

Pax Christi USA welcomes you to...

Resisting the Militarization of our Youth From Central America to Ferguson

Pax Christi USA at the SOA – 14th annual gathering, November 21, 2014

Opening Music by Jack Bopp and Dean Stevens

Welcome and Introduction: Sr. Patricia Chappell, SNDdeN, Executive Director of Pax Christi USA; Scott Wright, author of *Oscar Romero and the Communion of Saints*; and Jean Stokan, Director of the Sisters of Mercy Institute Justice Team

Opening Prayer:

Leader 1: Tonight we gather as poets, activists, believers, dreamers and peace-makers. We are citizens of a country gone mad with violence, a country that believes that conflicts and disputes can be solved by weapons and that all wrongs can be righted by the use of force, intimidation, and military equipment. We are here to free ourselves and each other from that illusion. We are also here to re-dedicate our actions for peace, for gathering support from one another and for remembering that it is God's work that is being done through us.

Reader: A Reading from the prophet Jeremiah (29:11-14) to communities living in violence: "I alone know my purpose for you, says Yahweh, my purpose for your prosperity and my purpose for your peace...to give you a future full of hope. At that time when you call on me, and come and pray to me, I will listen to you. You will find me when you seek me with your whole heart." We pray in silence for that day to come soon. (Silence)

All: **All nourishing God, your people cry for help against the violence in our world: Where children starve for bread and feed on weapons; starve for vision and feed on drugs; starve for love and feed on videos; starve for peace and die murdered in our streets. Too much of this violence occurs in communities of color where systems have been consciously created to evoke fear and not trust; despair and not hope. This has got to stop!**

Leader 2: Creator God, timeless preserver of resources, forgive us for the gifts that we have wasted. Renew for us what seems beyond redemption; call order, beauty and goodness to emerge again from chaos.

All: **Convert our destructive power into creative service; help us to heal the fracture and woundedness of our world.**

Leader 3: Liberating God, release us from the demons of violence. Free us today from the disguised demon of deterrence that puts guns by our pillows, missiles in our skies, tanks and armor of war on our city streets.

All: **Free us from all demons that blind and blunt our spirits; cleanse us from all justifications for violence and war; open our narrowed hearts to the suffering of those who are poor and marginalized particularly in communities of color.**

Leader 4: Abiding God, loving Renewer of the human spirit, unfold our violent fists into peaceful hands; stretch our sense of family to include our neighbors; stretch our sense of neighbor to include our enemies until our response to you finally respects and embraces all creation as precious sacraments of your presence.

All: **Hear the prayer of your starving people as we resist systemic injustice and institutionalized violence, that we may always choose life and resist the forces of death as we struggle together to be true peace-makers.**

Speakers:

- ❖ **Rev. Ismael Moreno Coto, S.J., popularly known as Padre Melo**, is a Jesuit priest and human rights activist in his native Honduras. He directs Radio Progreso (radio station) and E.R.I.C, The Team for Reflection, Research and Communication, whose work encompasses: grassroots radio programming; training on human rights, community organizing, and empowerment; the formation of leadership committed to social change; and aiding migrant families.
- ❖ **Tony Neal** is currently President/CEO of Educational Equity Consultants in St. Louis. EEC is an organization whose mission is to create a safe environment for people of color and whites to heal from the hurts of racism. EEC builds the capacity of individuals, schools and other organizations to address racism in ways that enable ALL people to reclaim their inherent intelligence and nobility.

Collection to support the work of Pax Christi USA: Sr. Patricia Chappell, SNDdeN

We ask that you please give as much as you are able in support of the work of PCUSA. Checks can be made out to Pax Christi USA. Baskets will be circulated. **Thank you for your generosity.**

Question and Answers with Our Speakers

Final Comments and Announcements

Closing Prayer:

Leader: Our prayer is taken from Jon Sobrino's *Theology of Christian Solidarity*. "Solidarity is another name for the kind of love that moves feet, hands, hearts, material goods, assistance and sacrifice toward the pain, danger, misfortune, disaster, repression or death of other persons or a whole people. The aim is to share with each other, to help rise up, to become free, to claim the human dignity and justice that all people are entitled...to rebuild."

All: **God is love, God stands in solidarity. God is solidarity. Where there is solidarity, there is God. Amen.**

Closing Music

Special thanks to the Sisters of Mercy who contributed so generously to making this event happen & the United Church of Christ congregation in Ashland, OR, for covering the costs of Padre Melo to be here this weekend.

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See a Pax Christi USA staff member in the back of the room to become a member today!