

Pennsylvania Pax Christi

Open letter to Pennsylvania's bishops expressing grave concern for our nation's trajectory in evils of militarism, racism and neglect of the poor, all in the context of recent ICE raids – page 6

CPF lost a devoted member Trish DiPietrae 1940-2026

Trish, an active member of CPF for more than 40 Years, passed away in hospice January 22, 2026. She was a parishioner of St. Malachy Catholic Church where she attended CPF meetings and was always willing to assist including service as an editor and contributor to the Catholic Peace Fellowship Newsletter. Trish, a West Catholic High and Temple University alumnus, retired from her role as Special Assistant to the Dean of the School of Veterinary Medicine at University of Pennsylvania. Her family has indicated that a memorial Mass will be held later when the weather improves.

We hold up Trish DiPietrae, her family and all of her loved ones in Prayer and Love - page 4

St. Malachy Black History Month presentation on Servant of God Sr. Thea Bowman

February 15, St. Malachy Antiracism Committee sponsored the parish third Sunday after mass hospitality with a presentation and discussion on Servant of God Sr. Thea Bowman and particularly her encouragement to all of us to tell each other "I really really Love you" - page 5

A glaring but blinding nuclear hypocrisy

by Scott Fina

Scott's commentary was published by the Santa Maria Times and also carried by the Lompoc Record, Hanford Sentinel, and Santa Ynez Valley News. See the link to the published article here:

https://santamariatimes.com/opinion/commentary/a-glaring-but-blinding-nuclear-hypocrisy-guest-commentary/article_d8f1bdeb-f96e-4f97-99a2-c48941305ef5.html

On June 22, the day after the U.S. sent B-2 bombers to unload 30,000-pound bombs on three uranium enrichment facilities in Iran, the Trump Administration released a White House Newsletter titled, "What they are saying: President Trump's display of peace through strength." (<https://apnews.com/article/iran-nuclear-sites-explained-israel-attack-4535b4ecb4aefb2f3de9e3ad62fe363f>) and

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/articles/2025/06/what-they-are-saying-president-trumps-display-of-peace-through-strength/>) The newsletter comprises a long list of comments by U.S. senators and representatives stating support for President Trump’s ordering of the bombing, and broad condemnation of Iran’s government.

An alternative read on the newsletter sees no display of peace, but rather, boasting, bullying, and bigotry with alarming consequences dispelling most hope for peace in the Middle East. What the U.S. has undertaken over several of its presidential administrations and their unquestioning alliance with Israel (a nation estimated to have 90 nuclear warheads, but refuses to admit to), amounts to radical hypocrisy and disregard for a humane world order. (<https://armscontrolcenter.org/countries/israel/>) Nuclear weaponry lies at the heart of this lawless ruthlessness.

Consider American nuclear military policy.

Despite having the most powerful, “conventional” military force on our planet, the U.S.—which brought nuclear weapons into the world and is the only nation to have used them—maintains an advanced and extensive nuclear arsenal. Many deem America’s nuclear force as a necessary evil: an essential deterrence for our nation’s security. The reality of the U.S. nuclear arsenal and how it will be employed, however, is far different from this thinking. Ironically, this reality stares Americans in the face!

The U.S. Department of Defense periodically publishes its nuclear military policy in a document titled the “Nuclear Posture Review” (NPR) The current document was published in 2022 under the command of President Biden. The NPR has a striking statement that brings under question, “deterrence” as the purpose of the American nuclear arsenal. The statement reads as follows:

“We conducted a thorough review of a broad range of options for nuclear declaratory policy—including both No First Use and Sole Purpose policies — and concluded that those approaches would result in an unacceptable level of risk in light of the range of non-nuclear capabilities being developed and fielded by competitors that could inflict strategic-level damage to the United States and its Allies and partners.” (<https://fas.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/2022-Nuclear-Posture-Review.pdf>)

In simpler terms, the U.S. military retains the possibility of throwing the first nuclear punch in a military conflict with an adversary that is using nonnuclear arms. Think about this. Shouldn’t one ask, who’s the real bad guy in this scenario?

Americans should also take a good look at how the U.S. military portrays the capacity of its nuclear arsenal. They should reasonably expect their military to be somewhat reserved in this regard, given the monstrous outcome that nuclear war will bring: the eradication of humanity. Yet, the U.S. Department of Defense flagrantly showcases its nuclear weaponry!

Readers are urged to Google, “America’s Nuclear Triad.” There on the Department of Defense webpage, they will be treated to a flashy, arrogant, multimedia presentation, resembling a violent video game bursting with bravado, muscle-flexing, and testosterone.

(<https://www.defense.gov/Multimedia/Experience/Americas-Nuclear-Triad/>) Indeed, the Department of Defense holds little back in depicting its access to military jets, Trident submarines, and land-based

intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) for delivering massively destructive thermal nuclear war heads around the world.

Americans can also observe nuclear weapons in real life. There are 400 silos holding ICBMs, on alert, located in Wyoming, Montana and North Dakota.

(<https://www.defense.gov/Multimedia/Experience/Americas-Nuclear-Triad/#land>) Several times a year, an ICBM is transported by vehicle to Vandenberg Space Force Base on the Central Coast of California, where it is launched and sent approximately 4,200 miles to the Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands. The U.S. military tests its ICBM system in this manner. The missileers who will fire off the ICBMs are also trained at Vandenberg. (<https://www.vandenberg.spaceforce.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/4193615/minuteman-iii-test-launch-showcases-readiness-of-us-nuclear-forces-safe-effecti/>)

The United Nations adopted the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which “entered into force” in 2021, banning the production and possession of all nuclear weapons.

(<https://disarmament.unoda.org/wmd/nuclear/tpnw/>) Nonetheless, nine nations, including the U.S. and Israel, have nuclear weapons. Six other nations host nuclear weapons on behalf of those nations that possess them. (https://www.icanw.org/nuclear_arsenals) Consequently, all these nations, including the U.S. and Israel, are violating international law.

So given this contemporary, global context of nuclear weaponry, and from an objective perspective, isn't it logical, if not fair, for Iran to also produce and possess nuclear weapons, like the U.S. and Israel have done?

Many Americans, including the members of the Trump Administration, argue that Iran cannot be trusted with nuclear weapons because it presents a terroristic threat.

(<https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/counterintelligence/the-iran-threat>) Likely, a majority of Americans supported the bombing of Iran's nuclear facilities by the U.S. and Israel for this reason. However, neither the U.S. nor Israel have provided clear evidence that Iran has been working to create nuclear weapons. On the contrary, as recently as June 18th, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Rafael Grossi, stated there had been no reporting of Iran pursuing nuclear weapons for over 20 years. (<https://truthout.org/articles/iaea-head-we-did-not-have-any-proof-of-iran-building-nuclear-weapon/>)

One can conclude there is a gross lack of critical thinking in determining which nations should be trusted or not. Afterall, it is the leadership of Israel that has been charged with crimes against humanity in what most of the world sees as genocide in its slaughter and current starvation of tens of thousands of innocent Palestinians in Gaza. (<https://www.icc-cpi.int/defendant/Netanyahu> and <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/10/un-commission-finds-war-crimes-and-crimes-against-humanity-israeli-attacks>). And has not the United States helped enable this atrocity by arming Israel?

Again, we should ask, who are the good guys and the bad guys in the world? For the sake of all humanity, Americans, open your eyes.

A link to guest cometary by Scott Fina: https://santamariatimes.com/opinion/commentary/does-anybody-know-what-time-it-is-guest-commentary/article_e79f33fa-678c-404d-8a9b-dd5720a8762d.html

Pennsylvania Pax Christi meets online every 3rd Monday at 4:30 pm -next meeting March 16

Please email the following if you wish to join us:

info@paxchristi-pa.org, Pax Christi Pennsylvania
pghpaxchristi@gmail.com, Pittsburgh Area Pax Christi
paxchristihbg@gmail.com, Pax Christi Harrisburg
paxchristiphila@yahoo.com, Pax Christi Philadelphia / CPF:
cpfnewsletter@gmail.com, catholicpeacefellowship.phila@gmail.com, cpfphila@gmail.com,

Also

West Chester PA Contact: Jeffrey Singleton jeffrey.singleton@comcast.net and for:

Blessed Are the Peacemakers Reading Group

Meets at Saint Joseph's Parish in Downingtown, PA; Contact for local meeting times:

<https://stjosephrc.org/blessed-are-the-peacemakers-reading-group>

Pax Christi USA:

info@paxchristiusa.org and sniamke@paxchristiusa.org

NEXT CPF MEETINGS: March 8, April 12, June 14, and July 12

We hope to have 2nd annual Peace Mass on August 9; No meeting that day or in May

Second Sunday CPF Phila meeting After the 10 am Mass at

St. Malachy 1429 North 11th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19122

Starting about 11:45 pm

Please email CPFphila@gmail.com for **New** Zoom Meeting Link.

Trish DiPietrae 1940-2026



Trish with Melissa at 2012 St. Malachy Women's Retreat

Reflecting on Sr. Thea Bowman's Call to Love:

"We need to tell one another in our homes, in our church, and even in our world; I really, really love you." — Sr. Thea Bowman

Reflective Questions & Discussion

1. Our nation is marked by racial tension, political division, and social inequity, how might choosing to say "I really, really love you" become an act of resistance and healing?

- a. What fears or barriers keep us from expressing love across political or racial divides?
- b. Can love be a force for social transformation? What might that look like in practice?





Pax Christi PA
“an unarmed and disarming peace”

info@paxchristi-pa.org

paxchristi-pa.org



Your Excellency,

We write to you today as members of Pax Christi Pennsylvania (PA), a network of local groups from Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, West Chester, and Philadelphia, “grounded in the Gospel and Catholic social teaching” and “rejecting war, preparation for war, every form of violence and domination, and personal and systemic racism.”¹ We are part of Pax Christi USA, a section of Pax Christi International, the official Catholic peace movement.

This time of year it is fitting to recall Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s challenge that militarism, along with racism and poverty, remains one of the “triple evils” of injustice embedded within our society. These past few weeks, between time of year we remember Dr. King and the preparation for Lent, one of those evils in particular, a shocking surge of militarism, revealed itself through:

- a preemptive military strike violating the national sovereignty of Venezuela and inflicting civilian casualties²
- threats of unilateral intervention directed at Mexico, Colombia, Iran, and Cuba
- geopolitical demands to acquire the sovereign territory of Greenland
- undermining the UN and other international organizations in conflict resolution
- establishing a so-called pay-to-play “Board of Peace” for Gaza that does not satisfy the need for justice to build peace³
- threats to deploy the U.S. military in domestic police actions
- terrorizing and killing of civilians by heavily armed federal agents in Minneapolis⁴
- allowing the expiration of the New START treaty, which limits nuclear weapons stockpiling

We stand horrified by these unjust actions that sow chaos and threaten human life. As members of Pax Christi Pennsylvania, we live the charism of gospel nonviolence: to be peacemakers (Matthew 5:9), to “put away the sword” (Matthew 26:52), to live the truth in nonviolent, loving service (Ephesian 4:15), to build the God’s kingdom of justice, peace, and joy (Romans 14:17).

¹“Our Vision – Pax Christi USA.” Pax Christi USA, <https://paxchristiusa.org/about/our-vision/>. Accessed January 2026.

² “Pax Christi USA responds to US action in Venezuela.” Pax Christi USA, <https://paxchristiusa.org/2026/01/03/pax-christi-usa-responds-to-us-action-in-venezuela/> Accessed January 2026.

³ “Pax Christi International declaration on the so-called “Board of Peace.” *Pax Christi USA*, <https://paxchristiusa.org/2026/01/24/pax-christi-international-declaration-on-the-so-called-board-of-peace/> Accessed January 2026.

⁴ “Statement in response to ICE shooting in Minneapolis.” Pax Christi USA, <https://paxchristiusa.org/2026/01/08/statement-in-response-to-ice-shooting-in-minneapolis/> Accessed January 2026.

We look to Pope Leo XIV who, in his opening *Urbi et Orbi* blessing moments after being elected, reminded the world that the gospel is “**unarmed and disarming**.”⁵ Weeks later in his letter to Pax Christi USA, the Holy Father encouraged us to form “local communities into ‘houses of peace’ where one learns how to defuse hostility through dialogue, where justice is practiced and forgiveness is cherished.”⁶

With this in mind, we ask you, our shepherds, in the name of the unarmed and disarming gospel of Christ:

- Name and speak more boldly against the injustice of militarism revealed in recent weeks
- Encourage brother clergy to preach and teach about the need for just peace
- Avoid “both-sidesism” by recognizing that there are structural, unjust differences in power that require prophetic clarity rather than neutrality⁷
- Participate in public, prayerful, nonviolent witness as direct action
- Provide the faithful People of God direction about how to promote peace and justice in the face of increased violence fueled by militarism.

There comes a time when faith impels action, to promote meaningful change in our communities. We look to you, our bishops, for leadership. Now is the time for you to speak about this militarism that seeped into the policies of our country.

Additionally, in years past, Pax Christi could look—and find—the support of our bishops, particularly through their membership in Pax Christi and its work for justice. We members of Pax Christi Pennsylvania invite you to join us as formal members of this movement, to teach about Christ’s work of peacemaking and nonviolence to our siblings in faith, to help form them into peacemaking apostles. We stand ready to support your ministry in these challenging times.

In Christ’s peace,

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⁵ “First Blessing ‘Urbi et Orbi’ of the Holy Father Leo XIV (8 May 2025).” *The Holy See*, 8 May 2025, <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/urbi/documents/20250508-prima-benedizione-urbietorbi.html>. Accessed 26 January 2026.

⁶ “Message of the Holy Father Leo XIV to the Participants in the National Assembly of Pax Christi USA.” *The Holy See*, <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/pont-messages/2025/documents/20250720-messaggio-pax-christi.html>. Accessed January 2026.

⁷ CCC par. 2242 on civil disobedience to civil authorities acting unjustly. Previously, Pope Saint John XXIII in his encyclical *Pacem in Terris* reminds us that governments that use threats against their own people do not advance the common good (par. 48). More recently, Pope Leo XIV echoes the CELAM Conference and Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi Te* in reminding us about the role of social sin in society, and how the church’s mission is in solidarity with those harmed by social sin. See *Dilexi Te*, no. 90-95.

catholic peace FELLOWSHIP

Philadelphia Chapter of Pax Christi USA – www.paxchristiusa.org

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www.cpfphila.com / cpfphila@gmail.com

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Dear Catholic Peace Fellowship Supporter,

In 2019 the Catholic Peace Fellowship celebrated its 50-year anniversary. CPF Phila is a member of Pax Christi USA and we have joined together to bring a gospel-based perspective to peace, justice, and environmental issues. We invite you to contribute to the program and the work of the CPF. Your donation can be a seed to allow this form of Catholic Peace Activism, be a gift to the next generation; please email cpfphila@gmail.com for an update to the donation process. Please visit our website cpfphila.com for links to past CPF newsletter articles and appeal letters and our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/catholicpeacefellowship.phila/>.

We hope the next generation will take the legacy of CPF into the future and maybe re-start the CPF newsletter to return to a formal format. We encourage subscribers to participate by posting thoughts, resource links and even articles to the CPF Facebook page. If you would like to submit an article for inclusion on the website and postings, please send to cpfnewsletter@gmail.com and cpfphila@gmail.com. Articles ideally should be limited to 1,000 words and please include a brief one-line bio. Photographs and graphics submissions can only be used with clear copyright compliant permission. We encourage passing on the CPF Newsletter and since that may include black and white printouts, for the online version, active links and color images please see www.cpfphila.com or request an emailed PDF at cpfphila@gmail.com and also at <https://www.facebook.com/catholicpeacefellowship.phila/>.

We thank you all again for your interest and generosity,

Catholic Peace Fellowship

Catholic Peace Fellowship Philadelphia meets most second Sundays of the month virtually as early as 11:30 am which is typically also in person after the 10 am mass at St. Malachy's; please see our Facebook for virtual / in-person events status. If you are interested in attending, please email us at cpfphila@gmail.com. Donations are now through the parish and tax deductible; see website for more information, for copyright notice, how to donate, and hopefully soon to make an online donation to support the website and media outreach. Thank you, CPF

return address:

Catholic Peace Fellowship
1429 North 11th Street,
Philadelphia, PA 19122



Door to the Path Taken
by Robert F. McGovern
tribute to
Blessed Franz Jagerstatter

deliver to:

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Franz Jagerstatter,
wood carving by Robert F. McGovern
at St. Malachy's RC Church