

Prayer Study Act
Observing the International Day of Peace (September 21, 2012)

Dear Friends

Pax Christi international has been represented at the United Nations in NYC for over 30 years. As an NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) we have consultative status within the UN. This means that as a team, with the approval of our International Secretariat, we can make verbal comments or prepare statements concerning issues that are on our agenda.

This year we have a full team of 5 delegates, Mary McDonald, Beth Begley, Madeline Labriola, Patrick Ryan and Cheryl Morrissey. Our team attends briefings, committee meetings and special events at the UN whenever possible. The priorities of PCI are numerous but we focus on the areas of nuclear disarmament and the arms trade, human rights, indigenous issues especially mining, sustainable development and financing for development. Several times during the year we attend conferences, which highlight one issue such as The Status of Women, Environment and the Climate Crisis, Sustainable Development and the Indigenous Forum.

Throughout July Beth and a Pax Christi delegation participated in the Control Arms Coalition during the Arms Trade Treaty negotiations and she has been active on the CoNGO Committee on Disarmament Peace and Security. Last Spring Patrick attended the preliminary meeting for the Rio+20 Summit in Durban, South Africa. Cheryl has been actively writing papers for the NGO Committee on Financing for Development Mary's long standing presence at the Indigenous People's Committee has led to a greater understanding of the pressures and problems faced by this special group. Madeline continues her work with the climate crisis subcommittee of the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development. We ban together with other religious organizations on the Committee of Religious NGOs to encourage greater understanding between the diverse religions and cultures.

As delegates to the UN we realize the importance of our work even if we rarely see the "fruits of our labour". The UN is a huge institution that moves very slowly and unfortunately is hurt by political ambitions at the expense of human needs by many countries, including the US. We represent civil society especially the people who have no voice and we continue to speak out and encourage following the gospel principles. The presence of our team at the UN gives credibility to the Pax Christi name thanks to the work of many people who served before us in this capacity and to that of the many Pax Christi colleagues throughout the world our name is remembered with respect and confidence.

This year we are preparing to participate in the observation of International Day of Peace as we have done for the past several years. This special day was declared by the General Assembly to be observed around the world on September 21, which coincides with the opening of the United Nations each year.

It is hoped that this day will be devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples. International Day of Peace is also a Day of Ceasefire-personal and political. Let us take this opportunity to make peace in our own relationships as well as impact conflicts of our time. Imagine what a whole Day of Ceasefire would mean to humanity? After all every journey begins with the first step.

Please join us and the millions of people all over the world as we observe this Day of Peace.

Madeline Labriola and the Pax Christi International UN Team in NY

Prayer:

God of Hope and Compassion be with us today as we pray for a deeper consciousness of the part we play in the history of war. Hear our prayers for a greater awareness of how we can build a more peaceful world.

Let us pray for the grace not to be silent as we seek to encourage world leaders to replace the politics of war with the politics of peace.

Let us pray that the gospel message of peace and forgiveness becomes like seeds that fall on fertile soil; that we have a good and obedient heart that allows His message to bear fruit.

Let us pray that all nations will turn away from the production of nuclear weapons and use this money to feed the hungry and improve the lives of the poor.

Let us pray that people and their land will not be raped for the natural resources that are part of their heritage. That good government policy will protect these precious resources so they can be shared equally and fairly with all of God's people.

Let us pray for the United Nations, that all 193 countries will work together to bring lasting peace and security to all.

Let us pray for forgiveness for all the times we have sought revenge and retaliation when we are called by our faith to love our enemies and do good to those who hate us.

Loving God lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth from despair to hope, from fear to trust, from hate to love from war to peace now and ever more. Amen

Study

The United Nations was established on 24 October 1945 with 51 countries and now has 193 countries represented. The main objectives of the UN are to keep peace throughout

the world: to develop friendly relations among nations; to help nations work together to improve the lives of poor people to conquer hunger, disease and illiteracy and to encourage respect for each other's rights and freedoms; and to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations to achieve these goals.

As citizens of the US and as members of Pax Christi we can help the UN achieve these goals by our actions as well as our prayers. The daunting task before this international body has often been met with scepticism and intolerance especially in the US. Governments alone cannot solve the world's problems. This is why the work of civil society is paramount to the success of this organization. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) like Pax Christi are working on the ground directly with people and governments to assure that the treaties; agreements and goals of the UN become reality.

A few months ago, world leaders, together with civil society, local authorities and the private sector met in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil for the United Nations Conference on sustainable Development to renew political commitment to long term sustainable development. As a result this year's theme for International Day of Peace is "Sustainable Peace for a Sustainable Future". The root causes of many conflicts are directly related to valuable natural resources, such as oil, gold, diamonds, timber or water. Addressing these issues is crucial to maintaining security. This Day offers people around the world a shared date to think about how they can contribute to ensuring that natural resources are managed in a sustainable way, thus reducing the potential for disputes and paving the road to a sustainable future.

Act:

On September 21 observe the International Day of Peace. Here are some suggestions:

Invite 2 or 3 friends over to your house for a candlelight prayer vigil.

Spend some time in prayer and meditation for peace.

Heal any relationships that are strained. Reach out to the other.

Check out the website www.internationaldayofpeace.org to see what is happening in your area and around the world.

Ask your parish priest to say a Mass for Peace (on Sept. 21 or 22) uses the day's readings but talk about peace in the introduction, petitions and gifts. (For an example used by Pax Christi Hudson Valley please contact mlabriola@mac.com)

Sponsor a walk through your town or village; gather your neighbours to walk in silence together. If you are in the NY/Hudson Valley area joins us for the "Peace Bells over the

Hudson” beginning at 10:00 am Sept. 22, 2012 on the Hudson River Walkway, Highland and Poughkeepsie, NY. www.peacebellfoundation.org

Be sure to tell your children and grandchildren about this day and how they can help to build a more peaceful world.

Remind yourself of how much of the earth’s natural resources you consume each day. Do you waste water, food, and gasoline? Do you still buy bottled water? Can you eat less meat? Buy less jewellery? Encourage others to do the same.

Educate yourself on the issues of mining especially on indigenous lands. Boycott companies that mine indiscriminately at the expense of the people. Write a letter to the editor to educate others about this topic.

Believe that peace is possible and that it begins with you!

For more information and/or register your action:

www.paxchristi.net

www.un.org

www.internationaldayofpeace.org

www.un.org/en/sustainability (info on UN and sustainability)

www.unscd2012.org/rio/index.html (Info on the Rio+20 conferences)

www.idpv.com (International Day of Peace Vigil)

Google “prayers for peace” and begin praying

Native American Prayer for Peace

O Great Spirit of our Ancestors, I raise my pipe to you. To your messengers the four winds, and to Mother Earth who provides for your children. Give us the wisdom to teach our children to love, to respect, and to be kind to each other so that they may grow with peace in mind. Let us learn to share all the good things you provide for us on this Earth.

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