

Pax Christi Peace Award, 22 May 2021

Thank you from Ellen Teague

I am bemused that you feel I deserve this award, but so honoured.

Thank you to Valerie and Nan for nominating me so eloquently and generously. I thought - gosh I must deserve this award - after reading that!

But I would emphasise that Pax Christi has given me so much, from 1990 when my dear friend Pat Gaffney moved from CAFOD to work there and drew me in. Among the highlights have been producing 'A Taste for Peace' - Recipes and beautiful Reflections for Peace; Joining a delegation to Bethlehem in the West Bank in 2015 for an international gathering - witnessing the enormous effort for peace as we walked around the barrier wall and Palestinian refugee camps, seeing the oppression of the Bedouin and even visiting the site of the Oak of Mamre monastery amidst the tensions of Hebron. And the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative.... I joined one of the many courses running.

Engagement with Pax Christi has been so influential for me and getting to know the peace community at home and internationally such inspirational, creative, compassionate and thoughtful people. We have shared so many meals - the best of any NGO gathering - and multiple experiences, but most of all we have shared friendship and an affinity and a vision.

I've found myself kneeling outside the Ministry of Defence on Ash Wednesday, playing the guitar in the crypt of Westminster Cathedral in the annual service to commemorate Franz Jaggerstatter, and, last Saturday, joining in the alternative vision presented by the conscientious objectors' day service in London as well as being introduced to Tai Chi and a Sambalpuri Folk Dance in the dance-a-thon for Pilgrimage for Peace! I turned my camera off - but I assure you I did it!

The nomination says I bring together strands of justice and peace and highlighting the scale of violence against God's creation. I certainly aim to do that. And Yes, some might call me obsessed with the Church's Social Teaching, particularly Laudato Si. But Pax Christi people show me I am not alone.

In all this, I thank the Columbans - who are marking World Biodiversity Day today - for having me in their Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation team in Britain for more than three decades, giving me the freedom and resources to pursue that agenda. The Columbans are active members of Pax Christi internationally; in fact, in Washington and London we have shared an office building!

And I thank my family - Gerry and our three gentle and wonderful young men who have prompted a life-long commitment to the Justice and Peace movement, and Pax Christi in particular, to give all our young people a future of peace.