



***Laudato Si'*: A Critique**

by Marian Ronan

In the two months since its publication, Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home* has received a great deal of praise. In the August 13 edition of *The New York Review of Books* Bill McKibben calls it "one of the most influential documents of recent times." Others suggest it will be the most important papal encyclical since *Rerum Novarum*.

No document of *Laudato Si'*'s scope and significance can entirely escape criticism, however. In this article I'm going to examine two of the most frequently heard criticisms of the encyclical. As background, though, here's a brief summary of the document:

The earth, our common home, is in increasingly terrible shape (it's becoming "a pile of filth") thanks primarily to human activity.

The Catholic faith, based in the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, the lives of the saints, and the writing of previous popes, is basically a "Gospel of Creation," calling us to protect and defend that creation.

The people most harmed by environmental destruction and climate change are the poor.

The "technological paradigm," that is, the worship of unbridled growth, the free market, and profits as an end in themselves, is the primary cause of the destruction of our "common home."

The solution to this crisis is "integral ecology," that is, the profound interconnection between God, all human beings, and the rest of God's creation.

Spirituality and religious education must be based in this "integral ecology."

The part of the encyclical that has gotten the most negative feedback is the assertion that cap-and-trade is not the solution to the environmental crisis. *New York Times* columnists Ross Douthat and David Brooks both denounced this position soon after the encyclical appeared. Others followed.

Let me make several points here. First, the rejection of cap-and-trade as a solution is utterly consistent with the Pope's argument throughout the encyclical that market solutions have had lots of time to remedy the problem and have failed. The current over-consumptive economy simply is not working, and the destruction of the earth is the result.

Also, a wide range of experts and organizations argue convincingly that cap-and-trade just doesn't work. It's a system rife with fraud, corruption and dishonest calculations. At bottom, it allows the fossil fuel industry to buy exemptions from regional, national, and international emissions limits without in any way changing its output of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases.

Finally, throughout the encyclical Papa Francesco stresses the essential role of indigenous cultures and voices in the cultural revolution needed to solve the climate crisis. But indigenous peoples are some of those most harmed by cap-and-trade. What is happening, as the galvanizing YouTube video "A Darker Shade of Green" makes clear, is that governments in the Global South—Mexico and Brazil in particular—sell carbon "offsets" to carbon emitting companies in the North. The governments get money and the companies get to continue their emissions because rainforests and other woodlands in the Global South are "offsetting" those emissions. Then those governments drive the indigenous peoples out of those rainforests and woodlands, cut down the trees, and replant them with palm oil or pine forests so they can make even more money. These are the same indigenous peoples whose impending extinction the Pope laments. Is it any wonder he opposes cap-and-trade?

(continued on page 2...)

(Laudato Si', continued from page 1...)

Another criticism of the encyclical involves its claim that population is not the cause of the climate crisis. In an article in the *National Catholic Reporter* the week after *Laudato Si'* appeared, the gifted columnist Jamie Manson argues that overpopulation is one of the “woefully underdeveloped” aspects of the encyclical and calls for Pope Francis to lift the ban on contraceptives.

As much as I share Manson’s desire that the Catholic Church should stop banning contraceptives, in other respects, I tend to agree with Pope Francis: The countries whose populations have leveled off or are declining, the countries in the North and West give off vastly more greenhouse gases per capita than countries with growing populations. Per capita, U.S. residents give off four times as much greenhouse gas as the Chinese do, even if, collectively, the Chinese give off more. The historic climate destruction debt is ours. It’s not population that’s the primary problem: It’s consumption, sloth, and greed.

But even if he were inclined to do so, for Francis to change the church’s position on issues like abortion or contraception would provoke an ecclesial civil war that would massively distract attention from what concerns him most: “the cry of the earth, the cry of the poor.” Instead, *Laudato Si'* makes a more subtle change. Even as Pope Francis *occasionally* mentions the harms of abortion and lack of respect for life, he unambiguously links those harms with social and environmental sins. For the first time in at least four decades, the leader of the largest organized religion on earth is saying that social issues are as important as sex/gender issues.

Finally, if the changes in belief and action called for in *Laudato Si'* were to happen, the situation of women would inevitably improve. After all, the anthropocentrism he rejects identifies women (and people of color) with the earth, even as it identifies males with the transcendent, implicitly male, God. And women and their children are at least 70% of the poor the Pope tells us are most harmed by environmental destruction. Pope Francis may not be going to authorize contraceptives, but he’s doing more for women in this encyclical than even he may realize.

Marian Ronan blogs at <http://marianronan.wordpress.com>.

Reflections on Returning from a Trip to Israel/Palestine

by Abigail Abysalh Metzger

Recipe for An Occupation:

- Restrict movement
- Limit access to work opportunities
- Limit access to health care
- Limit access to education
- Limit access to worship
- Deny building permits
- Demolish homes without permits
- Conduct middle-of-the-night raids
- Detain individuals, including children, without charge
- Impose severe restrictions on water
- Enforce laws that separate families
- Destroy olive trees and other property
- Allow provocation by settlers
- Harassment by soldiers
- Utensils needed: watchtowers, roadblocks and checkpoints
- Blend together in a 25 ft. high concrete pressure cooker
- Maintain at a Slow Simmer.

There is a point when cooking a concoction that it can be brought to a slow simmer...never quite allowed to bubble over into a full boil. When traveling through the Occupied Palestinian Territories you sense that you are in a pot that is slowly simmering knowing that with the slightest bit of extra heat it could easily morph into a full and dangerous boil.

Occupation is a toxic mix of dehumanizing and demoralizing ingredients. A recipe, one might venture to guess, that will sooner or later poison its recipients.

This past May, I was fortunate to return to Israel/Palestine for a second time. While attending the 70th Anniversary Assembly of Pax Christi International and then travelling on my own, I had my eyes reopened and my heart simultaneously broken and uplifted by the stories and “facts on the ground” witnessed firsthand.

Those of us in the U.S. read and hear about the occupation, settlements, and rock-throwing Palestinians. We think we know the full story. Yet, what does not make front-page news is another truth: Millions of

ordinary Palestinian mothers and fathers, grandparents and children are systematically being robbed of their lives and potential. Their history, at best, is dismissed and often denied. The experience of being made refugees in their own homeland remains unacknowledged. The dignity and rights of Palestinians as human beings has and continues to be forfeited to a half-century of military occupation with no end in sight. This is one travesty of the Palestinian story: that we as Americans are led to know only one narrative and the reality of one victim. All that changes when you visit!

In the same moment that you are witnessing terrible injustices you are amazed by the spirit and resilience of a people who refuse to give in to hopelessness. You learn about the numerous Palestinian organizations, community groups, and cooperatives that provide a lifeline of day-to-day normalcy. You meet the many Palestinian men and women who have chosen the path of nonviolent resistance and are revered leaders in their villages and towns. You marvel at the determination of the young people who despite all the challenges receive college degrees in business, computer science, teaching, nursing, accounting, social work, etc., insisting that they too have a right to a prosperous future. You admire both the Israeli activists who put their lives on the line to say no to the occupation and the international volunteers who choose to live among the Palestinian villagers bearing witness to their struggle while providing protective escort to vulnerable children and farmers, often putting themselves in harm's way of attacks and harassment.

Most importantly, you see the conflict through a new lens and a different set of eyes. And you wonder how have we allowed ourselves to be so complacent and complicit in not knowing this equally compelling story.

Will there ever be a fair and sustainable resolution? It is anyone's guess. However, after visiting, what is unquestionable is that Palestinians also desire and deserve to live with freedom, in peace and security, to raise healthy and productive children, to prosper in dignity, and to grow old on their beloved ancestral land.

Abigail Abysalh Metzger is the Pax Christi International representative in the UN Israel/Palestine NGO Working Group.

To learn more about the situation in Israel/Palestine, we recommend the following websites:

Bil'in Popular Committee against the Wall and Settlements
www.bilin-ffj.org/

Breaking the Silence
www.breakingthesilence.org.il

Christian Peacemaker Teams
www.cpt.org

Churches for Middle East Peace
www.cmep.org

Combatants for Peace
www.cfpeace.org

Kairos Palestine
www.kairopalestine.ps

Rabbis for Human Rights
www.rhr.org.il/eng/

The Israeli Committee against Home Demolitions
www.icahd.org

The U.S. Campaign to End the Occupation
www.endtheoccupation.org

Kerux No. 109

2015 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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The Quest for Peace Begins Within

by Carol Powell

Are you afraid to turn on the news? What countries are at war now? Where has the latest shooting occurred? Why all the anger and the hatred, students bullying one another, politicians shouting put-downs and insults? Nastiness and rudeness are the order of the day. Just watch reality shows. Is this the legacy we want to leave our children? How can we stop this descent into madness?

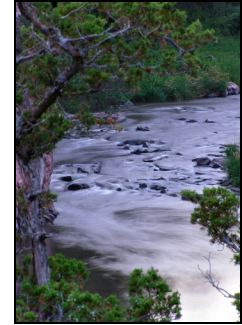
We cannot have peace in the world unless we have peace within ourselves. There are ways to develop inner silence and peace. There are practices that can help transform the chaos of our inner and outer worlds. The inner lion can be changed into a lamb if we make the effort to open ourselves to the Divine. The God within us cries out to be revealed to our fragmented world. But there is a price. We must surrender our need for control to the God-life within. This takes time. It takes patience and it takes letting go of a demanding ego. It takes prayer, not the prayer that we pray when we want something or when we want to tell God how things should be. It takes the prayer of openness, the prayer of surrender, the prayer of the contemplative who stands before God empty, only asking to be filled with guidance and light. It is the prayer of the humble Solomon who asked only for the gift of wisdom.

Sometimes organizations and institutions that we belong to can lessen our peace. They can have severe emotional and financial consequences on us and our family. They can threaten our peace and the peace of our family. We have to learn ways to open ourselves to inner silence and to spiritual practice which helps us to restore inner harmony.

Join us from February 26th to the 28th, 2016 on a retreat at St. Joseph's Renewal Center in Brentwood as we continue this journey toward inner quiet and peace. We will explore with you practices and simple ways to pray that go beyond words and thoughts and lead us into the brilliant intuition and experience of the God who dwells within each of us.

Carol Powell is a religion educator and author, and she will be leading our 2016 retreat with her husband Dave.

"Our insistence that each human being is an image of God should not make us overlook the fact that each creature has its own purpose. None is superfluous. The entire material universe speaks of God's love, God's boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God." (Paragraph 84)



"We can once more broaden our vision. We have the freedom needed to limit and direct technology; we can put it at the service of another type of progress, one which is healthier, more human, more social, more integral." (Paragraph 112)

—Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*

Farewell and Welcome!

Pax Christi Metro New York extends sincere and deep gratitude to two out-going members of the Board, Moira Egan and Cheshire Frager. Both have served for many years, sharing their knowledge, skills, and dedication to help spread the Peace of Christ throughout our region into the world. 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.

Simultaneously, PCMNY is very pleased to welcome two new Board members, Abigail Abysal Metzger and Fr. James Noonan, MM. Abigail is the Pax Christi International representative in the UN Israel/Palestine NGO Working Group and brings a variety of talents with her to the Board. Fr. Noonan was a missionary in numerous countries across the globe, most recently in South Sudan. He also served a term as Superior-General of the Maryknoll Fathers. He is now representing the Maryknoll Fathers at the United Nations and is striving to build a campaign for "No More War." We are honored to have both these gifted people join the PCMNY Board.

Book Review

Changing Water into Wine: The Gospels in Rhyme written by Joseph Muller, illustrated by Sean Cleary

reviewed by Rosemarie Pace

*Shalom I grant you, deep peace from My heart,
A kind of peace the world cannot impart.*

Jn 14:27-31

I would never have thought of it. I couldn't even imagine it being possible: the Gospels in rhyme. And to think that the idea first came to a high school student in love with epic poetry like that of Chaucer and Dante—amazing! But here you have it, and it is GOOD.

Joseph Muller was that high school student who began this labor of love as a senior and has taken nearly 20 years to complete it. That's nearly 20 years of growing into the depth and breadth of the Good News of Jesus Christ. During those years, Muller married and became a father, two life-changing experiences that have contributed to his appreciation of scripture. He earned a Master's Degree in Biblical Theology and assumed a career as a theology teacher at the high school and college levels. Besides composing this beautiful rendition of the Gospels, he has written several thought-provoking and insightful pieces challenging Catholic thinking on topics like U.S. foreign policy and global climate change.

But back to *Changing Water into Wine*: What Muller has done has taken the four Gospels and "harmonized" them, to use his own word from the invaluable Introduction. The result is one flowing account of the Gospel story organized into 16 chapters from the "Infancy Narratives" to "The Son Rises and the Church Receives the Spirit." Each poem is further identified with its biblical reference, for example "The Birth of Jesus," Luke 2:1-7 or "Jesus at the Sea of Tiberias," Jn 21:1-23. Then follows a faithful rendering of the scripture passage in couplet form.

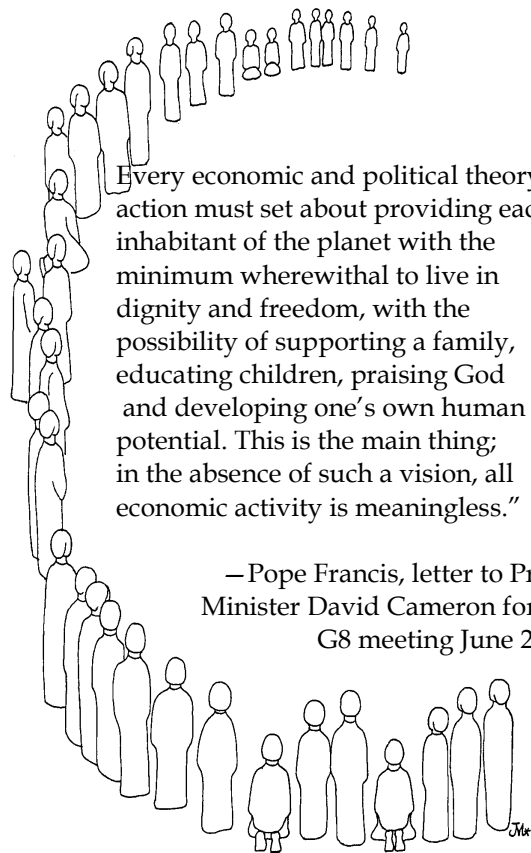
I found it best to read each poem slowly and aloud to absorb the richness of the text. It is also a rare treat to read the endnotes generously provided. They, like the Introduction, are filled with honest, humble, personal commentary, as well as important background information, including Old Testament references and explanations of temporal and cultural contexts. Reading the endnotes will both enlighten and entertain you in a most positive way.

Another not-to-be-skipped section is *The Appendix: Jesus Descends to the Dead* based on Mt 27:51-53 and Peter 3:18-19. Here Muller uses poetic license to compose his own reflection on Jesus's descent to the dead after the crucifixion. It is an imaginary tale of Jesus's invitation to repentance and reconciliation. I was so moved by it in a couple of places that I found my eyes tearing up.

Complementing this epic poem of "the greatest story ever told" are beautiful black and white sketches by Sean Cleary framing each page.

Of course, to make the Gospels rhyme, sentence structure is sometimes rather contorted, but no more so than in some hymns. My only real disappointment in this otherwise masterful work is that Muller, perhaps in his zeal to remain faithful to scripture as traditionally translated, does not adhere to inclusive language. Despite that one flaw, I heartily recommend this unique rendition of "The Gospels in Rhyme."

To learn more, visit: <http://changingwaterintowine.com/index.html>.



Every economic and political theory or action must set about providing each inhabitant of the planet with the minimum wherewithal to live in dignity and freedom, with the possibility of supporting a family, educating children, praising God and developing one's own human potential. This is the main thing; in the absence of such a vision, all economic activity is meaningless."

—Pope Francis, letter to Prime Minister David Cameron for the G8 meeting June 2013.

Nominate Peacemakers for 2016

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 19th*. **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.



Wonder what's going on at Pax Christi Metro New York between *Kerux* issues?

Don't forget to check out **KERUX LIVE!** at the PCMNY website www.nypaxchristi.org For news, activities, and more...

Want to be more involved in Pax Christi?

Join a local group.
Join a committee.
Volunteer in the office.

For more information contact the PCMNY office at info@nypaxchristi.org.

A Gift of Peace has been given in honor of:

Mary Gayle Clarke	Corinne Crawford
Mary Jane Delahunt	Aline Euler
Karen Hamilton	Joseph Hennessy
Charles Hermann, Jr.	Eleanor LaVine
Karen Mack & Mike Creutz	
Sr. Gloria Mercedes, MSBT	
John Monteserrato	Adele Panzera
Maximina Hernandez Rosado	
Dorothy Sutter	
Anneska Torres	
Anna Marie Tripodi	
Marvin Waite, MCA	
Ted Witterholt	



Please remember them in prayer.

Announcements:

9/11 & UN International Peace Day Commemoration: In honor of these important days we will be showing the film "In Our Son's Name" about the transformation that Phyllis and Orlando Rodriguez experienced after their son Greg died in the World Trade Center. This moving portrait of a positive response to violence challenges conventional concepts of healing and justice. Phyllis and Orlando will be with us to facilitate discussion. Join us at 2 PM, Sunday, September 13th, in Casserly Hall, St. Joseph's Greenwich Village Church. Suggested donation: \$5-\$10

Fall Assembly: Our Fall Assembly will be on Saturday, October 3rd, at Immaculate Conception in the Bronx. We'll be focusing on the very current theme of "Jihad and Just War" with Fr. Patrick Ryan, SJ as our keynote speaker. Prior to his talk, we'll have our annual State of the Region report, along with some fascinating background on Pax Christi International, celebrating its 70th anniversary this year. Register online at www.nycharities.org or use our brochure.

Human Rights Day/Feast of the

Holy Innocents: Come hear and see "A Report Back from the West Bank of Occupied Palestine" based on the recent Pax Christi Pathways to Peace Pilgrimage to the Holy Land. 7 PM, December 10th, Library, St. Joseph's Greenwich Village Parish House.

Peacemaking through the Arts: To celebrate the closing of the Merton Centenary, Kathleen Deignan, CND, Beth Bradley and her consort, Gadelica, will offer a concert to honor Thomas Merton's Celtic spirit. In word and song, this ensemble will offer selections from their new CD, *Asling* (ash-ling), a collection of sung visions and poems by Sister Kathleen - many texts drawn from the old collection called "The Carmina Gadelica" and realized in concert with an extraordinary troupe of musicians. Join us for this wonderful afternoon of song on Sunday, January 31, 2016, at 2:30 PM at Saint Joseph Church in Greenwich Village, New York - it just happens to be Merton's 101st birthday!

Retreat 2015: Hold February 26th to 28th for our 2016 retreat on the theme of "The Quest for World Peace Begins Within," at St. Joseph's Renewal Center in Brentwood, Long Island. Dave and Carol Pow-

ell, noted authors (look for them in *The Tablet*, *America*, and *Emmanuel* periodicals) and religious educators, will be facilitating the weekend. Carol is also a spiritual director and guide to centering prayer.

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:

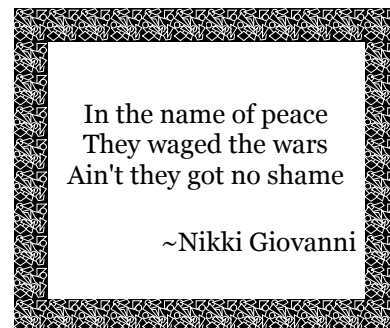
www.iGive.com/PaxChristiMetroNewYork and <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/13-3424349>.

"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.



Upcoming Events

- Sept. 10th: Board Meeting, St. Joseph's Parish House, 6:30 PM
Sept. 13th: 9/11 Memorial-UN International Peace Day Commemoration, St. Joseph's Greenwich Casserly Hall, 2-4:30 PM
Oct. 3rd: Fall Assembly, Immaculate Conception, Bronx, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Oct. 15th: Annual Appeal Mailing, PCMNY office
Nov. 5th: Board Meeting, St. Joseph's Parish House, 6:30 PM
Nov. 19th: Deadline to nominate a Peacemaker for 2016.
Dec. 1st: *Kerux* Deadline
Dec. 3rd: 2nd Annual Appeal Mailing, PCMNY office
Dec. 10th: Human Rights/Holy Innocents Commemoration, St. Joseph's Greenwich Village Library, 7-9 PM
Dec. 15th: Peacemaking through the Arts Mailing, PCMNY office
Jan. 7th: Board Meeting/Epiphany Party, St. Joseph's Parish House, 6:30 PM
Jan. 31st: Peacemaking through the Arts, St. Joseph's Greenwich Village 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.

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