

Catholics for Peace and Justice

August 2011 Newsletter

Greetings,

As I publish this newsletter, the debt ceiling agreement between both chambers of Congress and the White House calls for a \$917 billion dollar spending cut over the next 10 years.

As a part of the agreement, a twelve member bi-partisan “super” congressional delegation is to come up with an additional \$1.2 trillion dollars in cuts over the next 10 years, which will be voted on in an up and down vote.

If legislators are not able to pass the budget cuts of the “super” committee, automatic spending cuts will kick in across the board including cuts in defense and Medicare. As proposed, Social Security, Medicaid and Veterans health will not be included in the automatic spending cuts.

I am sure that many of you are aware of the lobbying effort that religious leaders across denominations, including the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, have been undertaking over the past month. If not, check out the statement on Catholic Social Teaching and articles below from the US Bishops, Paige May on “Mind the Gap” and the Circle of Protection.

Our faith calls us to the life of Christ - a life filled with love and compassion for the poor and vulnerable. Please consider reinforcing the efforts begun with your own through education, letters and phone calls. .

August 6 and 9 mark the 66th anniversaries of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Our friends at Pax Christi ask us to continue to address the nuclear issue. In remembrance of our commitment to non-violence, Peace Action once again will hold its annual Lanterns for Peace on August 6 [info below].

Blessings on your ministry...



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Catholic Social Teaching on Human Dignity and the Common Good

"I'm going to speak to you simply as a pastor, as one who, together with his people, has been learning the beautiful but harsh truth that the Christian faith does not cut us off from the world but immerses us in it; the church is not a fortress set apart from the city. The church follows Jesus, who lived, worked, struggled, and died in the midst of a city, in the polis." - Archbishop Oscar Romero

“Catholic Social Teachings state that each of us has a right to live in dignity and that our government must serve the common good. That means that society has a moral obligation to ensure that all people, especially those living at the economic margins, have access to the necessities of life including food and a safe place in which to raise a family. The extreme wealth inequality plaguing our nation today is inconsistent with these principles.

As Pope Benedict has written, “The dignity of the individual and the demands of justice require, particularly today, that economic choices do not cause disparities in wealth to increase in an excessive and morally unacceptable manner...Economic activity...needs to be directed towards the pursuit of the common good, for which the political community in particular must also take responsibility.” [*Paige May, “Mind the Gap”*]
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Local Movement - Friends of Palestine

From S. Virgine Lawinger

The Friends of Palestine (WI) work to educate the public and our Congress members concerning the acts on the ground in occupied Palestine. The Palestinian story is very much underrepresented in the mainstream media We attempt to remedy this through solidarity demonstrations, films, billboards, informational handouts, speakers, and a website. Several of our members have spent considerable time in Palestine and are available to speak to groups.

We are gravely concerned about U.S. foreign policy regarding the Israeli- Palestinian conflict. We believe the primary obstacle to a peaceful resolution is Israel's continuing occupation and colonization of Palestinian territories.

We oppose any breaches of International Law, seeking a just and peaceful resolution to the conflict.. We meet on the third Wednesday of the month at the Capitol Library on 74th and Capitol from 6 to 8 PM. For more information, please go to the "contact" tab at our website at web.me.com/jfquinn .

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US Bishops urge Congress and the Administration to protect programs for poor and vulnerable From the USCCB by way of Pax Christi

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops urges Congress and the Administration to protect programs for poor and vulnerable persons during the current deficit reduction negotiations and in decisions to come.

Several Christian leaders, including representatives of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), met with President Barack Obama on July 20 to urge the President and congressional leaders to protect programs for hungry and poor people in decisions surrounding the deficit and debt. Bishop Ricardo Ramirez told the President that the bishops are not advocating "a particular plan, but a fundamental moral principle: put the needs of the poor first in allocating scarce resources...The poor have no powerful lobbyists, but they have the most powerful moral claim on this process. Please do all you can to defend the poor and vulnerable in all you say and do at this moment of crisis and the hard days ahead." These leaders have also met with Congressional leadership of both parties.

YOUR Members of Congress need to hear the same message.

To locate your Representative or Senators, visit www.house.gov or www.senate.gov, or call [1-202-224-3121](tel:1-202-224-3121) to be connected to the Capitol Switchboard.

What you can do: Urge the Administration and Congress to give priority to poor and vulnerable persons in the negotiations to reduce the deficit.

Fiscal responsibility is important and our current budget deficit must be addressed; however, a just framework for future budgets cannot rely on disproportionate cuts in essential services to poor persons. A balanced approach requires shared sacrifice by all, including raising adequate revenues, eliminating unnecessary military and other spending, and addressing the long-term costs of health insurance and retirement programs fairly.

Urge Congress and the Administration to consider these moral criteria to guide their budgetary decisions:

1. Every budget decision should be assessed by whether it protects or threatens human life and dignity.
2. A central moral measure of any budget proposal is how it affects "the least of these" (Matthew 25). The needs of those who are hungry and homeless, without work, or in poverty should come first.
3. Government and other institutions have a shared responsibility to promote the common good of all, especially ordinary workers and families who struggle to live in dignity in difficult economic times.

More Information - Background and Additional Resources Go to <http://capwiz.com/catholicbishops/home>

[Bishops Letter to House on FY2012 Budget Resolution](#)

[Bishops Letter to Senate on FY2012 Budget Resolution](#)

[USCCB News Release on Meeting with President Obama](#)

[Catholic News Service Article](#)

[Pope Benedict XVI's Plea: Put the Poor at the Heart of Catholic Life](#)

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Mind the Gap!

By Page May, Emerson Hunger Fellow, NETWORK Education Program for Catholics in Alliance

In a recent review of the book *The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger*, Andrew Bradstock wrote, "...when some live in opulence while others can't even meet their basic needs, God takes a dim view. Indeed, as biblical archaeology shows, it's at those times that the prophets speak most urgently."

If there were ever a time when our nation must listen to the voices of those prophets, this is it. Most of us are aware that the super-rich own wealth far beyond what anyone needs. In fact, a recent survey conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute revealed that 62% of Americans believe that this concentration of wealth in the hands of the few is one of the biggest problems in this country.

Some would have us believe that this concern is little more than envy or even class warfare, but it is, in fact, a legitimate fear about the direction of our nation. [Read More ...](#)

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Circle of Protection – A Statement on Why We Need to Protect Programs for the Poor

In the face of historic deficits, the nation faces unavoidable choices about how to balance needs and resources and allocate burdens and sacrifices. These choices are economic, political—and moral.

As Christians, we believe the moral measure of the debate is how the most poor and vulnerable people fare. We look at every budget proposal from the bottom up—how it treats those Jesus called “the least of these” (Matthew 25:45). They do not have powerful lobbies, but they have the most compelling claim on our consciences and common resources. The Christian community has an obligation to help them be heard, to join with others to insist that programs that serve the most vulnerable in our nation and around the world are protected. God is calling us to pray, fast, give alms and to speak out for justice.

The Circle of Protection is a statement by church leaders from diverse theological and political beliefs who have come together to form a Circle of Protection around programs that serve the most vulnerable in our nation and around the world. All people are invited to sign the statement, which will be sent to President Obama and your members of Congress. [Click here to sign the Circle of Protection petition.](#)

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Nonviolence Study Group at MU

Faculty and Graduate Student Nonviolence Study Group meets the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month beginning September 1, 2011 at 11:30 am – 12:30 pm, Center for Peacemaking, 735 N 17 St
This study group is open to the public. This semester we will be studying Jim Douglass' “The Non-Violent Cross: A Theology of Revolution and Peace.” Email Patrick at patrick.kennelly@marquette.edu to be added to the mailing list for the assigned readings for each week.

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MU Center for Peacemaking Fall Retreat – Sept 17

Sept. 17, 9:00 A.M. - 4:30 P.M. at Chapel of the Holy Family, Marquette University Original Christianity, for about 300 years after the life of Christ, forbade the use of violence and enmity. This retreat led by Rev. Charlie McCarthy and John Carmody provide what many have called a life-changing experience of the Nonviolent Jesus of the Gospels. It addresses our struggles to transform our lives and our world by living Christ's example and message of universal love and kindness in all our relationships. It shows us how we can effect peace in our families, communities, workplace, political structures and the world by confronting with love those forces within that undermine the innate capacity for care and compassion with which we are all imbued.

This event is free and open to the public. Morning coffee will be provided. Participants are responsible for their own lunch. Contact: peacemaking@marquette.edu

Rev. Emmanuel Charles McCarthy is the founder and the original director of The Program for the Study and Practice of Nonviolent Conflict Resolution at the University of Notre Dame, a co-founder of Pax Christi-USA and was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. John Carmody, director of the Center for Christian Nonviolence in Wilmington, DE., served as a Marine Platoon Commander and Company Executive Officer in Vietnam in '67 and '68 where he was awarded a Silver Star and two Purple Hearts.

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New Sanctuary Movement August vigils

Monthly Prayer Service for Immigration - Tuesday August 2nd at 6:30pm- Ascension Lutheran Church - 1236 S. Layton Blvd.

Monthly Vigil at ICE - Thursday August 4th at Noon - Immigration and Customs Enforcement - 310 E. Knapp St.

Spread the word! Bring your friends! Hope to see you there!

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Addressing the Nuclear Issue

From Pax Christi

On July 1, 2011, H.E. Archbishop Francis Assisi Chullikatt, Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, gave a powerful speech in Kansas City, MO, USA, site of the new U.S. facility to build the non-nuclear components of nuclear warheads. The speech is titled, "[The Nuclear Question: The Church's Teachings and the Current State of Affairs.](#)"

In order to educate and advocate we need to be well informed. Here are three easily accessible resources on the close calls we have had regarding accidental nuclear launch to get us all started:

[Nuclear files](#)

[Nova: False Alarms in the Nuclear Age](#)

[Center for Arms Control, Energy, and Environmental Studies](#)

When reading these remember, since 1981 all false alarms have become classified. It was only a fluke that we discovered the false alarm in 1995! Also, we cannot forget that as goes the environment, so goes humanity. Here is one excellent resource on the environmental consequences of a nuclear launch: [Nuclear Darkness](#)

Last, see this resource on the human-psychological problems concerning the decision making process for nuclear launch: [To Err is Human: Nuclear War by Mistake](#)

Just think, the president is given only between 8 and 12 minutes to make a decision to launch!

We can all do a little to mobilize around this issue. It will let those who have the decision making power over the U.S. Nuclear Alert Status know that we are not only paying attention, but we are educated as well. And not only this, we do not feel that the urgency of de-alerting our nuclear arsenal is so difficult to understand for the average person out there.

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Christianity in the Middle East

From World Council of Churches

While there are no reliable numbers for the entire region, conflict situations such as Palestine and Iraq have seen significant drops in the Christian populations because of Israeli occupation and the war in Iraq respectively. In 2003 Christians in Iraq made up almost six percent of the population, today their number has dropped to just one percent.

Christian populations in other countries such as Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt have been decreasing over longer periods of time, often due to demographic, economic and immigration realities. Churches in the Middle East are viewed as the cradle of Christianity, and their decreasing numbers have become a pressing concern for the global Christian community.

The World Council of Churches promotes Christian unity in faith, witness and service for a just and peaceful world. An ecumenical fellowship of churches founded in 1948, today the WCC brings together 349 Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican and other churches representing more than 560 million Christians in over 110 countries, and works cooperatively with the Roman Catholic Church.

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When You're in the Market for a T-shirt, buy Fair Trade From Mike Howden at Four Corners Fair Trade

Do you know the costs behind one of the most common products in our culture, the cotton T-shirt?

- The toxic cost: Cotton is the world's most heavily pesticide-sprayed crop, accounting for approximately 10 % of global pesticide use.
- The child labor cost: Cotton produced in Asia is often grown, sprayed, and picked by children who are exposed to dangerous toxins without any protective clothing or masks.
- The resource cost: Cotton requires lots of irrigation; producing it is energy intensive.
- More toxic cost: Colored cotton shirts are usually died using hazardous textile dyes; 30 % of the toxic dyes end in waste water.
- The human cost: Most T-shirts are sewn in overseas factories that pay less than their country's minimum wage, in factories that are generally unhealthy and often dangerous, by laborers who are not allowed to unionize and work excessively long hours.
- The fossil fuel cost: Transporting T-shirts from foreign factories to the U.S. requires significant amounts of fossil fuels.

You can make a difference. When you're in the market for a T-shirt, buy Fair Trade.

[Click here for Sources of Sweatshop Free T-Shirts](#)

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Water, Water Everywhere? Reduce your environmental impact, utility bills with water conservation. From Carol Waskovich

It is estimated that by 2013 over 36 states in the US will face water shortages; that is a list Wisconsin does not want to be on. With simple conservation practices, we can avoid that and meet our needs in a sustainable way. The average person uses about 63 gallons of water a day. Here are 5 easy water-saving tips to reduce that amount:

1. Water smart: in the summer outdoor watering can account for 60% to 70% of all household water use. Watering early in the morning helps reduce the water lost from evaporation. And water deep, not often. Using rain barrels help by capturing water that would go into the sewer system.
2. Turn it off: Turn off the shower while you lather your hair or shave to reduce your water usage. Many of us practice this while we brush our teeth or do dishes; so extend this good habit to the shower!
3. Go low flow: Replace old showerheads with newer low-flow ones to reduce your household water usage by 45 gallons a day and about 16,000 gallons per year. Low-flow toilets save 25 gallons a day and 9,000 gallons a year.
4. Full loads: Make sure your dishwasher and washing machine are full before running them to save water and electricity. If doing dishes by hand, fill up the sink instead of running water for each individual dish.

5. Water pitchers: Keeping a pitcher of water in your refrigerator is a cheap and easy way to have ice cold water on hand. Turning on the tap for each glass wastes water as you wait for the tap to get cold. These are small savings, but it all adds up.

(from The Defender, Summer 2011 edition)

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Italians say ‘Yes’ to water as a public good

In a referendum held in Italy on 12-13 June, more than 27 million people expressed their will to repeal a law permitting water to be treated as a commodity, with a participation rate of 54.8% of voters, of whom almost 96% voted in favour. In the same referendum they said “no” to nuclear power plants, confirming the result of the previous referendum which took place in 1987, after Chernobyl.

“There is a strong will to take personal responsibility in the management of common goods” – commented Pastor Letizia Tomassone, vice president of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy (FCEI), after the announcement of the results of the referendum. The FCEI had been involved in the Italian initiative that had been promoting “Yes for Water as a Common Good.”, “In our churches there is quite a tradition of paying attention to these issues.”

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Ecumenical Resources on the Environment and Just Peace

[Biblical reflections on” Water and Just Peace”](#)

[Water and Land Grabbing](#)

[Global warming and climate refugees](#)

[Prayer service on “Just Water”](#)

[The Franciscan Special Issue on Climate Change](#)

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Lanterns for Peace - August 6

The Peace Action annual Lanterns for Peace event will be held Saturday, August 6th from 6pm-9pm. This year it will return to Pere Marquette Park. It will feature children's activities, music, speakers, lantern making and more. It will culminate with a floating of the lit lanterns down the Milwaukee River. Go to

<http://www.peaceactionwi.org/index.php> for further details.

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Resurrection from the Rubble Fundraiser – Haitian Resurrection Dance Theater – September 18

From the poorest country in the western hemisphere comes the incredible power of drumming and dance performed by former street children of Haiti. St. James Catholic Church is privileged to host the Haitian Resurrection Dance Theatre on Sunday, September 18 at 2 pm. Through drumming and storytelling the boys and young men of the Resurrection Dance Theater incorporate traditional Haitian and African movements into a modern setting. The earthquake of January 2010 destroyed two of the homes that housed the boys and some of the young men from this dance troupe, the Resurrection Dance Theater of Haiti has dedicated their tour performances to raising funds to rebuild St. Joseph’s Home for Boys. For more information contact Debra Schneider @ djschneider@wi.rr.com or 414-550-2167. The performance is free and open to the public. A fee will offering for St. Joseph’s Home for Boys in Haiti will be collected.

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Hosting an AFS Student: One More Way to Defy Borders and Create Global Community Understanding.

For more information go to www.afsusa.org/hostfamily .

AFS is a worldwide, nonprofit organization that has been leading international high school student exchange for more than 60 years. Each year, AFS - USA welcomes 2,500 international high school students who come to study in US high schools and live with host families. We are looking for families to become host families to students arriving in August. To learn more about hosting for the 2011 - 2012 school year, visit www.afsusa.org/hostfamily.

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Rock the Green – September 18

Rock the Green is the new way to rock – the convergence of world-class live music, sustainability and giving back to local communities. On September 18th you can join us at Rock the Green on Milwaukee's lakefront at Veteran's Park. As one of the beneficiaries of this unique event, we'll have an onsite interactive presence and will also be enjoying the many highlights of the festival. Tickets can be purchased through Ticketmaster. Go to www.rockthegreen.com for more info.

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Christian Youth Training for Eco-Justice

Young Christians aged 18-30 years are invited to apply for a programme addressing the links between environmental and socio-economic justice which is jointly organized by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in the context of United Nations climate negotiations in the latter part of 2011.

"Youth for Eco-Justice" is a transformational training programme for young change-makers in churches, faith-based organizations and networks worldwide.

The programme starts with a two-week training and immersion in the context of the international climate change negotiations (COP 17) in Durban, South Africa. The seminar will take place at the Glenmore Pastoral Centre in Durban from 26 November to 10 December 2011. In the months following the seminar the participants will initiate and implement projects in their home countries on a volunteer basis.

The postmark deadline for applications is 15 August. To [learn more...](#)

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Peace & Reconciliation: Spiritual Perspectives a Decade after 9-11 – September 8

This September, our nation will be observing the 10th anniversary of the tragic events of September 11, 2001. On Thursday, September 8 from 6-9pm at the Catholic University of America, Pax Christi USA will be holding a special event in Washington, D.C. featuring best-selling author and founder/editor-in-chief of Sojourners magazine, Jim Wallis.

Jim Wallis will deliver the keynote address, and Colleen Kelly, one of the founding members of September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, will receive the 2011 Pax Christi USA Teacher of Peace Award.

Tickets for the event are \$50 per person, with all funds going to support the ongoing work of Pax Christi USA.

[For more information on the event or to purchase your tickets online, click here!](#)

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Poverty Matters! Conference November 15/16

November 15 and 16, 2011 Poverty Matters! Conf - Wisconsin Community Action Program Association presents Poverty Matters! Conference, November 15 and 16, 2011 - SAVE THE DATE - Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells. Registration Materials Available Soon at www.wiscap.org

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Prayer

Song of Compassion

Written by S. Marion Verhaalen

Refrain:

Blessed is the heart that is open.
Blessed are the eyes that see.
See with the eyes of another
who is living life's Mystery!

1. We pass the beggar who is begging.
We do not acknowledge his need.
Yet we are called to compassion
for Love is the core of our creed. Refrain.

2. We bless the poor and the hungry.
We bless those turned away.
Yet caring for those who are nearest to us
can challenge us every day. Refrain.

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Just Water.

God of Life

The earth belongs to you

And we are your people.

We come in worship, acknowledging how much we need your grace
in a world where there is so much violence and greed.

We long for the living water that refreshes and gives life

Seeking justice and praying for peace

You are our hope and our strength

We open our hearts to your word.

Amen

From Common prayer for Peace and Justice

Ecumenical Water Network & World Student Christian Federation

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Reflection

"Is your Son Proud of You? "

By Frank Pauc

On the afternoon of Saturday, July 16th, I joined with Bob Graf and several other people at Bastille Days to demonstrate against our various wars, and specifically to protest the military use of drones. A couple people in the group were dressed as clowns, Don Timmerman was dressed as Death, and the rest of us looked relatively normal in a counter-cultural sort of way. In any case, we spent an hour and a half wandering through the French festivities with our signs and slogans. We didn't fit in well with the music and merrymaking. We were a generally unwelcome reminder of the reality of war, a reality that most people would prefer to ignore.

I have mixed feelings about our presence at Bastille Days. Times are hard, and people want to forget their problems, at least for a while. That is why people go to festivals in the first place. They go to have a few drinks, eat some food, meet with friends, and listen to music. Usually, they do not go to a celebration to hear about the carnage of war. In a way, I felt bad for shocking or upsetting the partygoers. They deserve a break too. At times, I felt like I was there just to piss in their Cheerios.

I carried a large sign and I often walked through the crowd by myself. [Read more...](#)



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Catholics for Peace and Justice
www.catholicsforpeaceandjustice.org

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<http://www.catholicsforpeaceandjustice.org/13.html>