



Pax Scotia

Issue 1

“
Peace in our homes, our families, our schools and communities. Peace in all those places where war never seems to end. Peace for those faces which have known nothing but pain.

~ Pope Francis



Inside:

Working for peace online – P2

Pax Christi Scotland update – P3

Climate emergency 's threat to peace -- P4

Contacting Pax Christi Scotland – P4

Pax Christi Scotland, welcomed into the international peace community in 2019, will work for all that Pope Francis says here. COVID19 lockdown? When better to petition for peace on the world stage & practise nonviolence at home & on social media?

WHAT DOES PEACE LOOK LIKE IN OUR FAITH COMMUNITIES?



By Fr John Convery sx
Chaplain
Pax Christi Scotland

**“It is in the shelter of each other that the people live”
(Irish Traditional)**

Please bear with me if I speak from a personal level at the beginning of these few lines of reflection. Is it just me, or is there a whiff in the air of ‘we’re all in this together’, ‘this will only get better if we stick together’, ‘the community must support the more needy and vulnerable’ and ‘society will be a better place when this is all over’? Even when I go out for my daily moment of exercise in the shape of a long walk, total strangers are nodding a head or asking ‘how are you?’ Social media is jam packed with posts from ordinary members of the public offering all kinds of messages of support and comfort. Is peace in our communities breaking out?

Yet our communities, parishes and schools are experiencing a distinct lack of peace and serenity as we live through the coronavirus crisis. Perhaps more than ever, our community of Pax Christi is being called to be an ‘instrument of peace’. Are we not more than ever obliged by the Gospel of Jesus Christ to facilitate conversations in our faith communities on how we practise and hold on to and develop a language of peace? Difficult and awkward dialogue on how we behave as a community of faith both from within and without will be needed more than ever when the journey moves on to ‘post virus trauma’.

Maybe I’m being too hopeful, if that’s possible, that the soil will be much healthier for a harvest of more peace talk in our communities. As we attempt to rebuild and reconnect with each other there will be a need to talk and act in a peaceful way and maybe even the possibility of real reconciliation, EASTER reconciliation. In this time, our time, the resurrected Christ compels us to keep alive that resurrection message ‘Peace be with you’.

‘God grant me the Serenity to accept

The things I cannot change

Courage to change the things I can

And the Wisdom to know the difference.’

International peace work online



Making the most of the technology

When COVID 19 struck, there was a feeling within the Pax Christi Scotland executive committee that, as we say in Scotland, the rug had been ca'd frae under us.

Following our inaugural AGM and weekend event in November 2019, there was much to do. There were some wonderful suggestions from new members at the event and from those of us who had been working hard to ensure Pax Christi Scotland had a place at the international peace table. Pax Christi International had accepted us into the fold – we were raring to go.

With three delegates lined up to go to the international meeting in Hiroshima in May 2020, plans for collaborations with CAAT (Campaign Against the Arms Trade), Hope for Justice (the charity that works for victims of modern slavery), and gender violence organisations, as well as work in schools, parishes and prisons underway, it felt we were on track.

And then of course, things fell apart. The Hiroshima gathering has been postponed until 2021. Meetings were banned, and then came total lockdown.

But technology has come to the rescue. Pax Christi International initiated a letter that was emailed between all member countries asking that President Trump '*ease and suspend sanctions that negatively impact civilian populations and other restrictions that impair governments' abilities to respond to the health crisis*'. It was good to work with more experienced member countries to come to agreement on the wording of the letter – which included the request for Mr Trump to suspend '*financial sanctions that impact the ability of countries to import much-needed medical supplies and equipment*'.

The countries in question are Iran, Syria, and Gaza, and it was agreed that future appeals to the US president would include other states where sanctions are denying people justice and threatening peace. That letter was signed by Pax Christi International co-presidents and the general secretary, the PCI board, and 13 Pax Christi Groups – including Pax Christi Scotland. The power of the Internet in allowing us to quickly get such an important communication together was a timely reminder that we live in 2020 and must make use of every technology trick we can to further the cause of peace.

You can read the whole of that letter on the Pax Christi International website (www.paxchristi.net), along with one issued on 30 March expressing '*solidarity with all of you especially those in Italy and other countries across the globe who have been adversely affected by the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19)... Our prayers are with you in a very special way*'.

The image at the top of this page encapsulates all that the letter to President Trump says. You can see it on social media along with our messages and those of Pax Christi International. See page 4 for all links you may find useful. Work continues – please add your voice...

Pax Christi Scotland Update: Work in progress, work planned

Schools Resources

Pax Christi Scotland aims to work for a nonviolent society by reaching out to families, schools, parishes and the wider community.

Diane Foy has been working on materials and we had hopes that we would be able to use these in planned meetings organised by Justice and Peace Scotland's *Beyond the Walls* initiative. *Beyond the Walls* aims to share with school students what the Church does outside the church buildings and the Sunday celebration of Mass.

These meetings are obviously on hold, but if you know of schools that would be interested in a Pax Christi Scotland event OR a *Beyond the Walls* event post COVID 19, email Marian or Hugh:

marian.pallister@zen.co.uk

hughfoy@yahoo.co.uk

Website

www.paxchristiscotland.org is a work in progress. Would you like to contribute a 500-word blog? It should be a reflective piece of writing on your thoughts about seeking a nonviolent world. Email to Marian!



CAAT meeting in Edinburgh – Roslyn Mauchline and Marian Pallister attended a very valuable all-day session.

CAAT

CAAT Scotland has an impressive record campaigning against the arms trade.

It has been able to bring a halt to arms trade fairs in Glasgow, and is working in every sphere of life.

An issue raised at the CAAT meeting in Edinburgh attended by Marian Pallister & Rosalyn Mauchline was the Scottish Enterprise funding for the arms trade in Scotland. As a result, Marian wrote to the First Minister questioning such funding in view of the fact that arms made in Scotland are being used in conflicts such as Syria and Yemen, targeting civilians.

The reply, from Matthew McAleer, a policy advisor in the Manufacturing and Industries division of the Scottish Government, stressed that the Scottish Government condemns human rights abuses and corruption wherever it occurs. It also stressed that export licences for arms is a reserved matter over which the Scottish Government has no control.

Mr McAleer wrote 'However, we have been very clear in our expectation that the UK Government should properly police the export of arms and investigate whenever concerns are raised.'

The letter went on to say that 16,000 people are employed in Scotland's aerospace, defence and shipbuilding sectors and the Scottish Government has a role in supporting these industries – but, the financial support received has 'primarily focused upon helping companies to diversify into non-military and civilian applications'.

We have heard during the COVID 19 emergency that some of these companies are indeed now manufacturing equipment for hospitals. Perhaps it is an issue we can follow through on with a view to ensuring that diversification is permanent.

Pax Christi Scotland acknowledges the expertise in the field of nuclear disarmament of organisations such as Christian CND, SCANA, and the Catholic Worker movement. We support them, and we support CAAT Scotland in its work against the arms trade. Support means action, including online letter writing and petition signing.

COP 26 cancellation – and why it matters to Pax Christi Scotland

Marian Pallister, chair of Pax Christi Scotland, offers a personal reflection.

A statement from the UN late on April 1 confirmed that the COP 26 meeting scheduled for November of this year in Glasgow would be delayed until 2021

Over 26,000 people would have attended the conference and the churches in Scotland had come together to prepare to welcome them and to put forward views on the climate emergency.

No new date has been set, but Pax Christi Scotland joins with the Scottish Bishops' Conference Commission on Justice and Peace in our intention to continue to campaign on climate emergency issues and to keep this 'other crisis' high on the political agenda and high in public awareness.

Why? What has the climate emergency to do with peace? Or indeed justice and peace?

Just about everything. Peace is threatened when the necessities of life – food, water, shelter – are threatened. And climate change has already severely affected the provision of all three in many countries across the world.

Our media has too often concentrated on the damage wrought by climate in the UK and in other wealthy nations, such as Australia and the US – the floods and fires that have done untold damage.

We hear so much less about developing countries where because of the effects of climate crisis, hunger, economic meltdown, and civic unrest are becoming the norm.

I would like to share what has been happening in Zambia, a country I know very well. Zambia has been noted since independence for its peaceful progression in the world. It relies on copper, tourism and agriculture. Situated in sub-Saharan Africa, it has always been subject to drought – perhaps once every four or five years. Occasionally those droughts have put the country in debt – the first president, Kenneth Kaunda, was forced to go cap in hand to the IMF and was given aid with damaging ties. Zambia got over it.

But now there have been three droughts in a row. Food security has been devastated. The World Food Programme has for the first time in more than a decade had to provide bags of mealie meal (corn flour) to prevent starvation. Families are back to one meal a day.

The Victoria Falls, the spectacular mile-long waterfall on the Zambezi River has dried. The Kariba Dam and many others on the major rivers which for decades have provided hydro electricity for the nation, are so dangerously low on water that power is rationed to as little as five hours a day. Bizarrely, in North Eastern Province, flash floods have literally drowned people out of their homes since January. All industry is threatened.

And so, there has been civil unrest. Only the double whammy of COVID19 is keeping a lid on it. So let's keep campaigning. Peace is under threat and Pax Christi Scotland needs to act.

Where to find Pax Christi Scotland:

<https://www.facebook.com/PaxChristiScotland> (Facebook)

www.paxchristiscotland.org (Website)

[@PaxScotland](https://twitter.com/PaxScotland) (Twitter)

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