

Testimony

A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

Anticipating September 6, 2020

Communications with the editor should be sent to j6anthonyblasi@yahoo.com. Pax Christi International was founded in 1945 with the encouragement of Bishop Pierre Marie Théas of Montauban, France, by Marthe Dortel Claudot, as a Christian lay organization dedicated to preventing a repetition of the savagery of the twentieth century's world wars.

Editorial

After the calendar, the Sunday Liturgical Reading reflections are based on readings for the Twenty-second Sunday of Ordinary Time. Tom Keene's poem is Letter to Linder. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. After the poem is a presentation of Catholic teaching on nuclear weapons, by Joseph J. Fahey, originally published in the online *Journal of Social Encounters*, 4:2: 42-29. On the whole, this is a persuasive presentation, though I have a criticism at one juncture, which I explain in my commentary on the Second Reading. As a bonus, so to speak, the platform of the United States Peace Council follows Joseph Fahey's essay.

Calendar

(Times are given in Central Time Zone)

Online

Monday August 31, 11:00am (12:00pm ET), panel "Pope Francis and the Reform of the Church," Rev. Augusto Zampini (Dicastery for the Promoting Integral Human Development), Paul Elie (Georgetown University), and Austen Ivereigh (British author, journalist). Co-sponsored by *La Civiltà Cattolica* and Georgetown University's Office of the Vice President for Global Engagement, and the University's Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life. Register at: <https://global.georgetown.edu/events/pope-francis-and-the-reform-of-the-church#rsvp>

Tuesday September 1, 6:00pm CT, “White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity,” Robert P. Jones (CEO, Public Religion Research Institute). Register at:
https://faithinaction.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_3f3NJFRaS5GqjnHOE3enhw?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=16921f70-4995-4fce-8561-857e3b7061dc

Saturday September 5, 2:00pm, Pax Christi San Antonio online meeting. For the Zoom link, contact Yvonne Dilling: yvonedilling@gmail.com. Agenda:

- 1) Discussion of transporting radioactive waste through Texas cities, Karen Hadden.
- 2) discussion of one of the Melaneyes Media videos, available at :
<https://www.eventbrite.com/o/melaneyes-media-17744127474>

Thursday September 10, 12:30pm-1:30pm, webinar “Social Responsibility of Religious Communities: Asian Traditions,” Robert Hunt (Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University) and friends. \$15; register at https://secure.touchnet.net/C21403_ustores/web/product_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=1930&SINGLESTORE=true

Friday September 11, 8:00am, online presentation “Black People in America’s Minority Religions,” Mansa Bilal King (Morehouse College). Information: Hayley Helmstreet, jhj2@rice.edu. Register at:
https://events.rice.edu/#!/view/event/date/20200911/event_id/110233

Saturdays September 12, October 17, and November 21, 10:30am-11:30am, SoL series, “Faith and Race—An Ongoing Conversation,” Bishop Trevor Alexander (Church of God in Christ, University of the Incarnate Word), Rev. Dries Coetzee (University Presbyterian Church), and Dr. Joshie Piper (University of the Incarnate Word). \$10 for all three sessions before September &, \$15 after. Register at:
<https://upcsa.org/sol-center-registration/>

Friday September 17, 7:00pm, “Homemade Citizenship: All but Inviting Injury,” Koritha Mitchell (Ohio State University). Lecture on the African American experience hosted by Trinity University. Register at:
https://trinity.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_FoYRDwbAS3q0wkTsx7V6Cw

Monday September 21, 12:00pm-1:00pm, panel discussion “How Religious Organizations Can Respond to Educational Inequality in a Time of COVID,” Marilyn Lee (Loving Houston), Esmeralda Sanchez Salazar (Rice University Religion & Public Life Program), Brandon Walker (The Summer Institute), and moderator Elaine Howard Ecklund (Rice U. Religion & Public Life Program). Register at: https://riceuniversity.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_bhHsllcqQF2rvqxlmaSCrw

Tuesday September 22, 4:00pm-5:00pm, online presentation “A Knock at Midnight: A story of Hope, Justice, and Freedom,” Brittany K. Barnett (attorney, founder of Buried Alieve Project), relates taking on a pro bono case that changed her life. She asks, “What does freedom mean in a country that is home to the world’s largest incarcerated population?” Donation-based ticket; register at <https://www.dfwworld.org/registration/brittany-barnett>

Sunday September 27, 9:30am, “Darwin, Race, Slavery, and the Tree of Life,” Bruce Yeager. Information: contact mmcgm63@gmail.com. Posted by St. Philip Presbyterian Church, Houston. Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86564638381?pwd=MTBtSF16eVhoTUF3SXJ2VlBWd0N2QT09#success>

Wednesday September 30, 8:00pm, *Blood on the Wall - Humanizing the Immigration Debate*, on the National Geographic Channel.

Saturday October 3, Voice of the faithful is holding its 2020 Conference online, with Phyllis Zagano and Fr. Richard Lennan as keynote speakers. \$50. Register at <https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=votf&id=9>

In San Antonio

Thursday September 10 is the date for The Big Give this year. See <https://www.thebiggivesa.org/>

Saturdays September 12, October 17, and November 21, 10:30am-11:30am, SoL series, “Faith and Race—An Ongoing Conversation,” Bishop Trevor Alexander (Church of God in Christ, University of the Incarnate Word), Rev. Dries Coetzee (University Presbyterian Church), and Dr. Joshie Piper (University of the Incarnate Word). \$10 for all three sessions before September &, \$15 after. Register at:

<https://upcsa.org/sol-center-registration/>

Notices

Program materials for hosting a Feast of St. Francis educational celebration, designed for use on October 4, from Catholic Climate Covenant. Sign up for the materials at: <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/program/feast-st-francis?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=0968c0cd-827b-4e11-af8e-fb5bf7b9b770>

Online course, *Laudato Sí* and Integral Ecology, beginning September, 12 sessions, presented by the Ordo Fratrum Minores (Franciscans), headquartered in Rome. Information and registration: <https://laudatosi-school-77aa.thinkific.com/>

Video, *Immigration Nation - An Inside View of ICE & How it Operates*: <https://www.netflix.com/title/80994107>

Online Resource for families or small groups:

If you're needing some social interaction with depth, more than just listening to zoom webinars, longing for the social time that used to happen before and after Mass, consider using the *Maryknoll Weekly Reflection Guides*. Gather as family or small group and use these guides in Facetime, Skype, Zoom etc. This an easy online structure with prayer, an introductory theme, a link to the Sunday Readings and some reflection questions to guide group conversation. Using the SeeJudgeAct methodology, you will be led as a group to consider where, in light of the shared reflection, the Spirit is calling you this week. The Global Solidarity charism of the Maryknoll family will feed you spiritually for these challenging times. Find the Guides in both Spanish and English at: <https://www.maryknoll.us/home/resources/mission-spirituality/ordinary-time-2020>

Second Reading (Romans 13:8-10)

The Lectionary skips over a difficult passage that comes immediately before the reading for the day. It is about taxes! "For you should also pay taxes for this reason, for the authorities are servants of God..." (Rom 13:6). It is not simply that paying taxes is an unhappy exercise, but there is a theological issue. The taxes may be used for evil purposes. I do not agree with Joseph Fahey, in the essay given below, that paying taxes is a case of immediate material cooperation in evil; the particular taxes paid by any one individual are not a sine qua non for the creation of nuclear weapons, though the total payment of taxes by a populace is such. But people who do engage in tax resistance on moral grounds are engaging heroically in a virtuous course of action. In general Catholics are not biblical literalists; they can reason that they should in general pay their taxes, but still allow that some may prophetically refuse to do so.

The Lectionary reading for today provides the rationale for not following St. Paul's instructions literally without exception: "Owe nothing to anyone, except love for one another; or one who loves fulfills the rest of the law. For the commandments—you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet—and whatever other commandment, are summed up in this saying, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself...'" (Romans 13:8-9). And how can one know whether not paying a tax is love and not selfishness? That is the burden of conscience. Philosophers call it natural law; we are responsible for the exercise of our natural intelligence to guide our actions. We cannot simply look up right conduct in a book, even a biblical book.

Third Reading (Matthew 18:15-20)

Buford Boone was the retired publisher of the newspaper in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. A young interim, or "visiting," assistant professor at the University of Alabama, I had made an appointment to meet with him in his garage—for tax purposes he was relegating everything related to his former career to his garage. It was a mere 45 minute interview late on a hot afternoon, during which I asked only a few questions and he, sitting in a swivel chair with his feet on a desk, chatted continuously about events twenty years before in 1956. Once the interview was over, I drove to my office and typed from memory for two hours what he had been telling me.

The South was a new and strange world for me. Some of the old white men I interviewed referred to me as a “Yankee,” indicating they would talk to me anyway. Mr. Boone never put me into any regional category; I was just a young writer and he had spent much of his life helping young writers get the facts.

Why did I seek out Buford Boone? I had come to Tuscaloosa and found that people were still talking about the governor “standing in the school house door” at the old university auditorium to block racial integration a dozen years beforehand, and even more about efforts to assassinate Autherine Lucy, a courageous young lady who tried to integrate the university in 1956 but, after a white non-student mob threatened violence and even trapped her for a time in a classroom building, the university expelled her for reasons of public safety. Mr. Boone editorialized against the university’s action the next day, himself running the risk of attempts on his own life (which were rumored) and boycotts against his newspaper (which were in fact attempted).

Buford Boone’s editorial did not focus on race relations but on the rule of law. The target of the mob was Autherine Lucy: “Her ‘crimes’? she was born black, and she was moving against Southern custom and tradition—but with the law, right on up to the United States Supreme Court, on her side.” He continued, “What does it mean today at the University of Alabama, and here in Tuscaloosa, to have the law on your side?” The question haunts us all, not simply people living in a small city in Alabama in 1956.

The rule of law eventually prevailed, though not for Autherine Lucy personally. Governor Wallace stepped aside before a token show of force by a campus ROTC unit and allowed the registration of two African American students in 1963. The governor later repented standing in the way in the first place, admitting that he had been wrong. It is my impression that many repented along with him.

The *Gospel of Matthew* endorses the rule of law and respects what we would call due process. “But if your brother sins against you, go reprove him between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you gained your brother; but if he does not listen, bring one or two with you besides, so that every word may be confirmed by the mouth of two or three witnesses. But if he ignores them, tell the assembly.” If the offender ignores the assembly, “let him be for you like the gentiles and tax farmers”—i.e., as someone who is morally ignorant. Matthew follows this up with a saying addressed to a plural “you”: Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Poem

Letter to Linder

(April 28, 1987, near Jinotega, Nicaragua, Engineer Benjamin Linder, 27, of Portland, Oregon died in a CIA-funded contra ambush as he was taking water flow measurements near the village of San Jose de Bocay.)

Dear Ben,

Last month,
like last year
and the year before,
I filed my income tax return.

As always,
it saved me
the hassle with IRS
and loss of my house
or prison for outright refusal:
 all in all, a bargain,
 a paltry fee
 for my liberty.

Last week,
you were the age of my children
when hired guns,
with a bullet to your head,
put an exclamation point
to your life:
 my portion of the powder
 that blew you away
 was a small price to pay.

Tom Keene
May 3, 1987

Catholic Conscience and Nuclear Weapons

Joseph J. Fahey¹

This essay briefly explores the history of Catholic ethics on war and peace. It then discusses Catholic social teaching regarding nuclear weapons, and the movement from conditional acceptance to the position of the unacceptability of even possessing nuclear weapons because they are intrinsically evil. The essay concludes with a discussion of the meaning of this development for policy makers and those who work in the nuclear weapons field as well as for average Catholics.

Introduction

The earliest Christians embraced pacifism in response to the Sermon on the Mount. Christians rejected bloodshed whether it be capital punishment, gladiatorial contests, and military service. They were called to the higher ministry of reconciliation, and the law of talion of old –an eye for an eye –was replaced by the call to love even our enemies. This grand law of love characterized Christian life in the early centuries when Christians were persecuted by Roman authorities for their fidelity to the Gospel of Jesus. When Roman soldiers converted to Christianity, they rejected bloodshed and hatred of enemies embracing instead active love for all. St. Martin of Tours (316-397 CE) was representative when he stated, “Hitherto I have served you as a soldier, let me now serve Christ...I am a soldier of Christ and it is not lawful for me to fight” (see Fahey, 2018; 2005).

The conscientious witness of the early Christians to renounce bloodshed and service in military forces has continued down to our own time. This was true even when some in the Church embraced the Just War theory (fifth century) and even engaged in the savage bloodshed of the Crusaders and later the Conquistadors (eleventh century). While pacifism retreated to monastic and clerical life after the fifth century there were, nevertheless., many examples of

¹ Dr. Joseph J Fahey retired after fifty years as Professor of Religious Studies at Manhattan College in New York City. He is a founder and former Director of the BA in Peace Studies there. He served as General Secretary of Pax Christi USA, and is the author of War and the Christian Conscience: Where Do You Stand?(Orbis Books). josephjfahey@gmail.com

individuals and small groups who maintained the peacemaking witness of the early Christians. We also do well to remember that the embrace of the Just War was done reluctantly and as late as 1000 CE various Penetentials and The Peace of God and The Truce of God severely restricted weapons in war, the number of those who could be killed in war, and the time of year when fighting could take place. Even during the brutal Crusades there were peace movements that opposed bloodshed. The Third Order of St. Francis which exempted lay people from military service is but one example of Medieval peace movements. Hence, while the term “conscientious objection” is of recent origin, the obligation to conscientiously observe severe restrictions on war and to opt instead for nonviolent alternatives is quite old in Christian history (see Fahey 2018; 2005).

While members of the Historic Peace Churches—Mennonites, Brethren, Quakers—have traditionally been exempt from military service, the idea that Roman Catholics could refuse military service with the approval of ecclesiastical authorities occurs only after World War II. During WWI, for example, Ben Salmon an American Catholic war resister opposed the war on the Church’s teaching on Just War and was imprisoned and sentenced to death for his stand. He sought support from clergy but received none. The few Catholics who resisted WWI simply did so without clerical or hierarchical support. During WWII Catholics in many warring countries were urged on by the hierarchy in their native land to serve in the military. There were Catholic conscientious objectors but few received any official support and, as in the case of Blessed Franz Jaegstatter in Austria, his priest and bishop refused to support him in his refusal to serve in the Nazi army. (I interviewed some WWII Catholic COs and almost all told me no priest would support them.)

Catholic Teaching on Conscience and War

A dramatic change on Church teaching on conscientious objection to war took place after World War II. These quotations, among many, represent that change: St. John XXIII wrote in 1963: “Therefore, in this age of ours which prides itself on its atomic power, it is irrational to believe that war is still an apt means of vindicating violated rights” (Pope John XXIII, 2016, n. 127). The Second Vatican Council stated in 1965 in *Gaudium et Spes*:

We cannot fail to praise those who renounce the use of violence in the vindication of their rights and who resort to methods of defense which are otherwise available to weaker parties, provided that this can be done

without injury to the rights and duties of others or to the community itself (Second Vatican Council, 2016, n. 78).

Every act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God and man which merits firm and unequivocal condemnation (n. 80).

Therefore, it must be said again: the arms race is an utterly treacherous trap for humanity and one which injures the poor to an intolerable degree. It is much to be feared that if this race persists, it will eventually spawn all the lethal ruin whose path it is now making ready (n. 81).

The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church:

Every member of the armed forces is morally obliged to resist orders that call for perpetrating crimes against the law of nations and the universal principles of this law. Military personnel remain fully responsible for the acts that they commit in violation of the rights of individuals and peoples, or of the norms of international humanitarian law. Such acts cannot be justified by claiming obedience to the orders of superiors (2004, n. 503).

Conscientious objectors who, out of principle, refuse military service in those cases where it is obligatory because their conscience rejects any kind of recourse to the use of force or because they are opposed to participation in a particular conflict, must be open to accepting alternative forms of military service. It seems just that laws should make humane provisions for the case of conscientious objectors who refuse to carry arms, provided they accept some other form of community service (2004, n. 503).

Pope Francis, Address to Participants in the International Symposium “Prospects for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons and for Integral Disarmament”:

Nor can we fail to be genuinely concerned by the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental effects of any employment of nuclear devices. If we also take into account the risk of an accidental detonation as a result of error of any kind, the threat of their use, as well as their very possession is to be firmly condemned. For they exist in the service of a

mentality of fear that affects not only the parties in conflict but the entire human race. International relations cannot be held captive to military force, mutual intimidation, and the parading of stockpiles of arms. Weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, create nothing but a false sense of security. They cannot constitute the basis for peaceful coexistence between members of the human family, which must rather be inspired by an ethics of solidarity (10 November 2017).

Perhaps the most hotly debated item in the 1983 US Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter on *The Challenge of Peace* was the question of whether nuclear deterrence would be condemned as intrinsically evil. If so, the pastoral implications—especially for scientists and technicians who design and make nuclear weapons and military personnel who serve in any capacity in nuclear warfare—were enormous. The US Bishops, however, did not condemn deterrence and the possession of nuclear weapons, adopting instead the position of Pope John Paul II in a 1982 letter to the United Nations that “deterrence based on balance, certainly not as an end in itself but as a step on the toward a progressive disarmament, may still be judged morally acceptable.” (As Chief of US Chaplains Admiral Msgr. John O’Connor told me in 1976, “If nuclear deterrence is condemned no superior officer involved in nuclear weapons warfare would be able to trust a Catholic under his command.”)

Pope Francis’s 2017 statement that “the threat of their use (nuclear weapons), as well as their very possession is to be condemned” leaves no room for doubt or distinction: nuclear weapons are intrinsically evil. Hence, nuclear weapons may not be developed; nuclear weapons may not be used as a deterrent; and nuclear weapons may not be used in warfare. In fact, the very act of making nuclear weapons is in itself intrinsically evil since the manufacture of nuclear weapons steals funds that should be used to promote the universal common good. Catholic teaching is now unambiguous on this subject.

Therefore, those nations who manufacture and possess nuclear weapons are engaged in an intrinsically evil act. This evil act directly involves those scientists who design these weapons, the manufacturers who make the weapons, the politicians who approve the funds to create the weapons, and the members of the military who are assigned to bombers, missile silos, and naval vessels that will fire these weapons when ordered to do so.

Catholic Teaching on Cooperation with Evil

Catholic teaching holds that cooperation with evil takes two forms: formal and material. People formally cooperate when they concur with the intent or act which is evil and they perform the evil act itself. In this case, a person is guilty of evil when they directly design, or fund, or manufacture, or use nuclear weapons. Material cooperation with evil means that one does not approve of the intent or the act that creates nuclear weapons but they nevertheless contribute in some way to the existence of nuclear weapons. Material cooperation may be immediate when, while a person does not support the intent to do evil, nevertheless contributes in some way without which the evil act cannot be done. Material cooperation may be mediate when a person participates in evil through in an indirect and non-supportive way.

When we apply these principles to the possession of nuclear weapons and their use for deterrence purposes, the conscience of those involved is challenged by these facts:

1. People are formally guilty of cooperation with evil when their intention and actions are to directly design, or fund, or manufacture, nuclear weapons. This group includes scientists, political leaders, corporations that manufacture nuclear weapons, and military personnel who are deployed to maintain and use nuclear weapons. Formal cooperation with evil is always gravely morally wrong. A moral action that is gravely wrong in Catholic teaching is a mortal sin.
2. People are materially guilty of cooperation with evil when while they are not directly involved in the design, funding, manufacture, and deployment of nuclear weapons but nevertheless commit actions without which nuclear weapons cannot be produced. People are guilty of immediate cooperation with evil when they provide the material (capital) that is essential for the immoral act to occur. Citizens who pay taxes that in part fund nuclear weapons are guilty of immediate material cooperation with evil since these taxes result in nuclear weapons research, development, and deployment. People may engage in mediate cooperation with evil if they provide material that is not necessary for the commission of the immoral act. Hence, military personnel such as cooks, medics, and office personnel may not be guilty of cooperation with evil (although as citizens that portion of their federal taxes directed to weapons of mass destruction may result in immediate cooperation with evil for which they are morally culpable.)

Hence, Church teaching on cooperation with evil poses a most serious challenge to the consciences of very large segments of society in nuclear weapons producing countries (together the US and Russia produce 92% of nuclear

weapons, with the US by far in the lead in overall military spending and arms exports). When Church teaching was that the possession of nuclear weapons was acceptable as long as disarmament was being pursued, scientists, politicians, defense corporations, soldiers, and citizens could continue to participate in nuclear weapons planning and production, although with a most uneasy conscience.

But at last the fiction of nations producing weapons while at the same time seeking disarmament has been exposed. The nuclear arms manufacturers and their governmental supporters have not been seeking disarmament.

The fact is that the nuclear weapons producing powers—mainly the US—never intended to do anything but to produce more plentiful and more powerful nuclear weapons if for no other reason than these weapon systems are highly profitable. And, it is a fact that the US always intended to use these weapons in warfare and continues to do so under President Donald Trump.

Pope Francis has exposed the obscenity of the nuclear arms race that only races for profit at the expense of people. Pope Francis has issued a clarion call to peace that the world simply cannot ignore. And we do well to remember that the Catholic Church has issued many, many statements condemning the arms race even of conventional weapons since the Pontificate of Benedict XV before WWI. Was not the conventional bombing of Hamburg and Dresden and Tokyo not more horrific than Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

The large number of Catholic citizens who are involved directly or indirectly with the production of nuclear weapons are going to need a good deal of assistance as they examine their consciences on the question of whether they can keep their jobs or continue to pay taxes. Catholics in the military have a special burden of conscience that will demand a special wisdom to discern whether they are guilty of formal cooperation with evil. Courage will be demanded of all as they find there is no longer any safe place to stand or any time to wait for nations to begin nuclear disarmament. Citizens—including those in the military—simply cannot wait for their governments to act. Tragically, the burden is on each of us. We must be prepared to stand alone if necessary, in the face of nuclear catastrophe. But we are not alone. Catholic teaching tells us that the God of love is with us and that Jesus has shown us how to make peace in the Sermon on the Mount. Catholic teaching on world governance is the blueprint for a world of peace for all!

The following proposals are designed to assist in the formation of conscience for faithful Catholics—and all people of good will—who wish to form a correct conscience on the matter of nuclear weapons:

1. Policy Planners: A faithful Catholic who is tasked with planning, developing, and providing funds for weapons of war can no longer assist in any way with the preparation of nuclear weapons (or conventional weapons of mass destruction). This will undoubtedly cause a crisis in conscience for those who had heretofore formed policy on the earlier teaching on the acceptance of “deterrence” These policy planners, from corporate executives to elected and appointed political officials must be instructed that nuclear planning is now a condemned activity by the Catholic Church and they should seek employment in fields other than that of nuclear planning. (NOTE: given the Church’s strong teaching, however, on aversion to any kind of arms preparation and spending, these officials do well to consider alternative forms of defense such as nonviolent national defense, diplomacy, and the pursuit of a governed world where war itself will be banned.)

2. Military Service: A faithful Catholic on active military duty who is involved with planning or supervising the deployment of nuclear weapons and those who serve in aircraft, surface naval ships and submarines can no longer in good conscience serve in any capacity that involves the very possession and possible use of nuclear weapons. Provision must be made in civil law and military law for those who conscientiously object to any military service that even remotely deals with nuclear weapons. Catholics who are refused assistance by military officials to join conventional military forces or to seek an Honorable Discharge for reasons of conscience should be supported by Church officials and lay Catholics with legal and moral assistance. Selective Conscientious Objection is a Catholic teaching that should be enshrined in civil law.

3. Civil Society: Faithful Catholics who are citizens of those nations which possess nuclear weapons have a moral duty to vote for officials who will support their nation signing the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. If they are given an opportunity to vote directly for budget items that involve nuclear weapons, they should vote in the negative. Catholic dioceses and parishes should make information available to Catholics on Church teaching on the condemnation of deterrence and nuclear weapons along with materials on peacemaking , nonviolence, and the necessity to ban war through international law and governance.

4. Educators: Those in the teaching profession—from grade school through university—can assist mightily in assisting Catholics to become informed about

the condemnation of deterrence and nuclear weapons. Catholic schools and parishes should provide instruction for those of draft age who must decide if they will register for military service. Catholic colleges and universities should be distinguished by offering programs in Peace and Justice Studies that offer all students the opportunity to examine matters of conscience and war.

5. Global Governance. Disarmament of any kind is simply not going to happen while we continue the system of sovereign nation states. People want security and protection and that can only be truly found in a system of world governance where international law will replace the international anarchy of today. Law can replace war and sinful military spending if we make the United Nations a system of democratic global governance. In the words of St. John XXIII in *Pacem in Terris*:

Today the universal common good presents us with problems which are world-wide in their dimensions; problems, therefore, which cannot be solved except by a public authority with power, organization and means co-extensive with these problems, and with a world-wide sphere of activity. Consequently, the moral order itself demands the establishment of some such general form of public authority (n. 137).

The Vatican and local conferences of bishops should prepare a pastoral plan on the urgency of disarmament and the necessity for a freely chosen democratic Global Union of states that will not only outlaw war but will ensure the safety of our fragile planet for all generations to come.

The 2020 National Elections:

The U.S. Peace Council Calls Upon U.S. Voters to Vote for Candidates who Commit Themselves to Opposing Endless War, Runaway Military Spending, and Racial Oppression

U.S. Peace Council

August 23, 2020

Year after year, Congress lavishes a treasure on the Military Industrial Complex. Practically every member of Congress votes to increase this huge

giveaway to war and militarism, expecting a portion of it will return to his/her state or Congressional District, thus further militarizing our state and local economies. Earlier this month, all but 43 House Democrats joined the Republicans to pass the \$740 billion defense budget in defiance of the will of the majority of American people. This shows that our elected officials in Congress have become captives of the lobbyists of the war and weapons industry.

Our whole economy is sinking due to the weight of the military spending, which is now absorbing over 67 percent of the federal government's discretionary budget, leaving a meager amount of funds to provide the basic needs of our people and society. Our states, cities and communities are languishing in debt and cannot afford to provide essential services and maintain infrastructure; they are cutting services, raising taxes and demanding give-backs from public workers. Our healthcare system is collapsing under the weight of COVID-19 pandemic; 40 million people have joined the ranks of the unemployed and have lost employer-provided healthcare, and our working families are less and less able to earn enough to cover their immediate expenses, let alone hoping for a secure future.

Less than three months to the 2020 elections, there is no sign of a national debate on the military budget and its destructive impact on the lives of our people. Both parties and their candidates have refused to discuss the issue of militarism and military budget. The obvious contradiction between the shiploads of gold the government pours into the wars, the military structure and killing machines and the country's inability to maintain its decaying infrastructure and provide for human needs is being systematically hushed by Congress and the Executive, abetted by the mainstream media. They rarely, if ever, talk about the military budget and the enormity of its destructive impact on our people and our society.

It is past time to free Congress from the grips of the war-mongers and the military-industrial complex by electing candidates — at all levels of government — who are true representatives of the interests of the people. The 2020 national elections give us the opportunity to take significant steps in that direction.

Inspired by the **Candidate Pledge** issued by the Black Alliance for Peace, and with full acknowledgement of the role of BAP in initiating this process, the U.S. Peace Council calls upon voters in the 2020 national elections to vote for candidates running for elected office — at all national, state and local levels — who commit themselves to the following pro-peace, pro-people, principles:

1. Oppose the U.S. government's unending, costly wars and other forms of intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign nations.

2. Oppose the U.S. government's disastrous regime-change policies and economic sanctions, and urge U.S. government respect for international law and the United Nations Charter.
3. Support major cuts in the military budget as a first step in reallocating federal spending to social programs in housing, education, healthcare, green jobs, public transportation, and the environment.
4. Support local Move the Money resolutions redirecting federal spending from military to civilian needs.
5. Support closure of the nearly 1,000 U.S. foreign military bases around the world, which would provide over \$150 billion a year for human needs.
6. Vote for giving highest priority in the allocation of all COVID-19 federal emergency funds to those who have been most impacted and are in greatest need as a result of the pandemic, who are primarily the poor and working families and communities of color.
7. Oppose the militarization of the police, specifically the Department of Defense 1033 program that transfers millions of dollars' worth of military equipment to local police forces.
8. Support a new, comprehensive, and just U.S. immigration policy which respects the rights of immigrants and rejects the current immigration policy of fear, abuse, and arbitrary exclusion.
9. Support the United Nations resolutions on the complete global abolition of nuclear weapons.
10. Oppose U.S. military and economic aid and assistance to any state that uses such aid for military aggression against and illegal occupation of other nations' territory, and oppression of the people in violation of United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

U.S. Peace Council • P.O. Box 3105, New Haven, CT 06515 • (203) 387-0370 •

USPC@USPeaceCouncil.org

• <https://uspeacecouncil.org> • <https://www.facebook.com/USPeaceCouncil/> •

[@USPeaceCouncil](#)

Links

Pax Christi International

<http://www.paxchristi.net/>

Pax Christi U.S.A.

<http://www.paxchristiusa.org>

Pax Christi Texas

<http://www.paxchristitexas.org>

Pax Christi Dallas

<http://www.Paxchristidallastx.org>

Pax Christi San Antonio

<http://www.paxchristisa.org>

Marianist Social Justice Collaborative

www.msjc.net

Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, International JPIC Committee

<http://saccvi.blogspot.com/>

San Antonio Peace Center

<http://www.sanantoniopace.center>

Texas Catholic Campaign to End the Death Penalty

www.txccedp.org

Dialogue Institute of San Antonio

www.thedialoginstitute.org/san-antonio/

Climate Change

www.creation-care.com

NowCastSA

www.nowcastsa.com/

Migrant Center for Human Rights

<https://Migrantcenter.org>