



Pax Christi

Annual Report 2010-2011



Anne Dodd chairing our Women Peacemakers conference in Leeds, November 2010

Report from our Chair

Anne Dodd

Taking over as Chair this year from Stewart Hemsley was always going to be a challenge. Re-reading the Annual Reports of the 8 years he was Chair has made me realise anew just how much we owe to Stewart's leadership and quiet wisdom. Long may Pax Christi continue to draw on his wisdom as he enjoys his retirement from being Chair.

The strength of Pax Christi lies in it always keeping close to its roots in Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching while constantly relating these values to prayer and specific actions for peace. But its strength also lies in a commitment of each member to be a peace builder and a peacemaker wherever they find themselves. It is only at the time of an Annual Report that one can see the scope of all the individual events, work and action by members.

We are blessed with having a gifted team in the office in Pat Gaffney, Fausta Valentine and Matt Jeziorski. A small team but a powerhouse of ideas, resources, creativity and encouragement to each and every member. That small team is backed up by the hard work of the office volunteers. We owe all of them a great debt of gratitude. But for its continued growth Pax Christi depends on each one of us to make its resources more widely known, to speak of it wherever we are, and to live out in our own lives what it stands for.

People and Projects

Pat Gaffney

In the direction of nonviolence

How to put a face to nonviolence is an ongoing challenge - approached this year through our *In the direction of nonviolence* programme. From parish-based sessions on the impact of local violence to school workshops with Barry and Margaret Mizen, we are trying to better understand how we might break the cycle of violence, develop the skills of peacemaking and draw on the spiritual practice of nonviolence, witnessed in the person of Jesus and many contemporary peacemakers. We were particularly honoured to be part of the planning of a service to mark the second anniversary of Jimmy Mizen's death. 'Building a Legacy of Peace' brought together almost one thousand young people in Westminster Cathedral to affirm their role as peacemakers.

We also give a face to nonviolence when we tell stories of peacemaking. As part of a week of activities at St Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation - where the Pax Christi ICON was again a focus - we shared an evening when people brought symbols of their own peace icons. For the second year we celebrated the International Day of Nonviolence on 2 October with an interfaith service that included stories of peacemakers from various faith traditions. At the Christian CND gathering in Coventry Cathedral we used our *Nonviolence Works* exhibition to help people identify methods used around the world and reflect on how these can be adopted today.

Nonviolent witness against injustice and violence is another model, often incorporating prayer. Our 29th Ash Wednesday liturgy of Repentance and Resistance at the Ministry of Defence in London elicited this response from Pax Christi member Frank Campbell: "*Confronting the reality of the power of destructive force in that massive building... with the words of scripture and the steadfast witness for peace made the liturgy come alive in a way which is quite rare*". We were also present at the March for Alternatives in Central London to make the connection between welfare and warfare, human security against military security.



International Day of Nonviolence at St Ethelburga's

People and Projects *continued*

Middle East

The Pax Christi pilgrimage to Israel-Palestine in November and subsequent follow-up has been a major piece of work. We strengthened our links and solidarity with groups in the region. Our pilgrims have been enormously creative in using their experiences and skills: local radio broadcasts, articles and letters in national and local papers, offering workshops and talks, running stalls and hosting social events.

We have also been spreading the message of the *Kairos Palestine* statement from the Christian Churches, encouraging churches and groups to make more of the *Week of Prayer for Israel-Palestine* which falls between 29 May and 4 June 2011. There is still much to do to engage church groups in action for peace in Israel-Palestine.

In September we hosted a visit by Fadi Abou Akleh from our partner, the Arab Educational Institute. Fadi worked in the office and joined in activities at Greenbelt and several school events. This was a great two-way learning process.

Between December and March, Executive Committee member Ann Farr served as an Ecumenical Accompanier in the village of Yanoun in Palestine. Through regular letters which we posted on our website, Ann kept us informed of her experiences and of the daily struggle of the Palestinian community.



Fadi at the Greenbelt Festival, August 2010

Out and about with Pax Christi members

Once again the ICON of Peace has been inspiring. Members in Horsham, Shrewsbury, Liverpool, London and Wrexham have used it for liturgy and workshops, alongside our publication, *Reconciliation the Heart of Peace*.

In November we co-hosted with the Fellowship of Reconciliation the Women Peacemakers conference in Leeds – with sixty participants from around the North, East and West. The aim was to celebrate ordinary women's extraordinary work through drama, workshops, and lots of informal networking.

We ran workshops at the Northampton Justice and Peace Day and a study evening for Chiswick J&P Network on *Security for the Common Good*. We have been involved in events in the Dioceses of Wrexham, Portsmouth, Birmingham, Nottingham, East Anglia, Southwark, Arundel and Brighton and Menevia, as well as the Liverpool J&P Commission retreat entitled 'Prayer and Priorities'.

Pax Christi has a wealth of experienced people and resources which we encourage you to tap into – especially on our Israel-Palestine work. If any of the ideas mentioned here attract you do contact us. Many can easily be replicated to meet your needs.

Finance & membership

John Dowbekin & Fausta Valentine

In January 2010 the urgent need to hold collections in response to the Haiti earthquake coincided with the annual Peace Sunday collection. As we predicted in last year's report, this did have a negative effect on the 2010 accounts. Conversely, early indications are that Peace Sunday contributions in 2011 are returning to their earlier, increasing levels. The encouraging element of this is that this is indicative of an underlying level of support for the work of Pax Christi.

In last year's report we also noted that Pax Christi has maintained appropriate reserves against financial fluctuations. Unfortunately, there was a significant issue this year. In November, Pax Christi International reported that they were facing a critical financial situation as a consequence of a dramatic decline in the level of actual support relative to expected support. Their response to this was a substantially reduced budget for 2011 and an emergency appeal to all national organisations. We have been involved in drawing up the revised plans for the future and are confident that the revised budget will be effective. Therefore, after careful discussion and consideration, we felt able to use our reserves to respond positively without undue impact upon our own local activities.

It is important to remember that we are a membership organisation. This has the obvious value of subscriptions and donations, but we must also increase our numbers. Please keep a supply of membership forms handy when organising events to make it easy for people to join.



Letter from a parish priest, February 2011

"Earlier this month we had a weekend visit from the Pax Christi reconciliation icon. It was wonderful to have it here and it provided the focus for the homily and also for a prayer meeting on the Monday evening. The icon proved fascinating to the congregation and I decided to have an impromptu collection for your organisation. Congratulations on your great work."

Schools and Youth

Matt Jeziorski

As our schools work - cornerstone of our Peace Education strategy - continues to flourish, the last twelve months have also seen great strides taken in the development in other areas of our work with young people.

The Pope's visit to these shores gave a timely opportunity to gather together some of the young people connected to Pax Christi to join in the events at Westminster Cathedral and Hyde Park and begin rebuilding a Pax Christi youth network. We aim to have one main event each year, alongside opportunities for involvement in the wider work of Pax Christi. Our 2011 event will be the Greenbelt Festival and supporting the Network of Christian Peace Organisations' work there.

We have also begun to offer retreats to student groups, particularly Catholic Societies, in order to develop Pax Christi amongst university students. The first was run successfully in November with others planned as well as workshops at two conferences of chaplains in higher education. In March we launched our new peace education resource, *The Wall*, exploring the ongoing conflict in Israel-Palestine with a particular focus on the separation wall. This publication has been widely distributed and well received. With colleagues in the Live Simply Youth Network we are currently preparing an online resource using the 2012 Olympics as a springboard for reflection on peace and justice.

Other highlights of the year include the Pax Christi International Youth Seminar in Strasbourg, which ran in parallel with the Triennial World Assembly, and the pilgrimage to Palestine – the latter providing some precious first hand experience to inform and enrich my work. We also took a group of young people to Pax Christi's Casa per la Pace in Florence to take part in a summer workcamp on the theme *If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation*.

As always, deep gratitude is due to the Pax Christi family for their ongoing support and encouragement.



International summer seminar at Casa per la Pace, Florence

Publications for YOU

Valerie Flessati

Purveyors of peace propaganda like Pax Christi were heartened to learn that Egyptian protestors had been reading a cartoon version of Professor Gene Sharp's theories about nonviolent social change. Would that our publications might be as influential!

We do, however, receive encouragement from satisfied customers in Britain. The efficient and speedy response of our staff and volunteers is especially appreciated. Peace Sunday materials go to all parishes. A priest from Newcastle upon Tyne reported: "We were able to use the bidding prayers, thank you, and the children's liturgy used the symbolism of doves. The parish continues to say the Pax Christi prayer for peace after morning Mass every Friday."

Every parish that sends a Peace Sunday donation received a letter of thanks, with our annual Peace Planner, the Lent resources flyer, and *Show me your Face* by Fr Gerry W Hughes SJ. Rebecca from North Yorkshire asked for extra copies, saying: "In the parish bulletin I put a 'Book of the month' and I would like to use *Show me your Face* for March".

The Spring sale brought in 94 orders - representing a substantial quantity of publications being put to good use. As supporters of Pax Christi you help to produce and distribute them because they carry ideas we all want to convey. Here are some new items to disseminate. *In the direction of nonviolence* describes the sessions we offer on nonviolence, while our pamphlet listing *60 Nonviolent Victories of the Past Century* was turned into an exhibition for last summer's Greenbelt festival and can be borrowed. *The Wall*, our latest resource, includes a role play refined during many workshops to improve understanding about Israel-Palestine. Why not try it out, accompanied by our leaflet explaining the *Kairos* appeal of Palestinian Christians, and another, jointly produced for the (June) World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel? For summer stalls add some colour with rainbow 'Peace' badges (popular in schools) and rainbow travel-card holders with 'Peace' on them.



Pax Christi People

President: Bishop Malcolm McMahon OP

Executive Committee

Chair: Anne Dodd

Vice-Chair: Michael Mitchell

Treasurer: John Dowbekin

Arianna Andreangeli, Davina Bolt, Ann Farr, Sr Christine Charlwood, Arn Dekker



In the office

Pat Gaffney, *General Secretary*, Fausta Valentine, *Administrator*, Matt Jeziorski, *Youth and Schools*, with Valerie Flessati, *Editor*, and volunteer support – Sr Mary Ann Tyler, Sr Margaret Therese, Helga Calloway, Peter McNamara, Sr Monica O'Brien, Jackie Coleman, Sr Daphne Norden, Lauri Clark ...and many more who help with mailings and events.

