



Dear Pax Christi members and friends around the world,

Christian communities have started their preparation for the celebration of Christmas, the commemoration of the birth of Jesus – called “Prince of Peace” by Isaiah – in Bethlehem. With the destruction of Gaza in July still fresh in our minds, it is certainly not easy to associate peace with occupied Palestine, but it is not easy either to associate peace with many other countries in our world. This has been a very tough year for millions of people in Syria, Iraq, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Nigeria, Ukraine... and sadly, in too many countries that can be listed here. In 2014, we remembered the beginning of the First World War, but while looking at our world today, it seems we have not learned the lesson yet.

In 1979, with an imminent civil war in El Salvador, in his last Christmas homily, Monsignor Oscar Romero told the people attending the celebration: “I congratulate you, brothers and sisters, not only because it is Christmas, but because you are courageous. While many people are afraid and stay indoors [...] you are, tonight, a witness of what Christmas is meant to be. In the midst of the world, notwithstanding the dangers, vicissitudes, psychoses, and fears, there is hope [...]”

We think that hope is one of the deepest values of Pax Christi members around the world. In a special manner, with the proximity of Christmas, we are reluctant to lose hope. Many of our member organizations are among those who did not lose courage and decided to address conflict through nonviolence. In every one of the countries listed above, mainstream media did not pay enough attention to their many initiatives organized mostly at the local level. But they are there – in Syria, in Iraq, in South Sudan, In Palestine – creating hope, inspiring peace.

Together with Pope Francis, we pray that leaders of regions in conflict have “the wisdom and strength needed to move forward with determination on the path toward peace, to address every dispute with the tenacity of dialogue and negotiation and with the power of reconciliation.” We believe with him “that in war all is lost and in peace nothing.”

At the end of the year we stand in solidarity with and send greetings of peace to the peoples suffering different types of violence; to all displaced families and those who have lost their loved ones in wars they did not start, nor support. And we also send our hopeful greetings to you, peacemakers, who make our world go round!

Our team at the International Secretariat is deeply grateful for your support and we wish that peace and active nonviolence will be your most precious commitment of 2015.

Peace,