



# Pax Scotia

## Issue 27

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## Soldarity and Dialogue - the way to world peace



Japanese NGOs putting the case to their government for an end to weapons of mass destruction (See P3)

**P**ax Christi Scotland is still a relatively new organisation (see P4 for news of our fourth AGM), and we are still growing. Because we are small, we understand the call both by Pope Francis and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to act in solidarity with our brothers and sisters and to seek dialogue in our search for peace and a nonviolent society.

It's why we invite speakers from around the world to share their ideas in our online events. It's why we co-badge events with other organisations here in Scotland and around our common home.

Following our *Poverty And the Bomb* event on the UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, speaker Delia Chatoor said "The world is indeed in crisis but we all have it in our hearts to improve the situation and bring some measure of positivity to the international community... As winter approaches, we should expand our contacts with all in civil society and bring out supporters to add their voices to the cries for peace."

"Civil society" - that's all of us. And on Page 3, we see that civil society persistence is making a difference.

Peace?

That's peace in our homes, our schools and parishes, our society in Scotland and in our world. Delia suggests we pray for peace in Eastern Europe. But we also have to **act**. That's why, when I was asked to offer one of the prayers of the faithful at the Inaugural Romero Lecture at the Edinburgh Jesuit Centre in mid October, I prayed for the work and mission of Pax Christi Scotland and Pax Christi International, particularly for all who are marginalised - the refugees and migrants, the most vulnerable in our society - recognising as St Oscar Romero did that **we must be a voice** for fractured humanity.

We can be that voice individually and collectively as Pax Christi Scotland. Our priorities may be varied but our goal is always peace for all of our brothers and sisters, for our common home. We are asked as Catholics to hear the voice of the earth and the cry of the poor, and our inspiring speakers since our last AGM have explored and emphasised the inextricable links between peace and nuclear disarmament; peace and the climate emergency; peace and our attitudes towards women; peace and discrimination in all its insidious manifestations. Join us at the 2022 Pax Christi Scotland AGM - and in solidarity, let's dialogue our way to peace.

*Marian Pallister* (Pax Christi Scotland Chair)

Pax Christi Scotland aims to speak for the marginalised - those against whom violence is perpetrated, sometimes unthinkingly. In September we hosted an event that we called '**The narrow white lens: time for change**'. The theme was racial justice, and Pax Christi Scotland member June Graham said the 'thought provoking' event was particularly relevant to her as she been working on a biography of the African American writer Vincent O. Carter.



## Racism is judged by outcomes, not by intention

*June Graham is a part-time writer and Gaelic early years worker, living in the Island of Lewis. She worked in the Institute of Applied Physics in Bern, Switzerland, as a climate change researcher from 2002 to 2009. She has recently been awarded Creative Scotland funding to complete her biography of Vincent O. Carter, an extraordinary writer who found it hard to get his work published because of the expectations of what a Black man should be writing at the time.*

### The Racism Challenge

The thick book I had pulled off the shelf was entitled *The Bern Book*, after the city where I was living. It was about the experiences of Vincent O. Carter, the first Black man to settle in the Swiss capital.

As an exhausted young mother, I had hoped to find some light reading in the secondhand bookshop. I couldn't possibly challenge myself with *The Bern Book*, could I? I decided to give it a go and am so glad I did.

Vincent O. Carter writes so directly that he seems to invite the reader into his own experience. During his first year in Bern in 1953, he was stared at and pointed out, but Bern allowed him freedoms he was denied in his home country, including the distance to reflect on his childhood growing up in Kansas City, Missouri, and to write about it.

He remained in Bern until his death in 1983, earning his living by teaching English. *The Bern Book* came out in 1973, fifteen years after it was written, and *Such Sweet Thunder*, the novel about Vincent's childhood, was published 20 years after his death.

"Did he find peace?" I asked Liselotte Haas, Vincent's Swiss partner. She told me he found great peace, dedicating the last ten years of his life to siddha yoga, expressing his creativity through painting, and inspiring many of his English pupils to discover a more spiritual and peaceful path in life.

Liselotte and I became friends, staying in touch after I returned to Scotland in 2009. When Liselotte wrote to me in 2018 about her struggle to find an archive which would take Vincent's letters (he wasn't Swiss or he hadn't published enough books, were the excuses), I realised it was time to write about his life. Shortly before COVID, I returned to Bern to record interviews with Liselotte and others who had known Vincent.

Researching Vincent O. Carter's experiences has taken me out of my comfort zone. It was one thing feeling indignation about the Jim Crow laws in Missouri in the 1920s when Vincent was a child, and another realising racism is still a problem, not only in the US and Switzerland, but also in Scotland. I unearthed my own little voice which worried, if we allow them more, will there be less for us?

It is challenging to be genuinely open to learning about the issues people like Vincent O. Carter faced, and not just be on the defensive, and yet I have been greatly touched and enriched by learning about a life that was so different from mine. My takeaway from the recent Pax Christi Scotland webinar, *The Narrow White Lens*, was, 'Racism is judged by outcomes, not by intention'.



June Graham says that It has been challenging to be genuinely open to try to learn about the issues people like Vincent O. Carter faced and not just be on the defensive.

*The Bern Book*, which she found in that Swiss bookshop, is insightful, sometimes funny, sometimes heart-breakingly revealing about the unthinking racism Vincent O. Carter faced in Switzerland, which he balances against the vicious racism experienced in his homeland. In the US at the time, segregation still meant that there were places he couldn't go, activities he couldn't participate in, extreme violence he could be subjected to.

Lest we forget, it wasn't until 1955 that Rosa Parks helped initiate the civil rights movement in the United States when she refused to give up her seat to a white man on a Montgomery, Alabama bus. Carter had moved to Bern in 1953, Ironically, the Swiss were super-critical of American racism, not realising that their own attitudes cut Carter to his very soul.

It is a book that reminds us in 2022 that words **are** as damaging as sticks and stones.

We look forward to June's biography. Meanwhile *The Bern Book: A Record of a Voyage of the Mind* by Vincent O Carter

ISBN 10: 1628973161 / ISBN 13: 9781628973167

is available from bookshops and on Kindle.



# Japanese NGOs push *their* government to take concrete steps towards nuclear abolition

*Rico Ishii Robertson is International Coordinator of Peace Boat, a Japan-based international NGO working to promote peace, human rights, and sustainability. Here she reminds us that persistence is a valuable tool we can all use to bring an end to weapons of mass destruction.*

On October 6th, the Japan NGO Network for Nuclear Weapons Abolition met with the Deputy Director General of Disarmament Division of the Japanese Foreign Ministry to urge the Japanese government to take concrete measures towards the total abolition of nuclear weapons.

The year 2022 has been very eventful for nuclear abolition campaigners. In June the first Meeting of State Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) took place in Vienna, Austria, and the tenth Review Conference of the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was held in New York in August. Although the efforts towards a nuclear free world continue and work around the TPNW is moving forward, the nuclear threat has become ever more realistic due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the volatile situation on the Korean peninsula.

As the 77th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) started in September, the first meeting of the International Group of Eminent Persons is planned at the end of the year, and the G7 Summit will take place in Hiroshima in May 2023, the NGOs requested the meeting with the government of Japan to urge it to take active leadership towards total nuclear abolition in such a critical moment. Akira Kawasaki, the co-chair of the NGO network and a member of the International Steering Group of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), highlighted the urgency of taking concrete action towards nuclear abolition in the current international political situation.

In the meeting, which was about one hour, the NGO group submitted six requests to the government of Japan, which are:

1. Include the contents of the final document of the NPT review conference, including the references to the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and the TPNW, in the draft nuclear disarmament resolution that the government of Japan submits to the UNGA this year.
2. Vote for the UNGA resolution that calls for the promotion of the TPNW. If this is not possible, at least abstain .



Rico Ishii Robertson  
Peace Boat

(There is a resolution to promote the TPNW at UNGA every year since 2017. Japan has not supported the resolution).

3. Set up an exchange space for Hibakusha and relevant NGOs to provide information and exchange opinions for the International Group of Eminent Persons.

4. Share specific information and coordinate with educational institutions and NGOs about the Youth Leader Fund for a world without nuclear weapons (On August 1st, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida introduced the idea to establish this Fund in his General Debate Speech at the Tenth Review Conference to the NPT).

5. Actively contribute to the assistance of nuclear survivors/victims.

6. Start exchange of opinions with Hibakusha groups and relevant NGOs at an early stage of preparations for the G7 Summit in Hiroshima.

The immediate response from the Deputy Director was a repetition of what had already been said in the past. The NGO members felt that the government lacks a sense of urgency regarding the situation. This is precisely why civil society needs to continue our hard work to push the government to really pay attention to their call. At the press conference that followed the meeting, Masako Wada, a Hibakusha from Nagasaki and the Assistant Secretary General of Nihon Hidankyo (Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations) showed her disappointment in their response. NGO members who participated in the meeting reaffirmed their commitment to continuing to push the government to take action for nuclear disarmament.

Even though no immediate positive change or response has been seen yet, the hard work of Hibakusha and civil society over many years reminds us of how important it is to keep being persistent, cooperate together, and not lose hope.

Rico Ishii Robertson

## Our website

Blogs, podcasts, past and future events – these are all on our Pax Christi Scotland website. All newsletters are archived there. You can pay your annual membership fee on the Membership page and make donations. Please explore and share:

<https://www.paxchristiscotland.org/>

Continued thanks to webmaster Chris Boles of Caledonian Websites:

<https://www.caledonianwebsites.com/>

## Membership Reminder

**Easiest method? Pay on the membership page of our website.**

If you pay by online banking, please give your name to identify your payment.

If you wish to pay by cheque, send to the address below, cheques payable to Pax Christi Scotland.

You can also make regular donations on our 'donate' page - thank you.

Membership fees are £10 for waged, £5 for unwaged.

Explore the website for all our activities:

<https://www.paxchristiscotland.org>

## Where to find Pax Christi Scotland:

<http://www.paxchristiscotland.org>

[https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/PaxChristiScotland)

[PaxChristiScotland](#)

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Snail mail:

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## YouTube Channel

You can find recordings of all our events at:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCcmLpQv27Py_ul14szp95g)

[UCCcmLpQv27Py\\_ul14szp95g](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCcmLpQv27Py_ul14szp95g)

Click on the word 'Subscribed' and you will be informed whenever a new recording is posted.

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# Pax Christi Scotland AGM

Pax Christi Scotland will hold its annual general meeting on Thursday, 24 October from 7pm to 9pm. We are delighted that after the business of the evening (documents will be sent out ahead of the meeting), Fr Tony Lappin will be our guest speaker.

Fr Tony's presentation will be entitled '*Living Our Faith In Scotland - the challenges and opportunities of journeying together*'. We have members in every corner of Scotland, and those challenges and opportunities are different in each diocese.

Fr Tony is a priest of the Archdiocese of St Andrews & Edinburgh, currently serving the parish of St Joseph's, Peebles and Innerleithen.



Find out more about him on the night, but a potted version of a richly fulfilling career is that before the priesthood, he spent a quarter of a century in social work and education. He is a registered psychotherapist and for over 18 years had a part-time private practice in the west end of Glasgow, helping individuals, couples and groups to explore experiences of trauma and other difficulties that have led to challenges in various aspects of day-to-day living. Today, part of his work is as a nominated 'psychological expert' with the Scottish Catholic Inter-diocesan Tribunal.

Fr Tony is currently a priest-member of the Commission for Caritas, Justice and Peace within the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh, with specific responsibility for SPRED (Special Religious Development).

As always, there will be an opportunity to ask Fr Tony questions, and of course we hope you will play your part in the 'business' of the AGM from 7pm to 7.45pm.

Details of the AGM:

**November 24, 2022 19:00 UK time**

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZclcuuvrj8sHNPRfslq7xslFhtRwiM8LFRK>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

*\* Watch out for news of a special  
Pax Christi Scotland Advent Vigil*

