

## Reflections

" I wish I could live for a long time so that one day I would know how to explain it; if I am not granted that wish, well, then somebody else will perhaps do it, carry on from where my life has been cut short.

And that is why I must try to live a good and faithful life to my last breath: so that those who come after do not have to start all over again, need not face the same difficulties. Isn't that doing something for future generations? "

*Etty Hillesum,  
killed in Auschwitz, 1943,  
taken from Pax Christi's Peacemaking Day by Day*

" Listening to the gospel has compelled me to confront all of our modern problems - political, social, economic - in the light of what discipleship demands today... We are called not merely to apply timeless and unchanging norms to changed conditions, but also to allow the "signs of the times" to enter into our discernment of our ministry.

This is the way we begin to respond as disciples of the One who is "the Way, the Truth and the Life", to very modern problem such as the arms race, destruction of the unborn, racism and every other kind of systematic oppression and denial of human rights.

Once we establish genuine solidarity with the poor and those in any way afflicted, there really is no longer any question of when to get involved..."

*Bishop Thomas Gumbleton,  
long-standing activist with Pax Christi USA writing in 1982*

## Celebrating Discipleship - holy women and men

This autumn, why not explore ways of recalling the witness and inspiration of those whose lives have been committed to peace and justice - following the way, the truth and the life. Our liturgical cycle marks of **All Saints on 2 November**, but a search through the calendar between now and Christmas produced a wealth of other opportunities for school and parish communities to look at the radical discipleship of some who have gone before us, through many ages and addressing many issues! Why not think of organising a discussion in a social gathering, an exhibition, a liturgy or an evening of readings to mark one or several of these great people.

- **23 September: St Adamnan of Iona**, the 9<sup>th</sup> Abbot of Iona who devised and promoted the Law of the Innocents, a seventh century law for the protection of non-combatants. Find out more on the Saints of Iona at [www.orthodox-iona.co.uk](http://www.orthodox-iona.co.uk).
- **4 October: St Francis of Assisi**. His life of voluntary poverty, nonviolence, dialogue with the 'other' has spurred many to follow this path to peace. His story is told in the Pax Christi *Year in Year Our* booklet for children and we also offer the *St Francis Prayer card*.
- **8 November: birth of Dorothy Day** in 1897, co-founder of Catholic Worker. She was inspired by the 'little way' spirituality of St Therese of Lisieux, bringing the love of God into routine daily life. Dorothy's clear writings on war and peace and justice and the State are as sharp and relevant today as in her own time. Her *Words of Peace* booklet and a short account of her life, *Dorothy Day and the Permanent Revolution* by Eileen Egan, are both available from the Pax Christi office in London.
- **11 November: St Martin of Tours**, patron of Conscientious Objectors. Find out more about the witness of the first three centuries of nonviolence in the Church.
- **30 November: death of Etty Hillesum** in Auschwitz in 1943, aged twenty-nine. Her writings affirm the value and meaning of life in the midst of great suffering and trial and can be found in *An Interrupted Life: The Diary of Etty Hillesum 1941-43*.
- **9 December: birth of Muriel Lester**, Christian pacifist born in 1883. Founder of Kingsley Hall in London's East End, Muriel worked with Mahatma Gandhi and was travelling secretary of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation.
- **10 December: death of Thomas Merton** in 1968. A Trappist monk, poet and writer on issues ranging from social justice to war and dialogue with other faiths. His writings include *Peace in a Post-Christian Era* where he writes, "If the gospel of peace is no longer convincing on the lips of Christians, it may well be because they have ceased to give a living example of peace, unity and love..." Pax Christi's *Making Peace in the Post-Christian era* offers an insight into Merton's challenge of the '60s for our time.

## Events and support resources

- **19-26 October 2008 - Week of Prayer for World Peace**  
An annual event which encourages faith communities to come together to pray for peace. A leaflet with prayer and scripture sources for each day is available from the Pax Christi office, price .50p. Pax Christi also has its Jewish, Christian Muslim Prayer for Peace card, available in sets of 50 for £2.00
- **26-27 October 2008 - Trident Ploughshares' "Big Blockade" at Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston.**  
Christian CND are organising an all-night candle-lit vigil at *Tadley Gate, AWE Aldermaston*, from 9.00 pm Sunday 26th October to 7.00 am Monday 27th October, broken into 2-hour watches, followed at 7.00 am by a procession around the base starting with a short liturgy. Join all or part of this witness. At each gate there is a stop for a rest and a liturgy at a set time so that people can join at any time during the procession. Should finish at about 4.00 pm with final prayers. The idea is to support the Trident Ploughshares blockade with a Ring of Prayer and to provide an alternative witness for those not wishing to take part in arrestable actions. For more information contact: **Christian CND**, Mordechai Vanunu House, 162 Holloway Rd, London N7 8DQ  
*Tel: 020 7700 4200 or [christians@cnduk.org](mailto:christians@cnduk.org).*  
  
For those wishing to take part in nonviolent direction action with Trident Ploughshares, there will be training on Saturday and Sunday 20th and 21st September. Contact **Alison** to register and for more details: [Alison.crane@ntlworld.com](mailto:Alison.crane@ntlworld.com) *Tel 01785 611768 or 0845 4588362.*
- **10-11 November 2008 - Peace Pilgrimage at Ypres, Belgium**  
The Flemish section of Pax Christi are organising a Peace Pilgrimage at Ypres, Belgium, to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the end of the First World War. Aimed especially at young people (but not exclusively), they hope that a number of countries will participate. The main activity will take place from **Monday evening 10th November** at 9.00 pm till **Tuesday morning** at 8.00 am. It will consist of an evening programme (9.00 pm till 0.30 am: welcome - workshops - prayer with a brother from Taizé), a night route (about 16 km, making a tour around the city of Ypres with a few stops, dealing with memories of the first World War and breakfast ending by 8.00 am). Delegations from abroad are welcome for the weekend before as well (from Saturday 8th November). The participants can stay with families in the neighbourhood. There are many other interesting places to visit, e.g. the Flanders Fields Museum (see [www.inflandersfields.be](http://www.inflandersfields.be)), to the International School for Peace in Mesen (see [www.schoolforpeace.com](http://www.schoolforpeace.com)) and the Island of Ireland Peace Park in the same small town (see [www.mesen.be](http://www.mesen.be)). Participants are also invited (if they are not too tired!) to take part in the Poppies Parade and the following official ceremony under the Menin Gate (till 11.30 am on the 11th). See [www.ieper.be](http://www.ieper.be). The November 10-11 activities will cost 8 euro; staying with the families is free. Interested? Contact **Hilary** at the Pax Christi office at [education@paxchristi.org.uk](mailto:education@paxchristi.org.uk) or phone 020 8203 4884

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## Diary

### 4 October - Liverpool

#### Celebration of St Francis of Assisi: A Dynamic Peace Message for Now.

At *St Anthony of Padua's, Queen's Drive, Mossley Hill, L18 8AY* - from 10.00 am to 3.30 pm.

Topics on the day include: *St Francis, West Papua, Operation Noah, Pax Christi, "Livesimply..."* Bring food to share.

Organised by: South Liverpool Pastoral Area Justice & Peace Group.

Contact *Steve* or *Maria* on 0151 522 1080/1

### 4 October - Bury

#### Prophetic Voices:

Annual Assembly of Salford Diocese Faith & Justice Commission. *Holy Cross College, Manchester Road* from 12.30. All welcome. Contact 0161 832 1363

### 10-12 October - London (weekend)

#### 'Breaking the Cycle: skills and approaches for challenging violence'

Non-residential course on spirituality and practice of nonviolence. Offered by *Pat Gaffney* and *Helen Gilbert* at *St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, Bishopsgate*. £50 fee for individuals; £100 organisations. Details or bookings : [helen.gilbert@stethelburgas.org](mailto:helen.gilbert@stethelburgas.org) - tel. 020 7496 1610

### 25 October - Glasgow

#### 'A People's Budget for Peace'

gathering in *George Square, Glasgow* at 12 noon. Speakers included *Bruce Kent, Judith Robertson* (Oxfam) and *Matt Smith* (Unison). Contact Scotland's for Peace on 0141 433 2821

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