



The Newsletter of Pax Christi Metro New York

Winter 2019 Number 122

Back from the Brink

by Rosemarie Pace

“For love of my brethren and friends, I say: Peace upon you!” (Ps. 122:8)

Thus began Pope Francis’s address to the people of Hiroshima (and the world) on November 24th, 2019 when he visited both Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. He continued:

Here, in an incandescent burst of lightning and fire, so many men and women, so many dreams and hopes, disappeared, leaving behind only shadows and silence. In barely an instant, everything was devoured by a black hole of destruction and death. From that abyss of silence, we continue even today to hear the cries of those who are no longer. They came from different places, had different names, and some spoke different languages. Yet all were united in the same fate, in a terrifying hour that left its mark forever not only on the history of this country, but on the face of humanity.

Along with global climate change, Pope Francis has made the abolition of nuclear weapons a key focus of his papacy. This was not the first time he made such a statement, and we can be confident it will not be the last. His message in Hiroshima went on:

With deep conviction I wish once more to declare that the use of atomic energy for purposes of war is today, more than ever, a crime not only against the dignity of human beings but against any possible future for our common home. The use of atomic energy for purposes of war is immoral, just as the possessing of nuclear weapons is immoral.... We will be judged on this.... How can we speak of peace even as we build terrifying new weapons of war? How can we speak about peace even as we justify illegitimate actions by speeches filled with discrimination and hate?

...Indeed, if we really want to build a more just and secure society, we must let the weapons fall from our hands.... A true peace can only be an unarmed peace.

...That is why we are called to journey together with a gaze of understanding and forgiveness, to open the horizon to hope and to bring a ray of light amid the many clouds that today darken the sky. Let us open our hearts to hope, and become instruments of reconciliation and peace.

In Nagasaki, Pope Francis was even more specific. He said:

We must never grow weary of working to support the principal international legal instruments of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.... May prayer, tireless work in support of agreements and insistence on dialogue be the most powerful “weapons” in which we put our trust and the inspiration of our efforts to build a world of justice and solidarity that can offer an authentic assurance of peace.

He then went on to address political leaders directly:

Convinced as I am that a world without nuclear weapons is possible and necessary, I ask political leaders not to forget that these weapons cannot protect us from current threats to national and international security. We need to ponder the catastrophic impact of their deployment, especially from a humanitarian and environmental standpoint, and reject heightening a climate of fear, mistrust and hostility fomented by nuclear doctrines.

Ultimately, he spoke to all of us stating:

All of this necessarily calls for the creation of tools for ensuring trust and reciprocal development.... It is a task that concerns and challenges every one of us. No one can be indifferent to the pain of millions of men and women whose sufferings trouble our consciences today.

As you know, Pax Christi has made nuclear weapons abolition a cornerstone of its work for decades. Nevertheless, it is a blessing to have Pope Francis take such a strong, public stance that affirms our work.

On November 22nd, Pax Christi Metro New York members joined Catholic Workers, two of the Kings Bay Plowshares 7 (learn more at <https://kingsbayplowshares7.org/>), the Manhattan Project for a Nuclear Free World, and others at the Japanese Consulate to express our solidarity with Pope Francis. Martha Hennessy and Carmen Trotta, the Kings Bay Plowshares activists, and Mari Inoue of the Manhattan Project also delivered an **Open Letter** to the Consulate office. Over the next two days, there were two more vigils outside St. Patrick’s Cathedral, and 30 members of the St. John’s University Sunday Community **prayed** together after Mass on campus.



In addition to praying and vigiling on the city streets, we encourage you to join the “Back from the Brink” campaign with Pax Christi regions across the U.S.A. You can read more at the Pax Christi USA website, www.paxchristiusa.org, but here are some highlights:

This campaign began August 6th, 2019 and runs to August 9th, 2020. Its goal is to get local governments to adopt publicly a “Back from the Brink Call to Prevent Nuclear War” with an official resolution. “Local government” can be at the state, county, city, or town level. An example of the resolution follows.

The City of New York joins the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the “Back from the Brink” Campaign in calling on the Trump Administration and the United States Congress to exercise global leadership in preventing nuclear war by:

- 1) Renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first;
- 2) Ending the President's sole, unchecked authority to launch a nuclear attack;
- 3) Taking all U.S. nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert;
- 4) Canceling the new plan to replace the entire U.S. nuclear arsenal with enhanced weapons;
- 5) Supporting the U.S. entry into the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; and
- 6) Requiring the U.S. to pursue a verifiable agreement among nuclear-armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

The time is long past ripe for this campaign. We are on the brink of a nuclear holocaust. The U.S. has been withdrawing from existing treaties and threatens to allow others to expire. U.S. tensions with Iran and North Korea are high. Conflicts between other nuclear-weapons states, like India and Pakistan, also have the potential for escalation.

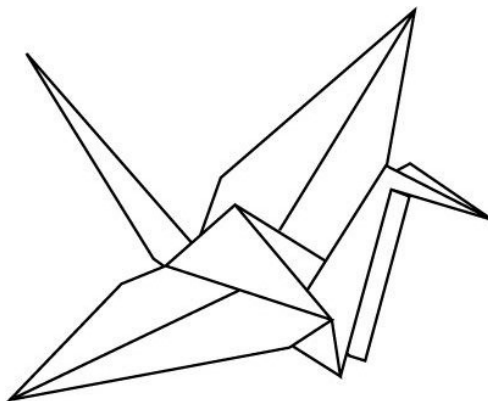
Simultaneously, 122 nations of the world approved the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons when it was composed in July, 2017. Eighty have since signed and 34 have ratified it, including the Holy See. Only 16 more nations are needed to ratify and make the Treaty international law. The International Coalition against Nuclear Weapons won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017. The state of California, the cities of Los Angeles and Baltimore, and several municipalities have already passed resolutions. Clearly, the majority of the globe wants nuclear weapons to be abolished.

The U.S. is investing well over a trillion dollars to upgrade our nuclear weapons arsenal over the next 30 years. This is our tax dollars at work to the detriment of health care, affordable housing, living wages, quality education, environmental protections, infrastructure across the country, and other means to real security.

Please join Pax Christi in this campaign. You can act alone or in a group of any size, be it your Pax Christi region or local group, parish, school, work place, or coalition with other peace organizations in your area. Choose the level of government you would like to approach. Use the resolution sample above or adapt it to your own needs. If you already have a politician who is an anti-nuclear weapons advocate, support him or her. If not, build your case to educate and influence him or her to become an anti-nuclear weapons advocate. Again, check out PCUSA's website for more information and guidance.

We have no time to lose to step "Back from the Brink."

Rosemarie Pace is Executive of Pax Christi Metro New York.



Human Rights in Crisis: The Uigurs

by Adem Carroll

Now twenty years into the new century, we find ourselves in the midst of a global human rights crisis, with repressive government policies targeting ethnic and religious minorities, refugees and democracy activists on an overwhelming scale. And sad to say, some of us may now often feel numb, faced with so many mass atrocities and even with personal stories of repression and surveillance. Despite the unprecedented availability of reporting on global crises online, many of us simply screen out "what doesn't concern us directly." And the perpetrators count on the resulting inaction, as they also count on popular support by framing repression as anti-terror tactics, claiming that entire populations represent an existential threat to the State.

This is what is happening in China, where the communist government has been targeting a Turkic Muslim minority called the Uighur, who live in East Turkestan, an area called by the Chinese "Xinjiang" or "New Territory." The territory is rich in natural resources and integral to China's ambitious "One Belt, One Road" strategy linking infrastructure projects in over 60 nations. Indeed, it is this economic interdependence that has led to so many other nations being unwilling to criticize Chinese policies.

Though repression of intellectuals and potential critics of policy during the Chinese Cultural Revolution resulted in millions of deaths, and though the repression of the Tibetan population has been comprehensive, the persecution of the Uighur has until recently been less recognized. However, repression has become harsher and more all-encompassing and the current crisis should not have come as a surprise to the world, including China's many economic partners. As reported by the *New York Times*, Western companies and academics have even assisted in building Chinese surveillance and control systems designed specifically to target the Uighur.

Though the region is officially named the Xinjiang Autonomous Republic, authorities have cracked down on any sign of autonomy or local leadership. The Uighur professional classes have been especially hard hit, with reliable estimates of at least 1.5 million disappeared into "re-education camps" which also provide slave labor to local industries. Re-education includes forceful rejection of traditional Islamic culture as well as fostering extreme loyalty to communist principles. This brainwashing takes place both in the network of concentration camps (many now relocated outside the region) and in the homes left behind, where wives and relatives must host Chinese officials seeking to ensure the children are fully indoctrinated. Millions of families are being disrupted, even destroyed. And officials have created a pervasive atmosphere of fear, threatening far worse if anyone complains.

Even outside China, apologists for these repressive policies are not hard to find. China has weaponized its students studying abroad, with many (though important to add, not all) serving as spies and informants on the others. In addition, the Chinese government funds "Confucius Centers" in universities throughout the USA and the world. These institutes rarely touch on "controversial" issues such as democracy struggles or human rights. And the web of complicity extends further, to the many companies eager to sell to Chinese markets.

However, it is particularly dismaying that the "Muslim governments" of the world have either kept silent or, like the leaders of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, have actually complimented China on its policies towards the Uighur!

One would have expected solidarity with oppressed sisters and brothers, as with the Palestinians, or the Rohingya. After all, Uighur are now forbidden to fast during Ramadan and the many manifestations of Islamic tradition that the Chinese authorities have attacked are not as they claim signs of radicalized religion. The Hajj pilgrimage is not a sign of fealty to the Saudis, and the beard or hijab are not rejections of modernity. This official zero tolerance for tradition is clearly an attack on basic religious freedoms. And this attack goes even further, seeking to erase history and identity.

Satellite imagery proves that in the last few years numerous Uighur cemeteries and traditional neighborhoods have been bulldozed. Moreover, historical mosques have been destroyed, some as old as Notre Dame in Paris. But does the outcry mourning these lost sacred places match the cry heard around the world after the Paris fire? Their beauty and significance to national identity was evident, and evidently seen as a threat to the powers that be.

When pluralism is ravaged by such powerful forces, it becomes all the more difficult to put effective pressure on China both inside the nation and internationally. Justice for All, the NGO I work with, has in the last year added a new program called Save Uighur.org to raise awareness among Muslim Americans and allies, and partner with Uighur leaders to influence policymakers. While strong concern in Congress is bipartisan, with both houses decisively passing bills in 2019, it is highly uncertain whether human rights concerns will succeed in competing with material considerations in the administration's trade war with China.

Faith communities already struggle to protect Chinese Christians. Some advocates argue that long term engagement demands compromise with the communist authorities, even on Church decisions. And many in the diplomatic community make the same argument. While it is unsurprising that China has veto power for actions in the UN Security Council, senior United States officials tell me that China is extremely aggressive in shutting down discussions behind the scenes. Consequently the Human Rights Council in Geneva is too intimidated to act, in contrast to its response to the Rohingya genocide, when council members overcame Chinese objections to ensure several full investigations as well as humanitarian aid to the displaced. None of this has yet happened for the Uighur.

Besides meeting with Congress, the Uighur leadership groups in the USA seek to tell their stories to student groups, synagogues and churches. With our Uighur staffer Aydin Anwar, I am organizing a panel on corporate complicity with China at the upcoming Amnesty International Annual Convention in early March. There will also be separate panel involving Amnesty's Chinese experts and JewherIlham, whose father, a well-known Uighur educator, has been imprisoned in the camps, a sinister system where torture, organ harvesting and killing are widely alleged.



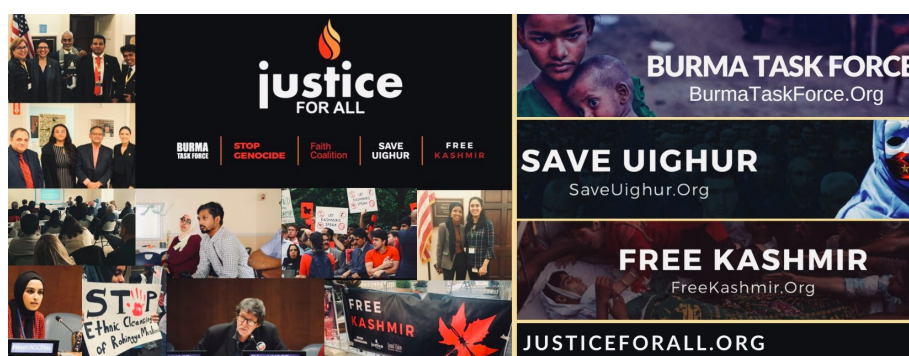
In early December 2019, I invited Uighur student Adili Yilihamu to join a panel at Yale. He spoke about how his parents were arrested after they returned from Hajj, sentenced to 15 years for this reason and also for sending him to Boston to study. When he agreed to speak with the *New York Times*, several months ago, he received an anonymous warning call not to do this, even before he met the reporters. After his interview ran in the newspaper, he received word that now his parents will serve 25 years.

At rallies and in meetings with officials, we hear of the same pressure tactics to silence the Uighur diaspora, of parents who have not spoken to their children in years. Some are harassed online or their websites repeatedly hacked. Many are silenced, or at least try to avoid their name and image circulating online.

Allies are urgently needed. Since governments have seldom learned that hearts and minds are never truly won through force, the rest of the world must find its moral voice. We must also work for a more transparent supply chain. With eighty percent of Chinese cotton coming from the Xinjiang region, there is a likelihood that our closets contain t-shirts and other clothing made by Uighur slave labor. That is the skeleton in all our closets, and, once known, that complicity should haunt us.

How to ensure the goods we buy are indeed good, and not stained by the blood and tears of captive and exploited people? Besides changing our buying habits out of guilt, we can be inspired by a vision of love and a clearer vision of common humanity, refusing to allow minorities to be othered, erased, or exploited-- anywhere.

Adem Carroll advocates for human rights policies and protections in an interfaith, civil society and international community framework, working with Justice for All since 2013.



Gifts of Peace

have been given in honor of:

Rosemarie Pace* Michael Joseph Tecci, III*

and in memory of:

S. Therese Camardella, CSJ*
 Anita & Domenico Ciaccio* Nellie Colon*
 Jennie & Gus DiMaria* Suzanne Guiney*
 Sharon Harrell* Jeanne Hession, MCA*
 Sr. Marion Hunt, SC* Heidi Schloegel Hynes*
 Patrick G. Kenny* Sr. Kate Kuenstler*
 Lillian Lewis* Robert Mikulak, Sr.*
 Edward Miller* Rev. Franklin Murdock*
 Rev. Fr. Bruce Quinn, OFM, Cap.
 Matt Simzik* Mary Anne Tobon*
 Manuel Torres*

Please remember them in prayer.

Kerux No. 122

Winter 2020

"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.

Kerux

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Peacemaking through the Arts: Our winter concert features the beautiful harmonies of Willow, a local a capella women's chorus who specialize in music from interfaith and international folk traditions that promote peace and social justice across borders. Date: Sunday, February 9th, 2020. Time: 2:30 to 4:30 PM. Location: Keenan Commons, Xavier H.S., 31 W. 15th Street, New York, NY. Check your mail or contact the PCMNY office to register.

Ash Wednesday: Our tradition on Ash Wednesday is to offer a Lenten Reflection to the faithful outside St. Patrick's Cathedral. Join us on February 26th, 2020 at noon to help spread our message of peace and reconciliation.

Retreat 2020: Sr. Cathleen Murtha, DW, a spiritual and retreat director for over 25 years and an active participant and leader on the Coordinating Council of Spiritual Directors International brings to her ministry a deep reverence for the power and presence of the Holy in all of life. We are privileged to have her lead us on our Lenten retreat, "Becoming Ambassadors of Reconciliation" from March 13th to the 15th at the Maryknoll Sisters Center. Registration to begin in late January.

Good Friday Way of the Cross, 2020: We're already planning for our 38th consecutive Good Friday Way of the Cross, Way of Peace on Good Friday, April 10th, 2020, starting at 8:30 AM in Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, E. 47th Street between First and Second Avenues in Manhattan. Join us as we commemorate Jesus's passion and death and pray for "Restorative Justice" for those with whom Jesus continues to suffer today.

Peacemaker Awards Reception, 2020: We're happy to announce our Peacemaker honorees for 2020: Betty Reardon, Nancy Lorence, and John Kemp. We'll also be honoring Young Peacebuilder Stella DiCicco of The Mary Louis Academy. Please plan on being with us to celebrate these newest Peacemakers and Young Peacebuilder. The festive occasion will take place on Sunday afternoon, June 7th, in Keenan Commons, Xavier H.S., 31 W. 15th Street, New York, NY. Registration to begin in April.

Annual Appeal: If you haven't already done so, please reflect on the many reasons you value PCMNY, especially in the current political climate, and respond as generously as possible to our annual appeal. If you did respond, THANK YOU!

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, a birthday, anniversary, jubilee, or new baby, 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.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Jan. 7: Board Meeting (6:30 PM)/Epiphany Party (7:30 PM), Cabrini Apts., 220 East 19th St., Manhattan
Jan. 27th: Retreat Mailing, PCMNY Office
Feb. 9th: Peacemaking through the Arts, Keenan Commons, Xavier H.S. 2:30-4:30 PM
Feb. 25th: Good Friday Mailing, PCMNY Office
Feb. 26th: Ash Wednesday Leafletting, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Noon
Mar. 13th: Retreat with Sr. Cathleen Murtha, DW, Maryknoll Sisters Center, Maryknoll, NY
-15th:
Mar. 24th: Board Meeting, PCMNY office, 6:30 PM
Apr. 1st: *Kerux* Deadline for Spring Issue
Apr. 10th: Good Friday Way of the Cross, starting at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, 8:30 AM
Apr. 20th: Peacemaker Reception Mailing, PCMNY Office
TBA: May Board Meeting, PCMNY office, 6:30 PM
June 7th: Peacemaker Awards Reception, Keenan Commons, Xavier H.S. 3:00-6:00 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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