

KERYX

Fall 2016 Number 112

The Newsletter of Pax Christi Metro New York

Building the Beloved Community: The PCUSA National Conference

by Rosemarie Pace and Fr. Francis Gargani



About 125 people gathered at the Double Tree Hotel in Linthicum, MD for Pax Christi USA's latest National Conference from August 12th to the 14th. The theme of the Conference was *Building the Beloved Community: Addressing the Signs of the Times with Bold Conversations Leading to Transformative Actions*. We were grateful to be in a comfortably air-conditioned space as the heat index outside soared to a dangerous 110-115°. We were also grateful for the spirit of community that permeated the gathering. We were engaged by the excellent speakers who addressed such topics as racial and environmental injustice and who offered insights into how to correct them. We were heartened by Fr. Rocco Puopolo's presentation on "How Pax Christi USA membership can grow on local and regional levels so as to continue building this national movement." One repeated recommendation was to be "respectfully insistent."

Break-out sessions on Racial Injustice and Care of the Earth, Immigration, the U.S. Criminal Justice System, and Islamophobia offered attendees more intimate opportunities to interact with speakers on these critical topics. Personally, I attended the session on Islamophobia and was proudly amused by the responses Pax Christi people gave to such words and phrases as Muslim woman, Qur'an, and hijab. The speaker, a Muslim woman, Zainab Chaudry, said people usually call back to her words like oppressed, violent, and terrorist. In contrast, our responses included beautiful, peace, and choice. Nevertheless, the presentation took on a more sober tone that noted that there have been more anti-Muslim attacks in the past year than right after 9/11/01. Participants in the session wanted to know how to counter the negativity against Muslims in their own encounters. Education, interfaith sharing, and simply getting to know one another as people were highly encouraged. Identifying similarities in faith and culture were also suggested.

Fr. Francis Gargani attended "Racial Injustice and Immigration." He describes it as "terrific" because both presenters are immigrant young women who are not only advocating and working for justice for immigrants in our nation, but are personally dealing with the system in their own struggle for themselves and for their families. He tells us that one presenter, Ivone Guillen, is a DREAMer herself and so speaks with first-hand experience of struggling against the unjust immigration system of our country. She is a 2009 graduate of Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA with a degree in International Studies and presently works with *Sojourners*, advocating for immigration reform, building partnerships in reform efforts. Her co-presenter, Diana Pliego, is presently with NETWORK as a Government Relations Associate. She serves on NETWORK's Racial Justice Circle, dedicated to dismantling institutional racism. She is a recent graduate of Columbia College in Columbia, MO with a degree in Community and Policy Advocacy. She was three years-old when her family immigrated to the United States, so has a personal passion for immigrants' rights and racial justice.

Both young women gave those who attended their session a real experience of trying to navigate our present labyrinthine system of immigration laws. Participants took on various profiles of immigrants with varying circumstances and status and followed a list of posters around the room trying to negotiate all the hurdles and obstacles. All found it a sobering experience, alerting even those engaged in immigration reform how overwhelming it is to try to attain "legal status" here in the United States. Fr. Francis says he kept thinking that if only Americans screaming against undocumented immigrants knew even half of what a racially unjust system we have in place in our nation perhaps they would support real reform!

One of the most impressive events at the conference was the presentation of the Pope Paul VI Teacher of Peace Award to long-time peace activist and Catholic

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The Future of the Catholic Peace Movement: Hope or Despair?

by Rosemarie Pace

What is the future of the Catholic Peace Movement? What is the future of Pax Christi? Depending on who responds to those questions, you may hear moans of despair or exclamations of hope. This year's Fall Assembly is going to head boldly into the fray with our theme, *Responding to the Spirit: Pope Francis and The Future of the Catholic Peace Movement*. And leading us on the way will be Kevin Ahern, Ph.D., Director of Peace Studies at Manhattan College, and author of the remarkably enlightening and encouraging book, *Structures of Grace: Catholic Organizations Serving the Global Common Good*, a 2015 Orbis publication.

Structures of Grace begins in the here and now of the refugee crisis and Pope Francis's call for action to move us from a "globalization of indifference" to a "globalization of solidarity and social justice." It raises up Christian Social Movements (CSMs) as one of the best possible answers to that call, for CSMs are "agents of social transformation" serving as intermediaries between church and society. They may work within the public sector of government, schools, and religion or more prophetically offer direct service even if it requires civil disobedience or other more radical involvement. They arouse moral and ethical values that may lie dormant without them, and they offer alternatives to the cultural norms of passivity or violence. Pax Christi can be counted as a CSM.

While affirming CSMs, *Structures of Grace* also asks some difficult questions and acknowledges some tough challenges that CSMs face in their distinct identities, missions, and organization. Coming from a theological background, in his book Dr. Ahern asks, among other pertinent questions: "How do the experiences of CSMs shape our understanding of the nature of God, the nature of the church, and the nature of ethics?" He clearly believes they do, but also believes deeper self-examination might help CSMs better organize to embody the values they seek to instill in society.

To make his case, Dr. Ahern presents case studies of three CSMs that illustrate how CSMs in general contribute to the common good. In some ways, the

three—the Jesuit Refugee Service, the Young Christian Workers, and the Plowshares—are quite different, but all three share the Christian faith, grow out of the church's embrace of justice and inclusion in the 1960s and 70s, accept public (political) responsibility as consistent with the faith, and engage in collective action to oppose suffering and indifference.

Dr. Ahern then considers the mission of CSMs in relationship to the church, and herein lies a major controversy: justice as a part of that mission. Some, including some popes, have been less favorable of the role of justice in the church than others. Some distinguish the responsibilities of clergy and laity. Some want to limit Christian expression to spirituality and education. Others, including Pope Francis, profess justice to be central to our Christian call. CSMs clearly incorporate all three—spirituality, education, and justice or, as Pax Christi would present them, prayer, study, and action,—as fundamental to their (our) mission. The support of Pope Francis of this kind of church is a reason we in the Catholic Peace Movement should side with hope and not despair. Our identity as church is invaluable in practical ways, like logistics and finances, and in promoting our mission of peacemaking and justice seeking.

But yet another question arises and this one is the heart of *Structures of Grace*: How do CSMs reflect or embody God's grace, for CSMs cannot exist without it? In short, grace is God's gift of love to everyone and everything. It redeems us from sin and enables us to do good. It is the basis of social transformation. CSMs, if they are true to their identity and mission, are the embodiment of social grace and the counterbalance to social sin. They are the instruments through which individuals come to see the demands of the gospel and to act on them, to reject inequality, nationalism, and racism, and to commit to peace and reconciliation, charity and solidarity. CSMs are the "Structures of Grace" that the church and the world need.

One problem (at least one) remains, however. CSMs are not perfect. Not all is grace. CSMs need to be able to discern what is and what is not of God. Dr. Ahern provides us with an excellent tool to help us do just that. He presents us with a list of excellent questions under three basic headings:

Who are we as a movement (identity)?

Where is grace or the Holy Spirit calling us to go (mission)?

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What do we need to do to get there (organization)?

He also provides us with some very practical considerations to help the process work, things like good leadership, time, prayerful reflection, and inclusion of participants from outside the movement.

Once again he acknowledges tensions can arise and cites Pope Francis's "participatory processes" as a means to ease them. In dealing with the tensions, Dr. Ahern emphasizes that structure must serve the mission and not the other way around, that CSMs use a holistic or integral approach that includes justice and spiritualism, that they make room for unity and diversity through cooperation and respect inspired by the Holy Spirit, and that they neither forget God's presence in the work (despair) nor attribute everything the movement does to God's will to the exclusion of others' good works (pride). Finally, to help CSMs assess whether grace is present, Dr. Ahern refers us to the Fruits of the Spirit of St. Paul and the Effects of the Spirit of liberation theologian José Comblin.

In conclusion, Dr. Ahern identifies three critical resources for the mission of CSMs: people, narrative, and relationships. Engaged and empowered people insure the future of a CSM. Provided with open and honest introductions to the identity, mission, and structure of the movement, they possess a clear understanding and appreciation of the CSM. Welcomed and heard, they become the CSMs "missionaries" for good. Narratives about the founding, vision, successes and struggles, and the people who contributed to the movement capture people's interest and enthusiasm for a CSM. Stories, celebrations of special events, liturgies, art and music are all ways to share the narrative. Relationships seal the bonds that sustain a CSM, and relationships include not only members, but also associates in other organizations and institutions, as well as the poor and marginalized. Relationships form community and the strength of community is far greater than that of any individual.

Reading *Structures of Grace* is like reading an affirmation of what PCMNY is and has been and a guide for what PCMNY can be. It affirms PCMNY as "an important way in which the church fulfills its sacramental vocation to be a 'sign and instrument' in the

world." And it challenges us to be "among the most active agents working for positive social change."

Come to this year's Fall Assembly on October 22nd at Manhattan College to learn more and become a part of the *Future of the Catholic Peace Movement*. Contact the PCMNY office to register, or register on line at: <https://www.nycharities.org/events/EventLevels.aspx?ETID=9336>. A limited number of Dr. Ahern's book will be available.

(Beloved Community, continued from page 1)

Worker, Art Laffin. It was equally pleasing to see recognition given to his wife and life-partner for her faithful support and collaboration.

Prayers and liturgies throughout the conference were particularly beautiful, inclusive and inspiring. Even our action with the "No Boundaries Coalition" in the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood of Baltimore where Freddie Gray grew up was prayer in words and deed. Two busloads of us overcame our resistance to the oppressive heat to help clean up two vacant lots that were a haven for drug dealers and a dumping ground for all matter of garbage. After the clean-up, community members joined us to pray, eat, sing and dance.

As always, the conference was an opportunity to re-connect with old friends from across the country and to make new ones. It was a time of reinvigoration and

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2016 Fall

"Kerux" is the Greek word meaning "herald". As the name of our newsletter, it reminds us that we are to be heralds of God's nonviolent love. We welcome letters, articles and reviews.

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Fr. Nelson Belizario	Joe McDonough
Abigail Abysalh Metzger	Fr. James Noonan
S. Susan Wilcox, CSJ	

Farewell and Welcome!

Pax Christi Metro New York extends sincere and deep gratitude to three out-going members of the Board: Margaret Flanagan, Beverley Johnstone, and Brian McCullough. Margaret served not only on the Board, but also on the Steering Committee before that. She outdid herself as President for the past four years. We are supremely grateful for her many years of dedication and equally grateful that she will remain active through the Witness Committee and whatever other ways she can continue to participate. Beverley and Brian also gave of themselves generously, sharing their knowledge and skills to help PCMNY witness to the Peace of Christ in our region. We will miss their presence at meetings, but are grateful that they will continue to be with us in spirit and in person whenever possible.

PCMNY is happy to welcome board member Fr. Francis Gargani to his new role as president of the Board. Simultaneously, PCMNY is very pleased to welcome Joe McDonough back to the Board. Joe had served the Council, Steering Committee, and Board over many years, but took a break recently. Happily, he never left completely, working on committees and being our ever-entertaining raffle presenter at Peacemaker Award Ceremonies. Joe is a social worker by profession and an avid fan of baseball and theatre.

PCMNY is eager to welcome additional Board members. Please contact the office for more information and to nominate yourself or someone else (with his/her permission) you think would be an asset to our organizational leadership.

Reflections on A Peace Delegation to Iraqi-Kurdistan

by Timothy Wotring

In late May, I went on a peace delegation to Iraqi Kurdistan hosted by Christian Peacemaker Teams and Presbyterian Peace Fellowship. Our purpose was two-fold. First, we went to listen to the stories of villagers who are affected by oil extraction on their land. Many of these villages' water sources were either dried up or contaminated and their lands laid barren. We brought these stories with us to testify at the Presbyterian General Assembly to persuade them to divest from fossil fuels. Second, we went to be

better informed about Middle Eastern politics and to learn how peacemaking is performed around the world.

Our delegation travelled almost all of Iraqi-Kurdistan, from its border with Iran to Mosul to Turkey's border. We trekked to refugee and internally displaced peoples (IDP) camps and to the Red Prison, where Saddam's regime tortured and killed Kurds during the Iran-Iraq War. Our group worshipped at a Syrian Catholic Mass and met with an Islamic Party parliamentary member who cares deeply for the poor. We visited the Halabja Peace Museum where the tragedy of the US-backed chemical bombing happened in 1988. I have been truly affected by the stories and struggles I heard and saw on exhibit there.

One highlight of my trip was meeting Father Jacques. He was born and raised in France but has such a heart for the Syrian people that he lived there for a time. About two years ago, he was kidnapped by ISIS. A few months into his capture, Assad's military regime came to liberate the ISIS camp. They told the captured, "Come fight with us against ISIS." Father Jacques spoke up, "We should neither fight for Syria's military or for ISIS. Violence creates more violence." ISIS leaders found out what he said and within a month released him. We met Father Jacques at a small monastery in Sulaymaniyah, where they took in 200 Syrian refugees. Father Jacques taught me that even with the threat of violence, one must be committed to peacemaking.

One of the last places we visited was an organization that gives children a place to play. Since an influx of refugees came into Iraqi-Kurdistan two years ago, much tension arose among all the groups: Syrian refugees, Yazidi IDPs, and Iraqi Kurds. This was true among the children too. The children's organization decided to teach peacemaking through gardening. They had the Syrian children care for the Kurds' garden plot, the Yazidis care for the Syrians', and so forth. Within six months of this peacemaking experiment, the children's care for the gardens spread to one another. I was reminded of the creative power and endless possibilities found untapped in peacemaking. This peace delegation awoke in me a hope that another world is possible.

Timothy Wotring is a new PCMNY volunteer with a M. Div. from Union Theological Seminary.

PCUSA National Staff, Council, and Regional Leaders Meet to Discuss PCUSA's Future

by Rosemarie Pace

Prior to the PCUSA National Conference, the National Staff and National Council invited Regional Leaders to join them at a full-day meeting to discuss ways to strengthen Pax Christi in the U.S.A. Kurt Aschermann, a professional consultant, served as facilitator of the meeting. A potential long-term goal is the restructuring of PCUSA, but this meeting was simply meant to get the thought-process going. In general, Kurt had us consider what PCUSA already has going for it, what we need, and what can't be done.

We began by brainstorming words to describe what a new Pax Christi would look like. Some shout-outs were: young, diverse, passionate, well-funded, prophetic, community, engaging, and transformative. Kurt pointed out that no one said "successful," so that was added to the list.

We then considered whether our old/current tactics work and agreed we need to be both high tech and high touch. We also need a common language to describe who we are and what we do, but we don't need to invest a lot of time and effort trying to attract those who will never be interested in us. We need to demonstrate our faith and mission with action more than words and with a commitment to justice to achieve peace. In telling our story, we need to present what makes us unique compared to other Catholic and other peace organizations. We need to focus our message in light of the signs of the times. In other words, we need both focus now and flexibility long-term.

After some fruitful discussion, we came up with our own "Unique Service Provider" (USP) list which states:

Pax Christi (Peace of Christ) is an inclusive movement for

Peace with social & racial justice and reconciliation

Rooted in Catholic Social Teaching

Prayer-study-action

Creative Nonviolence, and

Consistent life ethic.

Next the discussion moved on to other ways PCUSA and the regions could unify. One proposal had to do with fundraising. Could PCUSA take responsibility for all fundraising and provide for the regions? In short, the answer is "no" where PCMNY and, possibly, PC Michigan are concerned. Both regions maintain offices with paid staff. PCUSA is highly unlikely to be able to support either, let alone both.

Could there be one website template for all regions and PCUSA? Maybe, but currently websites vary widely, and not all regions are willing to sacrifice what they have to standardize it with everyone else's.

Would we share member databases? This led to another question: Who are members? Technically, members are those who contribute to PCUSA and live in a particular geographic region, which means that regions do not have members of their own. A region's members are known only through PCUSA. If regions maintain databases, members come from PCUSA's database. Regions may also have additional people in their database who participate in regional activities. Can there be a mutual exchange of these databases? What would be the pros and cons?

Are there activities we could all do in solidarity, for example sign-on letters, statements, press releases, Peace Masses, or Good Friday Ways of the Cross?

Clearly trying to unify traditionally independent groups will not be easy, but from the start, we understood that this meeting was not intended to produce any final decisions. The National Council and Staff will take what they heard and bring it all to prayer and contemplation at their next meeting. Time will tell, but the desire to fortify Pax Christi is a good one.



"Just imagine if all the energy that goes into fighting other people and reinforcing the belief in separateness was instead directed at showing respect for people. What if the five R's of restorative justice – respect, relationship, responsibility, repair and reintegration – were guiding principles of our activism?"

– Scott Brown

Announcements:

Special Event

Join St. Francis Xavier Peace and Justice Committee and Pax Christi Metro New York on Thursday, September 29th, for a free screening of Brave New Films' new feature film, [*Making a Killing: Guns, Greed, and the NRA*](#). The film tells the stories of how guns—and the billions made off of them—affect the lives of everyday Americans. It features personal stories from people across the country who have been affected by gun violence, including survivors and victims' families. It also addresses what we can do to put an end to this profit-driven crisis. Come to Hurtado Hall, St. Francis Xavier Parish, 55 W. 15th St., Manhattan. Doors open at 6:15; screening at 6:40.

Fall Assembly

Pax Christi Metro New York's annual Fall Assembly offers an opportunity for reflection on PCMNY's very identity as a peace community. We pray together, share our stories, and lend each other support. We also host a noteworthy speaker. This year Kevin Ahern, Director of Peace Studies at Manhattan College, will be speaking on the theme of *Responding to the Spirit: Pope Francis and The Future of the Catholic Peace Movement*. Register for this October 22nd event using our brochure or <https://www.nycharities.org/events/EventLevels.aspx?ETID=9336>.

Human Rights Day/Holy Innocents

In recognition of both Human Rights Day and the Feast of Holy Innocents, Pax Christi Metro New York will be joining Catholic Worker to present a Friday Night Talk at Mary House, 55 E. Third Street, Manhattan, on Friday, December 9th at 7:30 PM. Amy Wagner of the Ya Ya Network will be speaking, possibly along with some of the young people from the Network, which develops leadership skills in social and economic justice.

Peacemaking through the Arts

Save Sunday, January 29th, from 2:30 to 4:30 PM for an afternoon with renowned poet and musician, Cornelius Eady, co-founder of Cave Canem, a nonprofit organization that supports emerging African-American poets, and Rough Magic, a jazz and blues ensemble. Invited to join Mr. Eady are fellow poets

and musicians who will perform their arts on themes of family life, violence, race and class. Location: Most Holy Redeemer Church, 173 E. Third Street, Manhattan. Proceeds from this performance benefit the work of Pax Christi Metro New York. Registration information will be available in the late Fall.

Retreat 2017

We're very excited to have Sr. Megan Rice, one of the Transform Now Plowshares, to lead us on retreat from March 10th to the 12th at the Maryknoll Sisters Center. You won't want to miss this wonderful opportunity to be inspired by one of our greatest contemporary peacemakers.

Annual Appeal

We're beginning a new year at PCMNY and with a new year comes a new appeal for your support. Please reflect on the many reasons you value PCMNY and respond as generously as possible when you receive your letter in October. Thanks!

Other Ways to Support

Your Pax Christi Region:

Support us by searching the Internet with GoodSearch.com (powered by Yahoo) or shopping online with GoodShop.com. Just indicate Pax Christi Metro New York as your charity. You can also turn your online shopping and searching into much-needed donations at:

www.iGive.com/PaxChristiMetroNewYork and
<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/13-3424349>.

“Gifts of Peace”: Donate to PCMNY in honor of those you love, whether they're celebrating a special holiday or a birthday, are in need of encouragement, or mourning a loss. Cards are available from the PCMNY office for a recommended donation of \$5 each.

Pennies for Peace: On your own or with others, collect pennies throughout the year. Convert them to dollars and send them to PCMNY as a year-end gift.

Matching Gifts: Ask your company if it will match your gift to PCMNY.

Bequests: Please remember PCMNY in your will. Our legal name is Pax Christi Metro New York and our tax ID number is 13-3424349.

Nominate Peacemakers for 2017

It's time once again to nominate notable Peacemakers for our annual Awards Ceremony. As always, we are seeking those whose efforts, vision, and spirit lead us on the way to peace. One should be a **person of faith whose peacemaking has reached people across the nation** in his/her efforts to teach peace, make peace, and be peace. The other should be a **person of faith whose work is helping to transform metropolitan New York into the City of God**. Please nominate one or both who fit these descriptions, have inspired you, and will draw others to our cause. **Send a paragraph** for each to the PCMNY office *by November 9th*. **Designate if each nominee is for the national or local award. Tell us why** you think he or she should be honored as a peacemaker. And please **include contact information** for your nominees. **Send an e-mail** message to info@nypaxchristi.org, and be sure to include all required information. Thanks!

Background Information:

- The Peacemaker honorees are to be persons of faith, not necessarily Roman Catholics, whose works/actions promote peace and/or justice on a national or local level.
- By "peace and justice" we mean issues such as working to stop wars, eliminate the nuclear arsenal, reduce poverty, fight prejudice, spread the message of peace, and so forth.
- The works or actions include, but are not limited to, being a public voice of compassion to the marginalized, bringing inequities to light, leading peaceful marches, spending time in prison for nonviolent civil disobedience, promoting environmental conservation, and teaching conflict resolution.
- We will consider how recently and how long the nominees engaged in these efforts.
- Since PCMNY's mission concerns peace and justice, a nominee's private, non-policy making and not-widely published positions on other Catholic issues will not be weighed heavily in determining whether to bestow our Peacemaker awards.
- Affiliation with Pax Christi is not a requirement.
- We will consider whether the honorees can draw others to our cause. Those who have already been honored are generally not considered for a second award.

Process:

1. We invite nominations from our broad membership.

2. The Development Committee consider the nominees and make recommendations to the Board.
3. The Board and our Director make the final decisions.

JESUS SAID:

The Kingdom of God is like this: A woman takes some yeast and mixes it with a bushel of flour until the whole batch of dough rises.



A Gift of Peace has been given in honor of:

Barbara Benevento	Daniel Berrigan, SJ
Angela Bjornson	Virginia and Alberto Cortijo
Barbara Jean Crayton	Marvin Crayton
Leon Drumm	Patricia Finn Giovanetti
Patrick Flanagan	Eleanor Fortunato
Mary E. Frey	Francisco Gomez, Sr.
Paul Gualano	Virginia Havriliak
	Mary Gerald Kiely, MSBT
	Mary Kay Land
	Dr. Raymond Land
	Linda Martiny
	John Patrick Moore
	Msgr. Robert O'Connor
	Elizabeth Proefriedt, CSJ
	Mario Santamaria
	Rose Schmitt
	Joseph Towle, SJ
	Joan D. Yukl



Upcoming Events

- Sept. 29th: *Making a Killing*, Film on Gun Violence, Hurtado Hall, St. Francis Xavier Parish, 6:15-8:45 PM
Oct. 13th: Annual Appeal Mailing, PCMNY office
Oct. 22nd: Fall Assembly, Manhattan College, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Nov. 9th: Deadline to nominate a Peacemaker for 2017
Nov. 22nd: Board Meeting, St. Joseph's Parish House, 6:30 PM
Nov. 29th: 2nd Annual Appeal Mailing, PCMNY office
Dec. 1st: *Kerux* Deadline
Dec. 13th: Peacemaking through the Arts Mailing, PCMNY office
Jan. 24th: Board Meeting, St. Joseph's Parish House, 6:30 PM
Jan. 29th: Peacemaking through the Arts, Most Holy Redeemer Church, 2:30-4:30 PM

Contact the office for updated information on all events:
info@nypaxchristi.org, 212-420-0250, or www.nypaxchristi.org.
Also visit us on Facebook and Twitter.

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