

Background on Pat Gaffney, General Secretary, British Section of Pax Christi



Pat Gaffney has been General Secretary of Pax Christi, the International Catholic Movement for Peace since 1990. Prior to this, Pat was the Schools and Youth Education Officer for CAFOD, the Catholic Aid Agency and before this a teacher.

Her work as General Secretary involves Pat in lobbying and campaigning within the church and political networks on peace and security-related issues; support and facilitation for church-related groups on Christian peacemaking as well as co-ordinating the day to day running of Pax Christi in Britain.

Pat produces articles and practical education materials and is frequently in demand as a speaker and facilitator. She works to establish ecumenical links for Pax Christi and played an active role in the Churches Peace Forum of the CTBI, the Middle East Ecumenical Network (MEEN) and the Network of Christian Peace Organisations. She is a regular contributor to the religious press. In July 2015 Pat helped to co-ordinate and then chaired the National Justice & Peace Network annual conference on the theme "*The things that make for peace*".

Pat's work has taken her to East Timor, during the time of occupation, when Pax Christi was forging solidarity links with communities in the region and working to challenge British arms sales to Indonesia; to Russia where she helped to facilitate week-long programme at the Orthodox University in Moscow on peace studies for Russian students; to Israel and Palestine, on six fact-finding and solidarity visits which helped Pax Christi to shape its education and campaigning work on the region. Pat took a group of educationalists to the region in February 2009 and led an alternative peace-pilgrimage in November 2010 of twenty-five Pax Christi members. Her most recent visit was in May 2015 to participate in the Pax Christi International World Assembly and to make contact with peace and human rights groups in Israel and Palestine.

Between 2005- 2006 Pat was on the core group that raised awareness and undertook advocacy work on behalf of Norman Kember, the Baptist peace worker who was kidnapped and held in Iraq for 118 days.

In 2012 Pat was involved in a project entitled *100 days of Peace*, an education programme to bring the Olympic Truce ideal into the 2012 Olympics. Currently Pat's campaigning involves work on Drone warfare and attempting to engage the Church in critical thinking on the morality of drones; work on military spending and campaigning with others to present sustainable, human forms of security that are not based on fear or violence and now in work to ensure that peace stories, acts of witness at that time are part of the First World War commemorations. Pat is on the UK working group for Global Day of Action on Military Spending. In 2013 Pat gave several major presentations on the theme *Revisiting the peace message of Pacem in Terris: have we put the words into action?* to mark the 50 anniversary of the document.

In 2014, as a contribution to presenting a peace message of the First World War, Pat made presentations on the *Peacemakers from the First World War and the challenge of peacemaking* to the Liverpool Diocesan Justice & Peace Assembly, to Greenbelt Arts Festival, the Newman Associations in Eastbourne and Surrey Hills and to the Catholic Theological Association and to schools in Ascot and Colchester.

Pat is working to introduce more reflection on the place of active nonviolence through Pax Christi's *In the direction of nonviolence* programme and has used elements of this in workshops with groups in the UK including the National Conference with Catholic prison

chaplains and with a number of religious congregations. In 2016 Pat was part of a groundbreaking initiative between Pax Christi International and the Pontifical Council for Justice & Peace, helping to facilitate an international conference on *Nonviolence and Just Peace, contributing to Catholic understanding of and commitment to nonviolence*. Pat continues on a newly formed working group Catholic Nonviolence Initiative which is taking forward the work of the Conference.

Pat is also a practitioner of active nonviolence. Since 1986 she has been involved in nonviolent protests against the arms trade and the Governments nuclear weapons programme. These actions have led to arrests on 11 occasions and imprisonment three times. For thirty-two years, Pat has coordinated the annual witness of Repentance and Resistance to Nuclear War preparations at the Ministry of Defence on Ash Wednesday.

In 2002 Pat was given the first Peacemaker Award of the Sisters of St Joseph of Peace at their international Chapter in London. In July 2005 Pat was nominated for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize in the 1000 Women for Peace Project. In April 2012 Pat was listed in the Independent on Sunday's *Happy List* (in contrast to the Sunday Times *Rich List*) of people who make useful contributions to society.

Publications since 2000

Living Under Occupation: Daily life for the people of Palestine. Study Pack. May 2004

Challenging the Wall: Toward a Pedagogy of Hope. Chapter entitled : Women as Peacemakers: A Crack in the Wall. Published by the Arab Educational Institute, Palestine 2007

118 Days: Christian Peacemaker Teams Held Hostage in Iraq. Chapter entitled Reflections from the Edge: The Friends and Supporters of Norman Kember. Published by Christian Peacemaker Teams. 2008

Peace People Who Changed the World. By Valerie Flessati and Pat Gaffney. Published by Kevin Mayhew. 2008

Security for the Common Good: A Christian challenge to military security strategies. Published by Pax Christi and Fellowship of Reconciliation. 2010

Give Peace a Budget: Seven ways to spend \$1.7 trillion. DVD for Pax Christi. Part of the editorial and production team. 2013

General Election Briefing for 2015 Election. Network of Christian Peace Organisations. April 2015

Trident Briefing 2016. Network of Christian Peace Organisations, April 2016

Articles/resources

Educating for Peace: recent initiatives in the UK. The Development Education Journal Vol 13. 2006

Peace built from the inside: reflections on Pax Christi educational delegation to Israel/Palestine. The Tablet, (international Catholic weekly journal) May 2009

Hope for the Holy Land: making a difference in Palestine. Justice, Social Issues magazine, January 2010

Kairos Palestine: a reflection on the call of Palestinian Christians. Justice, Social Issues magazine, February 2010

Failure of War: reflection on Strategic Defence Review. The Tablet, (international Catholic weekly journal) February 2010

Nonviolent peacemaking today. 25th anniversary edition of Vocation for Justice. November 2011

Human Security - a concern for life and dignity. Justice & Peace Scotland Magazine, February 2012

Militarism's impact on coastal communities: Justpeace, journal of Pax Christi. May 2012

An Olympic Ring for Reconciliation: The Tablet, June 2012

Greenshoots of Peace: accounts of peace and justice project inside Israel. Peace News, November 2013.

Time for Action: British Christian's response to Kairós Palestine. Palestine Solidarity Journal, January 2014

Drones offer sinister new warfare tool. The Universe. October 2014

Let's remember the victims on Peace Sunday. The Universe. January 2015

The power of public prayer for peace. The Universe. February 2015

General Election Briefing for 2015 Election. Network of Christian Peace Organisations. April 2015

Time to think again about military spending. The Universe. April 2015

Abraham's Oak: article on solidarity work in Israel & Palestine. London Catholic Worker magazine. Summer 2015

We cannot say we did not know. The Universe, August 2015

Love tenderly but please, act justly too! The Universe. September 2015

Praying for peace at Westminster Cathedral with Pax Christi's ICON of peace. Oremus Magazine, September 2015

Justice and love, not bombs and rockets: The Tablet. 12 December 2015

Only the names have changed: peace and solidarity in East Timor at 20 anniversary of Ploughares action. Justice Magazine. June 2016

Challenge war by instalment. The Universe, July 2016

Let's press to end Israeli demolitions in the West Bank, The Universe, September 2016

How to recommit ourselves to Gospel nonviolence. Europeinfos: Newsletter of European Bishops' Conference, January 2017

Blessed are the Peacemakers: Blog post for Justice & Peace Scotland, February 2017

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