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## Peace Sunday - 20 January 2019

*Good politics serves peace*, Pope Francis, World Peace Day message

Dear Father,

Once again Pope Francis invites us to start a new year with a reflection on our role as peacemakers. Drawing on the evolving teaching of our church and looking at the 'signs of the times', Pope Francis is uncompromising in his challenge to war and violence. In his 2018 message Pope Francis wrote that the "endless and horrifying sequence of wars, conflicts, genocides and ethnic cleansings" are a major cause of the migration of thousands around the globe. Pax Christi has sought to keep these issues in the forefront of its work - challenging Britain's involvement in the global arms trade, questioning the morality of new technologies such as drone warfare - both here in the UK, and internationally, through our status at the UN.

Since 1967 Pax Christi has faithfully disseminated this message to church communities in England and Wales and we do so again this year. Our Peace Sunday booklet, enclosed with this mailing, offers prayers, homily reflections, children's activities and reflection materials. All of these resources are available on Pax Christi's website and the full World Peace Day message will also be posted here when it is available.

Among other things we have

- Urged our Government to support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and amplified the Holy See's voice calling nuclear weapons one of the greatest moral challenges of our time.
- Supported the Eucharistic Congress parallel programme, producing a special resource on the Eucharist, Peace and Justice, running meditations with the Pax Christi ICON of Peace, and workshops on peacemaking during the Congress in Liverpool.
- Produced reflection and prayer resources to help parishes and schools commemorate the peacemaking opportunity of the centenary of the First World War Armistice with the message *No more war - let's make peace happen*.
- Offered teacher inset days and several *Faith in Action* days for Catholic schools, part of our on-going outreach to schools. In 2018 we appointed a new Peace Education Worker.
- Created reflections on the post-Lent scripture readings, viewing them through the lens of peace and nonviolence and launched a new book, *Choosing Peace: the Catholic Church returns to Gospel Nonviolence*, which captures our work with the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative.

Pax Christi is in a process of transition, with changes in staffing due to retirement. Working nationally, with a team of 4 staff members and volunteers, a huge amount is achieved through the outreach work and the resources that are produced. Many parishes take special collections on or around Peace Sunday or make a donation to Pax Christi. I am thankful for this generosity and ask you to support us again this year. Pax Christi has made a deliberate choice not to be a charity in order to have the freedom and flexibility to take action which might otherwise be limited by constraints placed on charities - so your support is all the more important.

With every blessing and good wishes,

+ Most Rev Malcolm McMahon OP, National President of Pax Christi British Section

[www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk)