



Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace
April, 2016

Happy Easter Season!

With warm thoughts to all.

Spring has yet to fully arrive here on the East Coast. Ugghh!

But there are signs of hope. There will be a conference on peace and nonviolence to re-articulate Catholic belief on justification of war, perhaps tossing out the just war theory. Pope Francis today released his Pastoral on Family Life which will hopefully move us slightly in a more compassionate direction.

The plight of refugees has not greatly improved, but a few members of the congregation who are interested in serving the refugees at "the jungle" in Calais France will be invited to do so. Also, the story of a former Jewish boy who was saved from the Germans by British hospitality, is told as that now member of the House of Lords proposes renewing Kinderstransports. His action is the very definition of biblical justice; offering the mercy once shown to him.

I hope there is something of interest to everyone below, and something you can each do to make a difference.

Frank

Frank McCann
Peace Thru Justice Facilitator

Refugees being returned to Turkey from Greece.

Monday, the EU sent three boats with over 200 mostly Pakistani and Afghan refugees back from Greece to Turkey. Many of the refugees had recently arrived in Greece in rubber rafts.

The deportations are the first of thousands expected under the E.U.'s plan to end the continent's refugee crisis by shifting the burden onto neighboring Turkey. Human rights groups have condemned the strategy as a violation of basic rights. [Read More>](#)

Turkey Returning Syrian Refugees to Syria

Turkey has illegally forced thousands of refugees to return to Syria, a report by Amnesty International says.

The group says about 100 Syrians have been sent back to their war-torn country every day since mid-January in breach of international law. [Read more>](#)

A Call in Parliament for new Kindertransports



Young refugees are especially vulnerable. In Calais's infamous "Jungle" encampment, a British charity counted [305 unaccompanied minors](#) last month, and French child-protection agencies registered roughly [1,600](#) throughout the country in 2015. The real figure is likely to be higher, because not all will necessarily register. According to Br. Johannes at the

Calais camp, 128 unaccompanied youth formerly in the camp, are now unaccounted for.

One survivor, of the German persecution of Jews in 1939 was brought to England as part of "Kindertransports." Now, a Labour member of the house of Lords, Alf Dubs, has [proposed](#) an [amendment](#) to the Immigration Bill to welcome 3,000 unaccompanied refugee children from across Europe to the UK. [Read more>](#)

Are You Called to Serve Refugees in Calais, France?



At recent meetings of the Congregation's Leadership Team it was decided to support the work of the Catholic Worker House in Calais, France that serves the needs of refugees in the camp known as "the jungle". This will include some form of a financial donation and an invitation will soon be extended to sisters and associates who may be interested in serving in Calais to submit their names for such work that will be supported by the Congregation.

On Wednesday, Apr. 6 I had a chance to skype with Brother Johannes Maertens who leads the Catholic Worker effort in Calais. He was suffering with bronchitis, an after effect of the flu that swept thru the cam last month. Brother Johannes is seeking volunteers with excellent listening and communication skills to be pastorally present to the refugees. Ideally, volunteers will interact with various ethnic leaders to assist in distribution of supplies and maintaining peace. The work will include community building in the CW house in Calais and peace keeping with the townspeople of Calais who do not welcome the camp, the refugees or the CW house.

Many of the refugees in the Jungle have relatives in the UK and are seeking asylum there. English is the primary language for work in the camp, Arabic and Farsi would be helpful. French is helpful in relating to the townspeople and the local churches.

More details with an application for service will follow soon. In the meantime, [contact me](#) with any questions you may have.

House Considers a Terrible Immigration Bill

On Wednesday, March 16th, the House of Representatives' Judiciary Committee introduced and passed **a particularly heinous bill that would drastically reduce refugee resettlement** in the United States and negatively impact the lives of refugees around the world. H.R. 4731, "[The Refugee Program Integrity Restoration Act](#)," includes twelve pages of harmful provisions that deny life-saving protections for vulnerable people. [Read more>](#)

Among other things, it allows the House, no longer the President, to set immigration limits, permits revocation of refugee status, and allows states to opt out of immigrant settlements.

If you are willing we encourage you to call Speaker, Paul Ryan at 202-225-3031 (DC office) or, at 608-752-4050 (District office)

Here is a sample script you may use:

I support refugee resettlement
and I urge the Speaker
not to bring H.R. 4731, "The Refugee Program Integrity Restoration Act"
to the floor for a vote.

H.R. 4731 would drastically alter refugee resettlement by severely restricting refugee admissions, allowing state and local governments who "disapprove" of refugees to veto resettlement in their localities, and denying life-saving protection to refugees fleeing for their lives.

As a person of faith, this bill runs counter to our values. As an American, we must continue to demonstrate the compassionate leadership of the United States and the American call for welcome. **Please oppose H.R. 4731.**"

Urge Obama to keep his promise and resettle 10,000 Syrians this year.

President Obama promised to resettle at least 10,000 Syrian refugees in fiscal year 2016. Six months in, we've barely cracked 1,200. That's unacceptable. We can still meet this goal without compromising national security by adding more personnel and prioritizing efforts to clear

bottlenecks and backlogs.

Please [send a message to President Obama](#) asking him to honor his pledge.

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace Conference on Peace

The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and Pax Christi International will convene an international conference on **Nonviolence and Just Peace: Contributing to the Catholic Understanding of and Commitment to Nonviolence**, to be held in Rome, Italy, 11-13 April, 2016.

In recognition of the [Year of Mercy](#) declared by the Holy Father, this carefully planned Catholic conference on nonviolence and just peace will take place in Rome -- the invited participants represent a broad spectrum of Church experiences in peace building and creative nonviolence in the face of violence and war. One goal is a new articulation of Catholic teaching on war and peace, including explicit rejection of "just war" language in favor of an alternative ethical framework for engaging acute conflict and atrocities by developing the themes and practices of nonviolent conflict transformation and just peace.

Read the concept note for the conference [here](#).

Please join us in prayer for the success of the convening!

Prayer for the International Conference on Peace

Holy Spirit, our source of light and strength, we thank you for having inspired the call to peace-makers from all over the world to meet in the dramatic situation of humanity to reconsider our responsibility, to deepen and promote the liberating and healing nonviolence of Jesus.

Merciful God, our Father and Mother, you sent your Son Jesus, our Brother, to reveal through his life and teaching your divine, self-giving Love and so incarnate in our world the power of nonviolence, able to overcome ALL forms of violence and to reconcile humanity in justice and peace.

We confess that for centuries our Church, people of God, has betrayed this central message of the Gospel many times and participated in wars, persecution, oppression, exploitation and discrimination.

Holy Spirit, as we meet as peacemakers, we count on your light and your strength to help revive in the Theology of Peace the nonviolent message of Jesus in which there is no place for violence and to offer to all Christians the arms of peacemaking, pardon and reconciliation.

Holy Spirit, we trust in your light and strength that this Conference may mark a new step for our Church, on its way to becoming a Church of Peace, in the spirit of our Brother Jesus and so respond to the cry of humanity for life in dignity and peace.

Hildegard Goss-Mayr, March 2016, written for the Conference

U.S. Hosts Nuclear Summit

The Nuclear Summit was held in Washington DC last week in which nations looked to secure all nuclear materials to prevent any such materials falling into the hands of terrorists. The summit is said to have made progress in its goals.

However, that same week, Donald Trump declared he would never take the use of nuclear weapons off the table, even in Europe or the Middle East.

It is not too late to [send a message to President Obama](#) thanking him for his efforts, but also saying that we do not want to spend money needed for human initiatives on weapons we dare never use.

Bombing civilians to protect jobs?



Does arming Saudi Arabia make us safer? Is it okay to help bomb civilians in Yemen if it supports jobs in the UK? Whenever we raise concerns about the use of UK-made weapons we're confronted with the same myths: that arms sales and military intervention are in the national interest. Question the morality of wasting billions of pounds on Trident - weapons which could murder millions of people - and you are branded a threat to national

security. Not only are these policies morally unjustifiable: they're also based on myths and misinformation - which we need to overturn if we're to pursue positive alternatives.

A Labour Party Defence Policy Review is your chance to influence debate.

Whether you're a Labour member or not [you can contribute](#), and if you're a party member or in a trade union there is [even more you can do](#). The current approach, of more military spending and intervention and prioritising arms sales over human rights, makes nobody safer. At the same time, root causes of insecurity, such as climate change and inequality, are neglected.

Please [tell the Labour Party](#) you support policies for a safer world.

Shifting priorities from [arms to renewables](#) could provide many more jobs for skilled engineers, and would tackle one of the greatest threats we face, climate change.

You have one month - until the 30th April - to [have your say in the Labour Party Defence Review](#). **All of our voices count.**

Facebook: a marketplace for military weapons?

[The NY Times is reporting](#) that Facebook has become a major marketplace for unregulated sale of military arms and weapons systems. This is against Facebook policy and several sites have been shut down.

Pope's Pastoral on Family Life

Just released today, the Pope's post-synodal Pastoral letter on family life, [AMORIS LAETITIA, \(The Joy of Love\)](#) is now available. The document is 265 pages long. If time is a concern, Rev. Thomas Reese, S.J., suggests that the average Catholic should begin by reading Chapter 4.

CALENDAR

April 11-13 Peace and Nonviolence Conference in Rome

April 22 Earth Day

April 29 Arbor Day