



**I Want To Join Pax Christi USA
and Help Make A Difference!**

Pax Christi USA strives to create a world that reflects the Peace of Christ by exploring, articulating, and witnessing to the call of Christian nonviolence. This work begins in personal life and extends to communities of reflection and action to transform structures of society. Pax Christi USA rejects war, preparations for war, and every form of violence and domination. It advocates primacy of conscience, economic and social justice, and respect for creation.

Pax Christi USA commits itself to peace education and, with the help of its bishop members, promotes the gospel imperative of peacemaking as a priority in the Catholic Church in the United States. Through the efforts of all its members and in cooperation with other groups, Pax Christi USA works toward a more peaceful, just and sustainable world.

I support Pax Christi USA's Statement of Purpose and wish to become a member.

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Enclosed is my membership donation of

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Prayer

***Celebrating Our Diversity,
Overcoming Prejudice
by Cyprian Lamar Rowe, FMS***

*Beloved God,
Creator of the just and the unjust
Lover of all humankind
share your eyes of love
so that we will see beauty in all creation.*

*Let us, God, as we pass this way
make it a way that sings the glory
of all your creation
and celebrates the infinite variety
of your divinity in all and through all.*

*Help us, O God, to understand
that the violence of "isms"
whether racism or sexism or antisemitism
heterosexism or militarism
is a violation of your creative will.*

*Help us to understand, God,
that we have neither knowledge
nor power to know
the infinite designs of worlds
where by your grace we may inhabit.
Help us explore the heights and depths
of our need to love and be loved,
to understand that what we hate is often
our sense of incompleteness.*

*We shout against creations that we cannot love
because we fear and do not understand.*

*We need to understand because we need
to bow before them as being godly
as we too are godly.*

*Help us, God,
and in the spirit of Mary, Mother of the afflicted,
let us stand by the cross of our own humanity
loving it and knowing that dying to hatred
is the only path to salvation
in the name of our loving Brother, Jesus Christ.
Amen.*

STUDY RESOURCES

Read "Build the Ground Zero mosque," by Fareed Zakaria of *Newsweek* and CNN at www.newsweek.com/2010/08/06/the-real-ground-zero.html

Read Tom Cordaro's book, *Be Not Afraid: An Alternative to the War on Terror*, published by Pax Christi USA. Visit www.paxchristiusa.org to order.

Visit the Website of the Muslim American Society for more information on Islam in the United States. The Muslim American Society's mission is "to move people to strive for God, consciousness, liberty and justice and to convey Islam with utmost clarity." Their vision is a "virtuous and just American society." Visit on the Web at www.masnet.org/main/

Listen to one of a number of podcasts on Islam presented by the radio show *Speaking of Faith*. A recent show was entitled "Revealing Ramadan," online at <http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/>

ACTION SUGGESTIONS

Pray the prayer included in this Peaceweavings, "Celebrating Our Diversity, Overcoming Prejudice," individually or as part of your faith community.

Make copies of this Peaceweavings, distribute them at your church or leave copies in the information area or on a display table. Ask that the brochure or excerpts from it be included in your Sunday bulletin.

Sign, print, and circulate the letter of support, "Stand with Muslim Americans," available at http://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/2518/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=4594

Visit your local mosque or Islamic center. Explore the development of interfaith dialogues between Muslims, Jews, Christians, and others as educational events for your church, school, or community.

Fall 2010

Peaceweavings

***Embracing Our Principles Instead of Our Fears:
What a Mosque at Ground Zero Really Proclaims***

Catholic Social Teaching tells us that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. However, attacks on Muslims—and on dark-skinned people mistaken for Muslims—started almost immediately after the events of 9/11. This behavior is contrary to our Christian values.



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Embracing Our Principles Instead of Our Fears: What a Mosque at Ground Zero Really Proclaims

by Ronaldo Cruz, Director of Institutional Advancement, Pax Christi USA

Pax Christi USA, the national Catholic peace movement, joins the citizens of New York City and local and national organizations in support of the Cordoba Center, an Islamic community center proposed for lower Manhattan, near the Ground Zero site.

As the national Catholic peace movement, Pax Christi USA believes in the freedom of religion and in countering systematic and perpetual deep spiritual and social brokenness. Catholic Social Teaching tells us that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. However, attacks on Muslims—and on dark-skinned people mistaken for Muslims—started almost immediately after the events of 9/11. This behavior is contrary to our Christian values.

Pax Christi USA refuses to play into the fear cultivated by individuals and organizations that promote the xenophobic attitudes and behaviors that have become commonplace throughout the country. We believe it is contrary to the honor of the victims who died on September 11, 2001, and to the American principles we have been taught to respect all of our lives.

U.S. Muslims did not kill anyone. It was religious and political extremists, claiming to represent one of the great religions of the world, who committed these heinous criminal attacks. As we all know—or should know—Muslims were among the victims on that horrific day, along with Jews, Christians, people of other faith

traditions or no tradition, as well as citizens of other countries. Despite the fact that these acts were not carried out by U.S. Muslims and that Muslims working in the Pentagon and the World Trade Center were among those who died that day, what we witness today are unconscionable anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiments from many of our citizens—not only in New York, but throughout the country.

Pax Christi USA stands in solidarity with interfaith organizations committed to constitutional and civil rights for all people, no matter what faith tradition they claim. We congratulate President Obama's affirmation of the right of the Cordoba Initiative of New York City to establish a community center and mosque in lower Manhattan. The Cordoba Initiative has consistently been an advocate of positive and progressive relations between Muslim and Christian communities in the United States and throughout the world.

Pax Christi USA is concerned that a great deal of the opposition to the proposed project comes from individuals and organizations that are identified as hostile to the legitimate rights and aspirations of the U.S. Muslim community. We appeal to the opponents of this project to desist from the kind of slander and intolerance that are anathema to our nation's democratic ideals and the assertion of the basic human rights of all.

We would like to point out that not all families of the victims of 9/11 are opposed to the

construction of an Islamic center near Ground Zero. These brave and committed people, who have known the tragedy of 9/11 in their bones, have witnessed to all of us what it means to seek justice and promote healing, rather than to give in to fear or bias. In reference to the Cordoba Initiative, September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, a nationwide group founded by family members of those killed on 9/11, stated:

“We applaud President Obama for his leadership on this issue. Simply put: we lost our family members on 9/11/2001, but will not lose our nation, too. America, the concept and the people and the land thrive when we choose to trust in our principles rather than cave to our basest fears.

“What better place for healing, reconciliation and understanding than Ground Zero? We honor our family

members by practicing American principles and moving forward from Ground Zero to a future of peaceful coexistence.”

Pax Christi USA agrees with September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows' statement. We affirm that the Catholic and Muslim communities of New York and all of the United States can build positive bridges of mutual understanding, that we can collaborate for making our society stronger and more just for all people.

Ronaldo Cruz is the Director for Institutional Advancement at Pax Christi USA. Cruz served for over twenty years at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in Washington, D.C., as the executive director of the Secretariat for Hispanic Affairs.

Daily Reflections

Sunday: “We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world. At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace.” ~ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, “Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching”

Monday: “We fail to honor those murdered on that awful day (9/11)—including Muslim Americans killed in the Twin Towers and the Pentagon—by betraying our nation's historic commitment to religious liberty, fueling ugly stereotypes about Islam, and demeaning the vast majority of Muslims committed to peace.” ~ Religious leaders' statement in support of the Cordoba Initiative

Tuesday: “Truth, in fact, is *lógos* which creates *diá-logos*, and hence communication and communion. Truth, by enabling men and women to let go of their subjective opinions and impressions, allows them to move beyond cultural and historical limitations and to come together in the assessment of the value and substance of things.” ~ Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*

Wednesday: “Then Peter proceeded to speak and said, ‘In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears God and acts uprightly is acceptable to God.’” ~ Acts 10:34-35

Thursday: “We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.” ~ Maya Angelou

Friday: “The proposed Islamic Center is a much-needed facility to further the goal of mutual learning, respect, and appreciation across human boundaries. Rather than being a desecration of sacred ground, it is a sanctification of desecrated ground. It is a testament to what is great about the United States of America, the Constitution, and all civil laws. Let it stand as a symbol of our religious and patriotic commitments to freedom, diversity, and peaceful co-existence.” ~ Pax Christi Metro New York

Saturday: “Muslims, Christians, and Jews remember, and profoundly affirm, that they are followers of the one God, children of Abraham, brothers and sisters; enemies begin to speak to one another; those who were estranged join hands in friendship; nations seek the way of peace together. Strengthen our resolve to give witness to these truths by the way we live.” ~ Muslim-Jewish-Christian Prayer for Peace

In mid-August 2010, Ronaldo Cruz, Pax Christi USA's Director of Institutional Advancement, spoke at a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., in support of the Muslim American Society, addressing the controversy surrounding the proposed Islamic community center to be built in New York City near Ground Zero. The text in this Peaceweavings is adapted from the statement he delivered to members of the national media that day.