



The Newsletter of Pax Christi Metro New York

Fall 2020 Number 124

Welcome to a new era in Pax Christi Metro New York!

This September 2020 marks a new era in Pax Christi Metro New York (PCMNY). For decades, PCMNY has had a full-time staff person. Last year, we switched to two part-timers, and this new fiscal year we become a part-time office with a part-time Office Coordinator, Elda Luisi. Our Director of 20 years, Rosemarie Pace, has retired. We begin this issue of *Kerux* with an interview that Marian Ronan, long-time PCMNY member, former Board member, Committee member, and occasional contributor to this newsletter, conducted with Rosemarie just before she retired. We also include an article by Margaret Flanagan about our Gifts of Peace, and we reprint “Joint Statement on the 75th Anniversary of the Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki” composed and signed by a global coalition of faith-based organizations, including PCMNY. We hope you’ll enjoy this issue, and we hope you’ll renew your commitment to PCMNY in this new era. Your feedback is always welcome.

An Interview with Rosemarie Pace by Marian Ronan

So Rosemarie, how did you first become involved with Pax Christi? Also, was there anything in your background that inclined you to become involved? If not, what was it that drew you to the Catholic peace movement?

I always find these questions among the hardest to answer. Years before I knew there was a Pax Christi I’d read an article in *The Tablet*, the newspaper of the Brooklyn Diocese, that mentioned a group of Catholics involved in a peace action. I don’t remember any details beyond that, but I do remember thinking, “Wow, a Catholic group participating in a peace demonstration!” I was surprised and excited to think such a group existed. But it was years later that for a reason I can’t remember, I decided to inquire about a peace group—still don’t know if I knew the name Pax Christi—at St. John’s University, where I went to Mass. The choir director told me to contact Fr. Jim Reese who taught at St. John’s. He, in turn, told me to contact Elaine L’Etoile about Pax Christi Queens of which they both were members. I went to my first meeting at St. Nicholas of Tolentine Convent in Jamaica one Sunday evening in the late summer of 1987, immediately felt welcomed, intrigued, and engaged, and never stopped going. Only after that first meeting did I learn that Pax Christi Queens was part of something bigger, Pax Christi Metro New York and Pax Christi USA, as well as Pax Christi International.

As far as what initiated my interest in a peace movement at all, I’m equally fuzzy. I remember asking my mother why there was war when I was quite young. My beloved older brother had died (of leukemia, not war) before his 10th birthday and I, a 6 year old, learned to hate death. I saw such Disney films as *The Red Badge of Courage* and *Johnny Tremain* and saw boys dying. I associated war with death and I guess I decided to hate war as much as I hated death.

You became director of Pax Christi Metro New York in 2000. What kinds of activities had you been involved in before that that led up to your assuming the directorship? Had you been on the Board?

I was actually a pretty conservative teenager and had parents who were totally apolitical, but I was attracted to the environmental movement from the first Earth Day. I thought here's a cause I can embrace. I wrote my Master's thesis and my Doctoral dissertation on environmental education. I started Environment Clubs in the two elementary schools in which I taught. I worked for a few different environmental organizations as a young adult and supported others. Somehow, I always feel that my interest in the environment evolved into my involvement in the peace movement.

Once I discovered Pax Christi and felt my mind expanding I started to participate in public witnesses, leafleting, prayer vigils, things like that that were totally new to my experience. This was a community with which I fell in love. I chaired the committee that developed *First Steps: A Christian Conflict Resolution Process*, attended PCMNY events, started to volunteer in the office, and probably served on every committee that PCMNY ever had at one point or another. I represented PC Queens on the Council, was liaison between the Council and the Board, then served as Vice-chair and later Chair of the Council. (At that time we had both Council and Board.)

When you look back over your (twenty) years as PCMNY director, what do you feel the best about? What contributions or achievements make those two decades most worthwhile for you?

Another tough question, partially because 20 years is a long time to remember and pick and choose, also partially because the highs get mixed in with the lows. One thing that stands out for me is getting some things to happen that we'd talked about for years before I was staff without them ever coming to fruition. For example, we talked a lot about honoring Martin Sheen and Pete Seeger. We talked about having Sr. Joan Chittister for a retreat. We even talked about going as a group to Mets games, but it wasn't until I was Director that every one of those things came to be. Actually we didn't honor Pete Seeger, because I learned he doesn't accept honors, but we did get him to come when we honored Fr. Roy Bourgeois—and Pete performed! We also either started or grew a number of events and programs, like Peacemaking through the Arts, our Hiroshima/Nagasaki Memorial, *Just War/Just Peace* and *Seventy Times Seven: A Forgiveness Workshop*. Due to new technologies, I created Facebook and Twitter accounts with some help from more tech savvy members. Members also offered suggestions that led me to begin and maintain weekly bulletin inserts and seasonal reflections to share with parishes and on our website. One thing I worried about when I started as staff was my ability to sustain relationships with other peace groups, but I not only held my own, but built them up. Overall, I'd have to say it's been a good ride with lots of contributions and achievements, though I feel awkward saying that about myself.

The kind of steady, committed, leadership that you have provided to Pax Christi over the years required a solid, spiritual foundation. What are the dimensions of faith and spirituality that underpinned your work?

Funny you should ask that. With the current pandemic, I'd been quite content to attend Mass on line, but when I finally got back into a church for Mass, I was surprised at how much I was moved to be there and receive communion. As I said at the beginning, this all started with an article which impressed me because it was a Catholic group that was standing up for peace. I knew of secular groups, but what I've always valued about Pax Christi is its faith base. I guess when you're a cradle

Catholic as I am, it's in your veins. It's your family, your community, your culture. I love being able to approach all the issues that are part of the peace movement with prayer, as well as study and action. I think it's where I feel most comfortable. I believe in a God of Peace, a God of Nonviolence, a God of Justice. I don't believe we can have those things without a divine teacher and guide.

What do you hope to do in retirement? Are there aspects of it that you look forward to, and are there those that you feel apprehensive about?

People have been asking me what I'm going to do when I retire, and I've admitted I'm not sure. I know there are LOTS of things I could do and probably should do like clean my house and go through boxes I moved four and a half years ago that I've barely looked at since! I could also pick up piano and guitar playing. I've always said I'd love to learn to play chess and play it really well; I'm extremely competitive and a perfectionist, as some already know. I could also work on my limited Spanish and/or my even more limited Italian. What I'd really love to do once this pandemic allows us is travel, even if it's only upstate to cousins. In general, I just look forward to being free to do what I want if and when I want and not having to deal with the stresses of work. If I'm apprehensive about anything it's not doing at least some of the things I just mentioned and falling back into more of a work routine than a retirement lifestyle.

What are your hopes for PCMNY, and for Pax Christi at the national and international levels in the months and years to come.

I hope PCMNY thrives, along with PCUSA and PCI. I hope they can all keep growing and evolving to meet the demands of the time. I hope they have the people they need to dedicate themselves to Pax Christi as it deserves.

Gifts of Peace

by Margaret Flanagan

I have many friends who pass away without giving instructions as to what charities or nonprofits they would like to support, and many more who aren't religious so don't really want a Mass said for them. And there are those who are religious, who have so many Masses said for them it seems like a waste, as one Mass is technically enough. God saves us all, after all.

Years ago I discovered Gift of Hope cards from Pax Christi Metro New York (PCMNY), where you give a donation to PCMNY, and you send a card to your chosen recipient. Since then, PCMNY has developed many more cards for a variety of occasions, including sympathy cards specifically for the bereaved. The money you donate supports peace and social justice, in which I believe strongly. I don't have to give a set amount; it is whatever I can afford at the time, but the family doesn't have to know how much (or how little) I give. They just know I remembered their loved one whose name is published in *Kerux* so the whole community of PCMNY remembers them as well. I try to send a hard copy of the newsletter to those who don't receive our mailings, so people hear about the work we do as PCMNY. And *Kerux* is published on our website, so their names are out there for all the world to see and remember.

This issue of *Kerux* has a lot of names remembered. We have lost so many to the coronavirus and violence and war, and many of the folk were so hard hit because our world is not peaceful and social justice is not practiced as it should be. Our systems are racist, and there is no way to sugarcoat that

reality. By donating to PCMNY, I hope to work on changing that reality. Active nonviolence, as Jesus preached and lived all the way to the cross, is something we all need to work on.

I have asked my friend who is bilingual to translate the cards, and we hope to send them out in Spanish, as well. Reaching out to the Spanish-speaking community is another goal of mine. What are the needs you see in your neighborhood? How can PCMNY help? Get involved; do not stand on the sidelines and watch others harmed. Speak up, pray, study, act!

Margaret A. Flanagan, MCA, is a member of the Witness Committee and former Board President of PCMNY.

**Joint Interfaith Statement on the 75th Anniversary of the Atomic Bombings of
Hiroshima and Nagasaki**
Final text as of 6 July 2020

As a wide coalition of faith-based communities from around the world, we have committed to speaking with one voice that rejects the existential threat to humanity that nuclear weapons pose. We reaffirm that the presence of even one nuclear weapon violates the core principles of our different faith traditions and threatens the unimaginable destruction of everything we hold dear. Nuclear weapons are not only a future risk, their presence here and now undermines the ethical and moral foundations of the common good. We call for your commitment to a world that is more peaceful, safe, and just—a world only possible with the elimination of nuclear weapons.

August 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki—attacks which devastated these cities causing up to 213,000 deaths by the end of 1945 and many more in the following years. The attacks inflicted excruciating pain and suffering on both humans and the environment.

We are grateful for the global hibakusha, survivors, who have courageously borne witness, often in the face of intimidation and the recurring tragedy of loss and illness. We must meet the courage of the survivors with our own. We must abolish nuclear weapons forever.

We lament the racism and colonialism that drove the nuclear-weapon States to test their weapons on the communities that they deemed expendable, lives far away from their own, lives that mattered less, lives that were taken in pursuit of destructive power for a few. We acknowledge the immense suffering, oppression and exploitation faced by the Indigenous communities around the world whose bodies, lands, waters and air have served as the testing grounds for the ambitions of those who dominate with force.

Few who believe in the disingenuous notion of nuclear deterrence have witnessed or experienced the devastation of these weapons in their own communities. After seventy-five years we can see that nuclear weapons have not brought an end to war. Nuclear weapons do not create peace, rather they intensify the scourge and threat of war in our world, lives and communities. Because they are designed to cause massive and indiscriminate destruction, because they siphon precious resources that are needed to meet human needs and protect our shared planet, and because they enforce and sustain a global system based on domination and unending violence, the existence of nuclear weapons fundamentally contradicts the principles of any moral, religious and ethical system that values life.

Whilst many of our lives and imaginations might be far removed from memories of “hell on earth” and the legacies of environmental impacts, shattering health conditions and trauma wrought in a nuclear explosion, the impacts of the current global health crisis have given us all a glimpse into how life would change in the event of a nuclear explosion. Like the COVID-19 pandemic, the health, environmental and economic consequences would not be contained in space or time. Nuclear tests and accidents have revealed that radiation spreads through the atmosphere, oceans, plants, animals, and whole human populations. Our economies, production chains and ability to grow food would be severely disrupted.

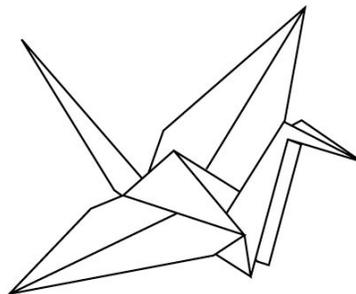
Many have consigned the stories of the horrors of this time to our distant past—stories only to be revisited when certain leaders deem it necessary to remind their citizens what others might do to them if they give up their own nuclear capacities. But we will not forget or ignore the powerful witness of those affected by developing, testing and using nuclear weapons. We are committed to ending nuclear weapons forever to honor them and to save our children, grandchildren, and future generations from experiencing what they suffered. As we build a world where equality, peace and justice are abundant for all, there is no place for nuclear weapons in our shared future.

Despite commitments made—including under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)—nuclear-weapon States have continued to maintain and develop their nuclear arsenals, while other States have worked to acquire them.

Despite our clear-eyed awareness of the dangers of the present moment, we are united in our irrepressible belief that change for the good is possible—in individual lives and in our world. We know that in the most dangerous and threatening times, human beings are capable of cooperation, creative problem-solving and mutual trust. Indeed, the existence of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) itself reaffirms that hopefulness. The NPT was born out of a moment when fears about nuclear war and distrust were at a peak, and it acted as a beacon to remind nations that international collaboration was possible and that each nation’s security does not demand the insecurity of others, but rather is contingent upon the security of all. We find ourselves again in such a moment in which the reaffirmation of international norms and the embrace of the NPT’s ultimate promise—abolition—must be realized.

In 2017, this goal of abolition moved closer to becoming reality when the UN adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, calling for the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons. Once 50 States have ratified it, it will enter into force.

We urge our governments to use the opportunity of the 75th anniversary of the only occasion that nuclear weapons have been used in conflict, to ensure that they are never used again in any circumstances. We call upon all States to join the growing community of States which have rejected nuclear weapons entirely. We appeal to you to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.



It's Not an Ending. It's a Totally New Beginning!

As noted on page one, Pax Christi Metro New York says goodbye to Rosemarie Pace as Director of PCMNY as she enters retirement. For 20 years Rosemarie has put heart and soul into promoting Pax Christi and Gospel nonviolence and building and maintaining relationships with diverse peace organizations across the region. Although Rosemarie has hung up her Director's hat, she is not leaving Pax Christi and will continue as member and volunteer to help carry on Pax Christi's work of peace. Thank you, Rosemarie. We wish you laughter and fulfillment in this next stage of life as you explore new interests and rediscover old ones.

Pax Christ Metro New York will no longer have a Director or full-time staff. The office remains, but Office Coordinator Elda Luisi will be there part-time. It will be up to us, Pax Christi members, to work with members of the Board and Committees to maintain PCMNY programs and events and to continue the work of building peace. Now more than ever consider volunteering, join a committee, bring your talents to the table.

Pax Christi Metro New York is also saying goodbye to our webmaster, Karen Mack, who is retiring. Karen created the PCMNY website and has maintained it for at least the past 10 years, greeting visitors to the website with a beautiful dove and keeping us up to date on Pax Christi events, reflections, *Kerux Live!* and more. Thanks you, Karen for being a part of the PCMNY community. Wishing you happiness, good health, and enjoyment in retirement.

Gifts of Peace

have been given in honor of:

Leon Drumm* Patrick Flanagan*
Nancy Lorence* Rosemarie Pace*
Daver Yuki*

and in memory of:

Carlo Bercy* Mary P. Brody* Easling Campbell*
Matthew Chin* Peter Joseph Dirr*
Maria Teresa Donoso, ACM* George Floyd*
Mary Lou French* Virginia Galvin*
Rosa Hernandez, MCA* Patricia Kelly MSBT*
Marc Lamparello* Linda Mark*
Cliff Marques, ST* Joseph McKenzie-Hamilton*
Virginia O'Leary* Angela Robinson*
Ursula Santos* Amada Sotolongo, ACM*
Maria Tavarez* Steve Thornton*
James Verbil* Armand Walti*

Please remember them in prayer.

Kerux No. 124

Fall 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

Life at Pax Christi Metro New York, like life everywhere since March, has been much less eventful than before the pandemic; that is, literally, there have been far fewer events, if any. Nevertheless, we are happy to be able to offer you two new Zoom events. We hope you can join us at both.

UN International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

In observance of the UN International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on Saturday, September 26th, we will be co-hosting an Interfaith Prayer Service via Zoom starting at 11 AM. All are invited to offer a prayer, poem, reflection, or chant on peace or nuclear weapons abolition from their faith tradition. It should be no more than two minutes. Please contact rosemarie@nypaxchristi.org for the Zoom link and to let us know if you will be offering a brief prayer, poem, reflection, or chant.

The Politics of Peace, a Fall Assembly

On Saturday, October 17th, we will host our annual Fall Assembly via Zoom from 10:30 AM to 1:00 PM. The theme is “The Politics of Peace” and our keynote speakers are MJ Park, co-founder of Little Friends for Peace, who will lead us in a Peace Circle, and Kirin Taylor, PCMNY Board and Education Committee member and founder of the Peace International Political Party. Kirin will be introducing us to this brand new political party. If you are on our mailing list, you will get a brochure for the Fall Assembly in the mail, or you can request one by contacting the PCMNY office. You must register for the Assembly. Registration is \$15. To get the Zoom link, contact rosemarie@nypaxchristi.org.

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: Visit <https://www.nfggive.com/guidestar/13-3424349> to donate online. Also 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 OR <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

As noted on page 7, the covid-19 pandemic has cut into our event planning, but we are happy to be able to offer two events this Fall. Please stay tuned for even more. Visit our website and our Facebook and Twitter pages. You can also keep in touch via e-mail or by phone.

- Sept. 26th: Interfaith Prayer Service in observance of the UN International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, 11:00 via Zoom. Contact rosemarie@nypaxchristi.org for the link.
- Oct. 17th: The Politics of Peace, our annual Fall Assembly, 10:30 AM – 1:00 PM via Zoom. Link to be available in early October.

Thank you for all you do for peace and for one another. Be well. Stay safe.

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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