Dear Reader,

The time to ban nuclear weapons is long past due. Countries around the world know this, but the very countries that are in possession of nuclear weapons—and who don’t want other countries to get them—are the ones most resistant to abolishing these weapons of mass destruction. Because of the obstinacy of the nuclear weapons nations and some of their allies, the rest of the world decided it was time to take a stand without waiting any longer. As a result, they organized a conference at the United Nations to begin the process of developing a new nuclear weapons ban treaty that builds on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. In this issue of Kerux, you will find several items leading to and reporting on the “First Negotiation Conference” that took place the week of March 27th, 2017, at the UN. A second conference will occur mid-June through early July.

First, we share a letter from numerous Catholic organizations and congregations sent to the new U.S. President days before his inauguration calling his administration to “surprise the world” by supporting negotiations at the UN to ban nuclear weapons. The primary author and signer of the letter is Pax Christi International (PCI). This was a sign-on letter to which Pax Christi Metro New York (PCMNY) added its name, along with many, many others.

The second entry is the “Public Statement to the First Negotiations Conference for a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons leading to their elimination.” Again, faith communities, this time not just Catholic, composed and signed the statement, including PCMNY. It was published in March, shortly before the Conference began.

Beth Begley, a member of Pax Christi Maryknoll and of PCI’s team at the UN—also one of PCMNY’s 2017 Peacemaker Honorees—provides us with a concise report on the conference and concurrent prayer vigils as they were happening.

To these items, I would like to add that Pope Francis endorsed the Conference with a letter to Her Excellency Elayne Whyte Gómez, President of the Conference, in which he wrote, “I wish to encourage you to work with determination in order to promote the conditions necessary for a world without nuclear weapons.” Acknowledging the extreme challenges that face the world today from terrorism to cybersecurity to environmental problems to poverty, he notes the inadequacy of nuclear deterrence. He questions “how sustainable is a stability based on fear….” He professes that “Peace must be built on justice, on integral human development, on respect for fundamental human rights, on the protection of creation, on the participation of all in public life, on trust between peoples, on the support of peaceful institutions, on access to education and health, on dialogue and solidarity.” He declares that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is “imperative” and must be “based on mutual trust… directed to the common good….” He extends a “wish that the efforts of this Conference may be fruitful and provide an effective contribution to advancing an ethic of peace and of multilateral and cooperative security, which humanity very much needs today.” Finally, Pope Francis “invokes the blessings of the Almighty” on all the Conference attendees and the citizens of their countries.

It is the hope and plan of PCMNY to focus our annual Hiroshima/Nagasaki Memorial on Sunday, August 6th, on the efforts put forth at both the First Conference just completed and the Second Conference occurring between June and July.

Yours in hope,
Rosemarie Pace
January 31, 2017

To: President Trump
Re: A message from U.S. Catholics in support of nuclear abolition

Now is the time to affirm not only the immorality of the use of nuclear weapons, but the immorality of their possession, thereby clearing the road to nuclear abolition.


Dear President-elect Trump:

Nuclear weapons have plagued humanity for 70 years. Designed to terrify as well as to destroy, these weapons can, in the hands of either states or terrorists, cause indiscriminate harm to humans and the earth on a scale that is unthinkable and likely to persist for generations. The use of nuclear weapons has long been strictly prohibited by Catholic teaching. Two years ago, however, the Holy See added that “the very possession of nuclear weapons, even for purposes of deterrence, is morally problematic.”

As leadership in organizations representing hundreds of thousands of Catholics in the United States, we are deeply troubled that the United States would, by implication or action, contribute to a renewed nuclear arms race. No moral justification exists for impeding the already painfully slow steps to nuclear abolition; undercutting existing nuclear arms control agreements; or encouraging the proliferation of nuclear weapons, including among so-called “friendly” countries.

We strongly oppose plans of the United States to modernize the nuclear weapons arsenal, investing billions to ensure that these deadly weapons remain ready for use. These funds and tremendous human talent are diverted from meeting true human security goals and from protecting the integrity of creation.

Continued reliance on nuclear weapons is an affront to human dignity and the sacredness of life. Yet, nuclear weapons are the only weapons of mass destruction not prohibited by an international convention, even though they have the greatest destructive capacity of all weapons.

We urge your Administration to surprise the world and actively support negotiations at the United Nations on a treaty that would not only make it illegal for nations to use or possess nuclear weapons, but would also help pave the way to their complete elimination, strengthening existing non-proliferation and disarmament efforts.

In his recent World Day of Peace message for 2017, His Holiness Pope Francis said, “An ethics of fraternity and peaceful coexistence between individuals and among peoples cannot be based on the logic of fear, violence and closed-mindedness, but on responsibility, respect and sincere dialogue. Hence, I plead for disarmament and for the prohibition and abolition of nuclear weapons: nuclear deterrence and the threat of mutual assured destruction are incapable of grounding such an ethics.”

As you accept the heavy responsibility for U.S. nuclear weapons policy we urge you to remember, in the words of the Holy See, that “the commitment to disarm embedded in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and other international documents is more than a legal-political detail, it is a moral commitment on which the future of the world depends.”

Sincerely,

Marie Dennis
Co-President
Pax Christi International
Marie.dennis@paxchristi.net

(and many others, including PCMNY)
Public Statement to the First Negotiation Conference for a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons leading to their elimination

Faith Communities Concerned about Nuclear Weapons
March 2017, New York

Since the first attack with atomic weapons, in August 1945, when the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed, the terrible consequences of nuclear weapons have demanded their abolition. Since 1945 humankind has been forced to live in the shadow of apocalyptic destruction. Any use of nuclear weapons would not only destroy the past fruits of human civilization, it would disfigure the present and consign future generations to a grim fate.

Our respective faith traditions advocate for the right of people to live in security and dignity. We believe in the commands of conscience and justice; we seek to honour our duty to protect the vulnerable and to exercise the stewardship that will safeguard the planet for future generations. Nuclear weapons manifest a total disregard for all these values and commitments. There is no countervailing imperative—whether of national security, stability in international power relations, or the difficulty of overcoming political inertia—that justifies their continued existence, much less their use. Their catastrophic humanitarian consequences demand that nuclear weapons never be used again, under any circumstances.

We raise our voices in the name of sanity and the shared values of humanity. We welcome these negotiations, necessary to prohibit the worst weapon ever invented. We reject the immorality of holding whole populations hostage, threatened with a cruel and miserable death. We applaud the world’s political leaders that have demonstrated the courage to begin these negotiations. We urge those not present to re-examine their positions and, at the very least, make a commitment to join the June-July session in good faith.

As people of faith, we urge those negotiating here to:

Heed the voices of the world’s Hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors) and reiterate that the fundamental justification for this new legal instrument is the prevention of the humanitarian harm caused by any use of nuclear weapons.

The clear justification for this new legal instrument is to ensure the suffering of those affected must never be visited on any other individual, family or society. The humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons remains at the core of all nuclear disarmament efforts;

Continue to call upon all states to participate in the negotiations in order to fulfill their obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament;

Develop a treaty text that clearly and explicitly prohibits the use, possession, development, production, acquisition, transfer and deployment of nuclear weapons, as well as any inducement, encouragement, investment or assistance with those prohibited acts. The new instrument should also provide for an obligation for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, and a framework to achieve it.

Kerux 3

“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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Editor: Anne Bjornson
Taking the Lead to Ban Nuclear Weapons

by Beth Begley

March 27 to 31, 2017 at the United Nations in New York 132 countries came to the first session of meetings to negotiate a ban on nuclear weapons! When the U.S. ambassador to the UN staged her protest outside the conference door the first morning, she had 21 states behind her. Did you hear anything about this in the media?

The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) has been in effect since 1978. It requires good faith efforts toward nuclear disarmament as well as non-proliferation. Every five years the treaty is reviewed. Real progress has been hard to detect. At the last review, progress lagged and a group of nations suggested an open-ended working group to meet last October to facilitate progress on the NPT agenda. It was approved, but many nuclear weapons states didn’t participate. The working group operated on General Assembly (GA) rules of majority vote rather than the NPT rules of consensus. The countries present voted a resolution to the GA to convene negotiations for a nuclear weapons ban March 27 – 31 and June 15 – July 7, 2017. This was passed by the GA. Lightning speed for the UN.

There have long been treaties banning other indiscriminate weapons of mass destruction – chemical, biological and, recently, land mines, and cluster munitions. Now the nations who do not have nuclear weapons but who live under the threat of nuclear annihilation lead the initiative for banning the manufacture, possession, acquisition or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Pax Christi International has identified the Ban Treaty as a major priority for advocacy (http://www.paxchristi.net/news/pax-christi-international-announces-new-advocacy-priorities/6583#sthash.lrezL0q2.dpbs). Jonathan Frierich, Pax Christi International (PCI) Disarmament Coordinator; Mary Yelenick and Beth Begley, members of the NY delegation of PCI at the UN; and partners from PAX, Netherlands, are working with colleagues from the International Campaign against Nuclear Weapons (ICANW.org) on this priority. Jasmine Nazario Galace, Pax Christi Pilipinas, presented an interfaith Statement to the delegates at the Ban Conference. (Please watch Jasmine delivering the statement at the 2:52:33 point of the video link below. You can also read the statement in this issue of Kerux on page 3. http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/watch/3rd-meeting-united-nations-conference-to-negotiate-a-legally-binding-instrument-to-prohibit-nuclear-weapons-leading-toward-their-total-elimination-27-31-march-2017/5376451727001).

In conjunction with the conference, a prayer vigil was held each morning at 8 am at the Isaiah Wall across the street from the UN. PCI was joined by Edith Newman and Jill Frasier from Pax Christi Brooklyn and accompanied in the UN by Marie Dennis, Co-president of Pax Christi International, and by antinuclear campaigners, Sisters Megan Rice, RSHM; Ardeth Platte, OP; and Carol Gilbert, OP.

Meetings were held with countries attending to support and offer input, and with countries not attending (e.g. Germany and Canada) to encourage their participation. The U.S. did not respond to requests for a meeting or for information.

We return to the UN June 15 to continue. Meanwhile, we’ll be asking for your advocacy and assistance. Stay tuned….

From left: Ardeth Platte, OP; Beth Begley, Mary Yelenick, Carol Gilbert, OP; and Megan Rice, RSHM at the United Nations.
PCMNY Welcomes Two New Parishes for Peace

As we hope you know, a few years ago PCMNY began a program we call “Parishes for Peace.” All parishes are welcome and encouraged to become Parishes for Peace, which is similar to an individual membership, but intended for a whole parish community. We offer Parishes for Peace all our services, publications, and programs, and encourage them to offer a Peace Mass at least once a year. We do ask a modest donation to become a Parish for Peace, starting at $100. You can see the current list of Parishes for Peace on the Programs page of our website, and ask that you invite your own parish to become a Parish for Peace, if it has not already joined. Here I would like to highlight our two newest Parishes for Peace, Sacred Heart in Bayside, Queens, and St. Andrew the Apostle in Brooklyn.

Sacred Heart has had a very active Peace and Justice Committee for many years, but only this year did they officially join PCMNY as a Parish for Peace. As such, they hosted a beautiful Peace Mass in January with our own Board President, Fr. Francis Gargani, CsSr, presiding. Sacred Heart’s Peace and Justice Committee is well known in the area for its excellent programs of speakers and films on a wide array of contemporary issues and prayer experiences, including such topics as racism, prison reform, and the environment and such contemplative opportunities as Taizé song and meditation.

St. Andrew the Apostle was home to a PCMNY local group years ago, but it had faded out of existence until this year when St. Andrew’s became a Parish for Peace. Now a handful of parishioners is reviving Pax Christi at the parish. One of their first plans is a Peace Mass on Saturday, May 20th, at 5 PM. They are also looking into what other prayer, study, and actions they will develop as time progresses.

We are very happy to welcome Sacred Heart and St. Andrew’s as Parishes for Peace and grateful for their work for peace. We hope this spirit will grow as time goes by.

Yemen is Starving

by Rosemarie Pace

What better way to spend Holy Week than fasting and vigiling for those in need, and who are more in need than the starving and much forgotten people of Yemen, especially the children? For several years now, the Yemeni people have been victims of a civil war that has killed over 10,000 people, including more than 1500 children. Millions more have been displaced. Because of a sea blockade, food supplies are extremely scarce. In addition, prices of food and fuel are skyrocketing largely due to their scarcity. The result is that nearly half a million children are facing severe malnutrition and 3.3 million children and pregnant or lactating mothers are suffering from acute malnutrition. While all of this happens, U.S. arms manufacturers are wallowing in profits from sales to the Saudis who are leading a coalition of fighters, and the U.S. media say little to nothing.

In response to this crisis and as an appeal to the United Nations, 10s of people across the country committed to fast from all solid food for the week, and many held vigil at the Isaiah Wall across from the UN every day of the fast from 10 AM to 2 PM. They and additional peace advocates, including members of PCMNY, stood in silent witness, held banners, leafleted information to passersby, and broke for brief information sessions provided by activists with particular knowledge of the history, current situation, and needs of the international community and the U.S. in particular. Specifically, participants called for the member states of the UN to urge an end to the blockade and airstrikes, to silence all guns, and to negotiate settlement of the war in Yemen. They called on the U.S. to stop all drone attacks and military “special operations” within Yemen, to end all U.S. weapon sales and military aid to Saudi Arabia, and to provide...
**PCMNY’s 2017 Young Peacebuilder, A Model of Kindness, Compassion, and Service**

Cira Mancuso, a Senior at School of the Holy Child in Rye, NY, is PCMNY’s 2017 Maloof Family Young Peacebuilder. We will be honoring her and two other Young Peacebuilders at our Peacemaker Awards Reception on Sunday, June 4th, 2017 in Casserly Hall, St. Joseph’s Greenwich Village Church. Below is Cira’s winning essay. Be inspired and please join us on June 4th to celebrate all our Peacemakers.

We are all a product of our experiences and mine have included a good steeping in Judeo-Christian ethics. From this upbringing based on kindness, compassion, and service, I distilled this bit of truth: Live not for your good but for the good of others. This mantra has guided my life choices and influences who I am and who I aspire to be. It is through transcending my own self and giving of myself to others that I find the greatest happiness and fulfillment. I feel I reflected PCMNY’s values in two of my peacebuilding activities: my Amnesty International club and my service trip to South Africa.

Two years ago I started an Amnesty International Club at my school. I felt a responsibility to do my part in helping to build a peaceful world because I was blessed to live in a community where I am not afflicted by war and poverty. When the club received our first case involving Su Chanlan, an imprisoned women’s rights activist in China, I led the club in hosting two solidarity letter-writing campaigns, calling the Chinese embassy continuously, posting newspaper articles in the school and local newspaper, and contacting the state department—specifically Thomas Malinowski—who responded saying he would bring Su’s case to his colleagues. Most importantly, we prayed, both in the club and at the school morning meetings. Su, however, remains in prison, but we remain committed. She put conviction into action and paid a high price, a price I will never have to pay. That inspires me to be a person of change.

Over the summer I spent four weeks teaching at a school in South Africa. I never thought I would “find myself” in this impoverished community, but there, among people living in shacks of scrap metal, children drinking from puddles and women looking for food in garbage cans while competing with stray dogs, I experienced a sense of contentment that can only come from being what you are truly meant to be. By dissolving myself into this community and allocating pieces of myself to these children and their struggles, I discovered a connection between me and the rest of humanity. I did not stop their pain or end their hunger, lack of clothes, medicine or housing, but I did, for a time, end their poverty of attention, love, and hope. I continue to send packages and letters to the children, who reply with their names scribbled in crayon, something I taught them to do. My actions will feed through their lives and empower them, and they in turn empower me to hear the unheard and see the unseen. Jesus said “the poor you will always have with you” and I finally understand what he meant.

(Yemen, continued from page 5...) compensation to those who suffered losses caused by U.S. attacks.

You can add your voice to the cause of peace in Yemen by pressuring the media to focus far more attention on this critical issue.

**A Gift of Peace** has been given in honor of:

- Fr. Francis Gargani, C.Ss.R.
- Fr. Jim Noonan, MM
- Sr. Cecilia Palange
- Fr. Kevin Queally, TOR

**And in memory of:**

- Maryanne Cavanagh
- Patrick Devine
- Jack Donovan
- Dorothea E. Hite, MCA
- Sr. Mary Stephanie Kelleher, M.S.B.T.
- Det. Steven McDonald
- Fr. John McGuire, OP
- Br. Hilary Mettes, ST
- Willson Montalvo
- Rosa Roman
- Marie Sanetra
- Sr. Eileen Schuilenberg, S.C.
- Mary Sodomora
- Christina Stanick DelGreco
- Eleanor Zablotny

Please remember them in prayer.
Announcements:

Peacemaker Awards Reception
We are very pleased to announce our 2017 Peacemakers: Vilma Torres, Director of Safe Horizon’s staff at the Bronx Family Justice Center; Mary Anne Muller, long-time supporter of and activist in the peace movement here in NYC; and Beth Begley, member of the Pax Christi International NGO Team at the UN, Pax Christi USA, PCMNY, and Pax Christi Maryknoll. Help us celebrate these dedicated peacemakers, along with our Young Peacebuilders, on Sunday afternoon, June 4th, in Casserly Hall below St. Joseph’s Greenwich Village Church. Invitations available starting mid-April.

40-Day Fast for Christian Nonviolence
Pax Christi Metro New York joins others around the country in an annual fast for Christian Nonviolence. This fast is an opportunity to remember, repent, and resolve to transform our culture of violence, whether the violence of the street or the violence of war, drones, and nuclear weapons proliferation. It begins July 1st and ends on August 9th, the tragic triple anniversaries of the executions of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein), Jewish convert to Catholicism and holocaust victim; Blessed Franz Jaegerstaetter, martyr for refusing to serve in Hitler's army; and the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, Japan, the largest Christian community in Japan. PCMNY frames it with prayers made available for you to pray alone or in community. Please sign up to fast with us by contacting the PCMNY office.

Hiroshima/Nagasaki Memorial
We’ll be gathering on Sunday, August 6th, from 2:30 to 4:30 PM for prayer, presentation, and a public vigil in commemoration of the 72nd anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and to learn more about the actions that are taking place at the UN this Spring to abolish nuclear weapons. Further details to come.

Summer Picnic
PCMNY’s annual pot-luck picnic in Central Park, in view of the majestic Metropolitan Museum of Art, has become a refreshing tradition that brings together members and friends in a spirit of invaluable camaraderie. A delicious assortment of foods and great conversation are the order of the day. Relax with us on Saturday, August 12th at 1 PM. (Rain date: August 26th)

Also upcoming—Stay tuned:

UN International Peace Day
Fall Assembly
Human Rights Day

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 the 2016-2017 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.
PCMNY Statement Regarding U.S. Missile Strikes against Syria

On April 6th, 2017, the new U.S. Administration issued missile strikes on an airbase in Syria supposedly in response to a chemical attack by Syria on its own “beautiful children.” We at Pax Christi Metro New York deplore both the use of chemical weapons, regardless the perpetrator, and the use of retaliatory missiles, regardless the rationale.

First, it was never determined what chemicals were used or how they were released. One claim is that Syrian military did cause the release of the chemicals, but only because it hit a chemical warehouse. This could be a cover-up or it could be true. There has been no confirmation, and the U.S. attack disrupted the investigation to find out.

Second, launching missile strikes does nothing to protect Syria’s “beautiful children.” In fact, they are beautiful, but if our government really cared, we would be opening our doors wide to welcome them here, not banning them. What missile strikes do accomplish is an acceleration of the hostilities within Syria and among all the many players in their civil war and the international surrogate war that this conflict is. We know this to be true because right after the U.S. strike, the Syrian military bombarded the same area with more attacks.

Phyllis Bennis, Middle East expert, wrote in Common Dreams on the day of the assault:

...We know that using chemical weapons—of any sort, in any war, against any target—is a crime. And we know there must ultimately be accountability for those who use it, regardless of who they are. That will take time.

In the meantime we know another truth: that a US military escalation against Syria (because we must not forget that US Special Forces and US bombers are already fighting there) will not help the victims of this heinous chemical attack, it will not bring the devastating war in Syria to a quicker end, it will not bring back the dead children. It will not defeat ISIS or end terrorism, it will create more terrorists. It will almost certainly cause more casualties, more injuries, and more dead. Maybe dead children. There is still no military solution. This is what we know.

Instead of responding to violence with more violence, we at PCMNY affirm the statement from Pax Christi International (PCI), which urges the international community to work together “to implement strategic nonviolent actions, including lifting sieges and securing humanitarian access throughout Syria; deploying independent UN monitors to re-establish a national cease-fire; supporting local peacebuilding programs in Syria; ending weapons sales and arms trafficking in the region; and urgently renewing a multinational commitment to make progress in the Geneva peace talks....”

We agree with PCI in their support of Pope Francis who said “Peace in Syria is possible, but that the only way to achieve it is through a political solution.” We concur that “Massive humanitarian assistance for the victims of violence and displaced communities is needed, as well as international investment in local and national peacebuilding strategies.”

The way to peace is through active nonviolence. We can do no less.
Read the full PCI statement at http://tinyurl.com/k4qeh8m.
Read PCUSA’s statement at http://tinyurl.com/mr527lr.
Upcoming Events

Apr. 18th: Peacemaker Awards Reception Mailing, PCMNY office
May 23rd: Board Meeting, St. Joseph’s Parish House, 6:30 PM
June 4th: Peacemaker Awards Reception, Casserly Hall, St. Joseph’s Parish, 3:00-6:00 PM
July 1st:
Aug. 9th: 40-Day Fast for Christian Nonviolence
Aug. 1st: Kerux Deadline for Fall Issue
Aug. 6th: Hiroshima/Nagasaki Memorial, 2:30-4:30 PM, Location to be Announced
Aug. 12th: Picnic, Central Park, 1:00 PM (Rain date, Aug. 26th)
Sept. 26th: Board Meeting, St. Joseph’s Parish House, 6:30 PM
TBA: UN International Peace Day
     Fall Assembly, Manhattan College, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, Date to be Announced
     Human Rights Day

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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