostles to *'Listen to him!'* - to Him, the innocent, nonviolent and merciful one.



From One Transfiguration to Another

After his Transfiguration, when (according to St Luke) Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus about his forthcoming *Exodos*, his 'passing over' through death to life, which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem, Jesus took Peter and James and John back down the mountain to his cross. After Hiroshima, all humanity has made a similar downward journey into the valley of potential nuclear death, a new plutonium-fuelled Passion of the Christ.

75 years ago a bomb called Little Boy destroyed our innocence. 75 years ago Fat Man's fallout drew us into the nuclear age. Will we let these evil instruments continue to corrupt our conscience and our politics, or will we let the voice from that other, non-nuclear cloud awaken us from our torpor: *'This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him'* (Lk 9.15)?

75 years ago, in the very months when the Manhattan Project was coming to murderous fruition, a French school teacher began a campaign of prayer for reconciliation between France and Germany. The result was the Catholic Peace Movement, *Pax Christi* - now established in countries around the world, committed to work for peace. It offers a space in which to question the logic of militarism and the threat of mutually assured destruction. It also engages in practical initiatives to build peace in our broken world. Will you join us? Find out more at www.paxchristi.org.uk

Pax Christi - a movement supporting everyday peacemakers

75 years ago Pax Christi was started by two people who obeyed the gospel challenge to love their enemies even in the bitter context of the Second World War. Today Pax Christi is active in 50 countries - a grassroots movement supporting 'ordinary' people in their 'everyday' peacemaking.

The teacher



Marthe Dortel-Claudot taught in a girls' school in Agen, in the south of France. The Second World War was still raging when, praying in church on 23 December 1944, she became painfully aware of what Christmas preparations must mean for German Catholics who were suffering so much. Gradually she recognised a call to pray that Germany would be healed of the damage caused by twelve years of Nazi rule. Marthe's first recruits were a war widow, the daughter of a deportee, and the local Carmelite

community. In the spring of 1945 she visited the local bishop to invite his support for a movement dedicated to reconciliation: 'Pax Christi'.

The bishop

In 1944 Bishop Pierre-Marie Théas of Montauban had spent ten weeks in detention for speaking out against the deportation of Jews from the south of France. When some fellow prisoners asked him to give a retreat he preached about forgiveness, and suggested they should pray for their captors. This provoked outrage. Théas replied 'My friends, I cannot proclaim anything except what the Lord said: Love your enemies. No more, no less.' He offered Mass for Germany. The following year, when Marthe Dortel-Claudot visited him to present her Pax Christi proposal, he said 'Yes'.

The local group

Against the backdrop of the Metropolitan Cathedral, members of Pax Christi Liverpool held a vigil to mark the 2019 World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel. They shared the time of prayer with members of Kairos Sabeel, and attracted public interest with placards which read: 'Occupation denies humanity'. In

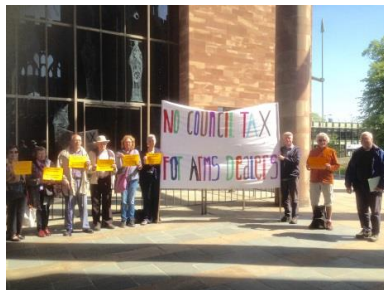


Leeds Pax Christi members co-sponsored a screening of 'Voices across the

Divide', one of eight films shown during the Leeds Palestine Film Festival to throw light on the people, history and culture of Palestine. Through personal stories the film recounts the evolution of the conflict.

The pensioners

Led by Pax Christi member Paul McGowan, pensioners in Coventry have been campaigning for several years to convince Coventry City Council, as part of West Midlands Consortium, to stop investing pension and council-tax payers' money in companies that sell weapons. Having successfully persuaded the West Midlands Pension Fund to withdraw from direct investment in the cluster bomb trade, the group has now focussed on challenging local investment in Lockheed Martin, the world's largest arms dealer, which has



offices on the Coventry University campus.

The lawyers

Based on the Greek island of Lesbos, a small international staff team with 140 volunteer lawyers is helping many of the desperate migrants who have landed there and are detained in a refugee camp. The lawyers hold advice sessions, distribute leaflets in various languages, and prepare individuals for interviews. In this way they have guided over 9,000 people in the past three years, helping 74.5% of them to prove their refugee status. In recognition of this work protecting human dignity Pax Christi International awarded the European Lawyers in Lesbos their 2019 peace prize.

The youth leaders

Catechists and confirmation candidates prepared a peace shrine for Peace Sunday in the parish of Our Lady and Mount Carmel, Enfield. Durham Martyrs parish promoted Peace Sunday on social media, tweeting the children's peace prayer for everyone to share. A special children's liturgy was used, and young people in their youth 'Base Camp' looked at 'How can we share the Good News and be peacemakers in the world?' Meanwhile in Waltham, the Year 9 Justice and Peace Group of Holy Family school discussed 'How can I help create peace' and gave out Pax Christi peace badges.



The archbishop



From Fiji, Archbishop Peter Chong, a partner of Pax Christi's Catholic Nonviolence Initiative, and president of the Federation of Catholic Bishops' Conferences of Oceania, comments: 'Fiji has been labelled as a country with a coup culture. The coup culture paradigm claims that coups and violence will help politicians and activists achieve their political goals. Studies on political resistance and campaigns show that violent methods have a low success rate'. He has worked with Muslim and Hindu

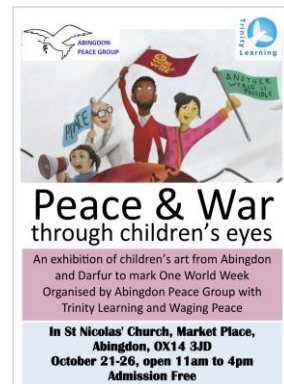
leaders saying, 'Our religious traditions teach that nonviolence is the method for achieving our social and political transformation. Religious traditions condemn violence because it does not belong to God's nature. Violence gives birth to a spiral and culture of violence'.

The students

Schools from across Hallam diocese took part in a Social Action Day - the initiative of two girls, Anna and Eleanor Marshall, who wanted to encourage their peers to get involved in justice and peace. The students issued the invitations, and planned and led the day's programme, with the introduction, opening and closing prayers. Activities included a workshop on Franz Jägerstätter and peacemaking. It concluded with each group discussing how to take forward in their own schools what they had learned. The event proved so popular that a repeat was requested.

The community networkers

Pax Christi members Tony Godfrey and Anne Dodd work with Quaker Sally Reynolds and other campaigners in the Abingdon Peace Group. Making the most of community alliances multiplies their outreach. In October 2019 the trio put on an art exhibition called 'Peace and War through Children's Eyes' featuring drawings by children from Darfur, Sudan, now living in refugee camps, alongside those of Abingdon children. The refugees' drawings were collected by 'Waging Peace', an organisation focused on Sudan. They revealed shocking memories of their villages being attacked. In Abingdon, the networkers teamed up with Trinity Learning, an educational charity. With some funding from the Christian Peace Education Fund, they produced a peace pack to help primary school children prepare pictures responding to the question 'What does peace mean to you?' The exhibition was hosted at St Nicholas Church and attracted visitors through the widely-read 'Abingdon Blog'.



Useful websites

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales:

<http://www.cbcew.org.uk/CBCEW-Home/Departments/International-Affairs/>

Catholic Nonviolence Initiative: www.nonviolencejustpeace.net/

Campaign Against Arms Trade: www.caat.org.uk

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

Caritas Social Action Network: www.csan.org.uk/

National Justice and Peace Network: www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

Peace encyclicals and World Peace Day messages:

tinyurl.com/encyclicals-messages

Open Democracy: www.opendemocracy.net

Podcasts - *for personal learning or discussing in a group*

Short talks on Catholic social teaching - human dignity, the common good, creation, solidarity etc - including one by Pat Gaffney of Pax Christi on 'Peacemaking - the choice of life or death'

<http://www.catholicsocialteaching.org.uk/resources/podcasts/>

Today's nonviolent movements - Maria Stephan, Director of the Program on Nonviolent Action for the US Institute of Peace

<https://www.usip.org/publications/2019/05/maria-stephan-todays-nonviolent-movements>

Webinar on 'Experiences of nonviolence and Jesus' way of nonviolence'. One of four produced by the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SOJ2Qgz-0_M&feature=youtu.be

Portraits of Catholic peacemakers Dorothy Day, Oscar Romero and the 'Nuns on the Bus' project. <http://www.goodradioshows.org/peaceTalksL193.htm>

Ziad El-Sayegh of the Middle East Council of Churches on dealing with root causes of conflict <https://soundcloud.com/catholicchurch/understanding-the-christians-of-the-middle-east>

Pax Christi

people putting peace into action by



Helping every parish celebrate Pope Francis' peace message



Delivering peace education sessions to young people in schools



Challenging the global arms trade and the suffering and destruction it causes

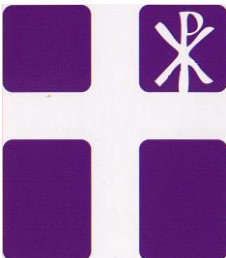


Promoting a just peace for Palestine and Israel



Speaking up for nonviolent approaches to conflict

Contact Pax Christi if we can help you to run an event in your parish, school, university or diocese.



PAX CHRISTI
St Joseph's
Watford Way
London NW4 4TY
0208 203 4884
www.paxchristi.org.uk