

**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 Statement of Purpose and wish to become a member.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Enclosed is my membership donation of
\$ _____ . _____\$35 _____\$40 _____\$50 _____\$100

At this time I can only contribute \$ _____

Payment:

Visa Mastercard

Card Number _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Please send me:

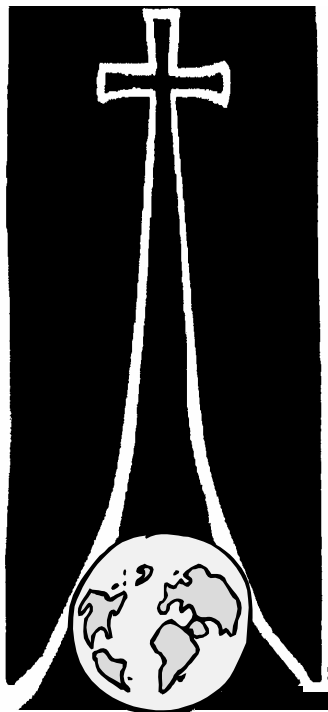
- Information about joining a local group
- Parish Sponsor Program information
- Youth/Young Adult Forum Information
- Will/bequest information

Fall 2004

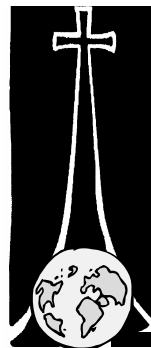
Peaceweavings

A Prophetic Church

As the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures spoke to the inhumanity of the "Empire" and called God's people to a new vision and hope for humanity, so must the Church today.



Pax Christi USA
532 W. 8th Street, Erie, PA 16502
814-453-4955; www.paxchristiusa.org



A Prophetic Church

The world in which we live certainly does not reflect God's design for the universe or God's hope that people and creation would live in peace and harmony—that all would enjoy the dignity that ought to be accorded the children of the Creator and that all would have fullness of life. Far from this ideal is the tendency toward "Empire" building, with our own country taking the lead in modeling this. As the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures spoke to the inhumanity of the "Empire" and called God's people to a new vision and hope for humanity, so must the Church today.

Reading the signs of our times, we see too many in our world that suffer from oppression and injustice. We see violence that plagues our neighborhoods, society, nation and world—and characterizes relationships. The majority of our world lack those basic goods which would enable them to live with dignity and respect. We cannot escape these realities along with the other "eyesores" that mark our era:

- war and its many tragic consequences
- economic domination and the "bullying" of nations
- the alienation of women, the rejection of their personhood and exclusion of their giftedness
- the marginalization of peoples
- the abuse of children

- the increasing numbers of hungry, homeless, ill and those deprived of an education
- the plight of our immigrant peoples
- the hypocrisy in the legislative and financial affairs of our government and in the foreign policies and new imperialism that characterize our national political scene
- the dichotomy between the profession of faith and justice
- marketing practices that promote a consumer culture and a culture of greed
- the unethical business practices of multinational corporations
- terrorism in the Middle East
- the AIDS pandemic in Africa and India
- corrupt governments and the plight of the poor in Third World nations
- the ever-increasing gap between the rich and poor and the feminine face of poverty

These and other affronts to human dignity, along with the pollutants that assault our environment and the misuse of natural resources, testify that we are a long way from making God's vision for the world and hope for people our lived reality. It is the obligation of the Church to address these aberrations and speak out against them, and it is the responsibility of the Church to hear God's Word and give voice to God's will. It is the call of the Church to be prophetic.

The Church, the people of God, must speak to those areas that diminish the dignity of the person and serve as stumbling blocks to the unfolding of the reign of God, sin—

personal sin and the sins of systems, societies and nations. The people of God must demonstrate their outrage and demand change when poverty, oppression, and violence of any form afflicts a people. The people of God must not tolerate those “isms” (gender, age, race, rank, etc.) that diminish the human person and any denial of basic human rights or conditions that do not enhance human advancement. The people of God must identify and address the underlying values and kinds of environments that lay a foundation for or encourages dominance and tyranny—that causes, encourages or perpetuates injustice, not only the acts visited on peoples but the conditions and systems that allow and support oppression. The people of God must speak to those aspects of a culture that promote lifestyles and products that deplete the world’s resources and offer a narrow or biased worldview which supports the gross inequities that exist among peoples and nations. The people of God must act on behalf of those who experience any diminishment and must act in favor of the Gospel.

The Gospel addresses the quality of human life and the conditions in which it is nurtured—it demands that persons, societies, institutions and systems that oppress be converted. Witnessing to the love of God in Jesus compels us to exercise our preferential option for the poor—to be voices for the voiceless, to act on behalf of those most in need...to be prophetic! There can be no justice without the promotion of human

life, the inclusion of all peoples, the recognition of the dignity of the human person and the complete liberation from anything that diminishes the human person. The call to conversion, the struggle for justice and the commitment to transform the world are inherent to our being Church—the people of God.

Bishop Gabino Zavala of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles is the bishop-president of Pax Christi USA. This piece is excerpted from his keynote presentation prepared for the 2004 Pax Christi USA National Assem-

Prayer

*Our Father, Mother, who are in the world
and surpass the world,
Blessed be your presence, in us, in animals
and flowers, in still air and wind.
May justice and peace dwell among us, as
you come to us.
Your will be our will;
You will that we be sisters and brothers, as
bread is bread, water is itself,
For our hunger, for quenching of thirst.
Forgive us.
We walk crookedly in the world, are
perverse, and fail of our promise.
But we would be human, if only you
consent to stir up our hearts.
Amen.*

By Daniel Berrigan, SJ

Prayer Reflections

Sunday: The Christian Faith is an integral unity, and thus it is incoherent to isolate some particular element to the detriment of the whole of Catholic doctrine. A political commitment to a single isolated aspect of the Church’s social doctrine does not exhaust one’s responsibility towards the common good. —*Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life*, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, November 24, 2002 and approved by Pope John Paul II

Monday: More than 840 million people in the world are malnourished, 153 million of them under the age of five. In the U.S., 33.6 million people, including almost 13 million children, live in households that experience hunger or the risk of hunger. —Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Tuesday: Lord Jesus, teach me to be generous; teach me to serve you as you deserve, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to seek reward, except that of knowing that I do your will. —St. Ignatius of Loyola

Wednesday: A Catholic moral framework does not easily fit the ideologies of “right” or “left,” nor the platforms of any party...Our responsibility is to measure all candidates, policies, parties, and platforms by how they protect or undermine the life, dignity, and rights of the human person, whether they protect the poor and vulnerable and advance the common good. —from *Faithful Citizenship*, issued by the United States Catholic Bishops

Thursday: To act is to be committed, and to be committed is to be in danger. —James Baldwin

Friday: Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual understanding. —Romans 14:19

Saturday: At a time when much of the world is gripped by fear of terrorism and a few voices hint that the time may again come when the United States should call upon its nuclear arsenal to make ‘quick work’ of frightening threats, it is fitting to

reassert our commitment to disarmament and the conduct of limited war only as a last resort....As we have in the past, we again call on faithful people everywhere to renew their commitment to the work of Christ’s peace and justice, and repeat Pope Paul VI’s plaintive refrain: ‘No more war, war never again!’ —Bishop Wilton E. Gregory, President, United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, August 6, 2004

Action Suggestions

1. Support Pax Christi USA’s sign-on statement, *Called to Embrace All Life: The Catholic Vote and Catholic Values*. Info on the statement is available at www.paxchristiusa.org or by calling 814-453-4955 ext. 221.
2. Make copies of this brochure and place them in the information area of your local parish.
3. Get involved with local/national campaigns led by people who are poor or marginalized. Support their efforts by offering your time, money and resources to further their work.

Resources

- Recent *Peaceweavings*—including “Mixing Politics and Religion” by Sr. Christine Vladimiroff and “Choosing a Presidential Candidate” by Fr. John Rausch—are available as free downloads at the Pax Christi USA Web site, www.paxchristiusa.org.
- NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby has free resources available for groups and individuals on the upcoming election. Visit www.networklobby.org for info.
- FaithfulAmerica.org is an online community of people of faith who want to build a more just and compassionate nation. It provides one-click opportunities to impact current political issues. Visit www.FaithfulAmerica.org.