

PAX CHRISTI AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

KIA TAU TE RANGIMARIE KI A TAATOU KATOA / WORKING FOR PEACE FOR ALL EVERYWHERE

This month's news...

A Gift from Pax Christi:
Querida Amazonia and
Listening to the People of
the Land.

By Judith McGinley OP.

Nuclear Power: Living in the
shadow of tragedy of
Fukushima
Nuclear Power Plant

Fiji ratifies UN Nuclear
Weapon Ban Treaty.

COVID-19 & Humanitarian
Disarmament.

Remembering the
Rainbow Warrior.

Time to create a more
equitable, compassionate,
just and reflective world.



Tēnā koutou katoa.

The primary focus in this edition relates to the impact of the nuclear age on nations and peoples, who make up the Pacific. The impact from nuclear technology; the consequences from choices of government leaders who do not live and freely associate with Pacific Peoples is an ongoing reminder for those who continue to fight for a stop on nuclear technology from weapons to power plants.

We are living in an age of change. COVID-19 continues to impact nations and states whose attitude towards the Earth and its peoples is one of control and the illusion of “I/We can do anything we want to do”. This attitude is what shapes colonisation; shapes the thinking of those who think they are invincible and ignore current safety rules like social distancing.

What the world needs now is the ability to stop, truly listen and re-imagine a world of ‘we are all in this together’ mind reset.

At the time of writing this, Matariki celebrations are ending. What will the new year bring us? Importantly what will be new?

Bridget Crisp rsm

A Gift from Pax Christi: Querida Amazonia and Listening to the People of the Land.

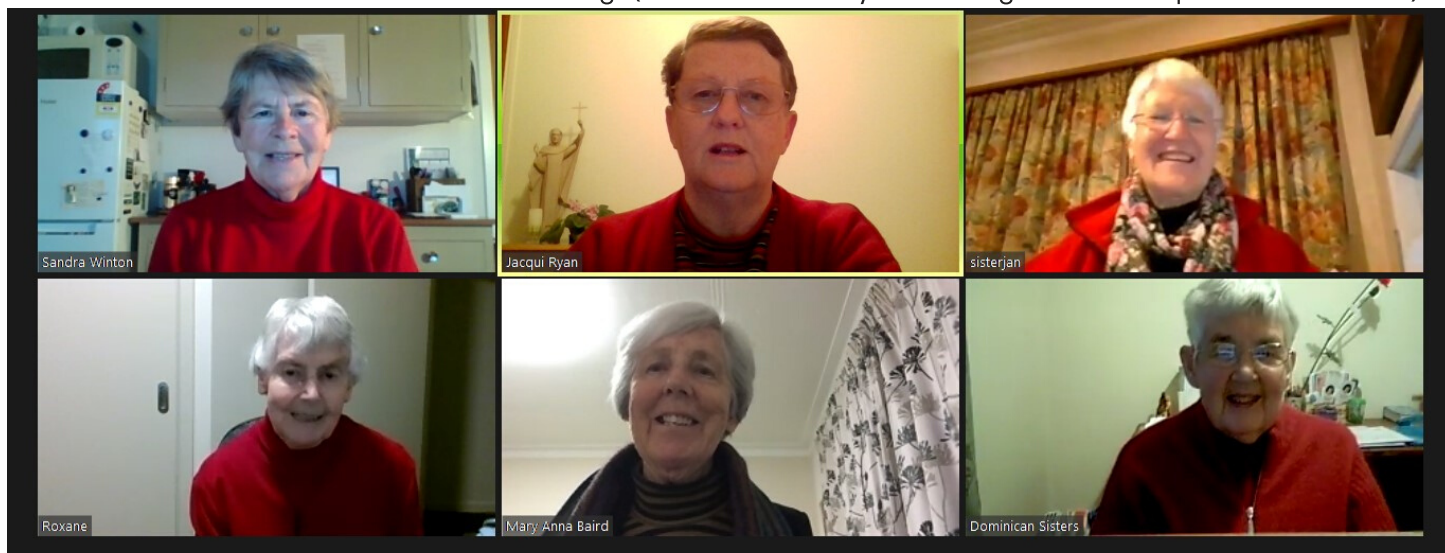
by Judith McGinley OP.

During Levels 4 and 3 of lockdown a small group of us gathered via Zoom over several weeks to reflect on and discuss a document prepared by Susan Healy for Pax Christi. In this document Susan highlighted themes that are common to *Querida Amazonia* and *Listening to the People of the Land*. As we read and reflected we were struck by the similarities between the histories and lived experience of these two vastly different contexts and cultures (the Amazon and Aotearoa). We were inspired and challenged. And we were surprised at the personal memories and responses that were evoked. The document prepared by Susan is an open invitation to look again at the wisdom and values of indigenous peoples all over the world, including Aotearoa. I felt a deep yearning for what we sometimes seem to lack in our culture – especially an innate respect for the natural world and the importance of relationships, community and the common good.

Our studying Susan's document together was itself a call to hope. Alongside the reading was honest sharing of personal experience which was moving, encouraging and challenging. Doing things together can take us to a new life-giving place. Our sincere thanks to Susan for the thought and work you put into preparing the document. Thanks also to Bridget Crisp for recognising the opportunity provided by *Querida Amazonia* and inviting Susan to do this critique. We are deeply indebted to you both. We six were led on a journey of silence and listening, growth in understanding and deep contemplation. We really enjoyed doing this study together. It was a weekly highlight during the many weeks of lockdown – and a call to prayer and action. Little did we know that the cry "BLACK LIVES MATTER" would echo around the world a few weeks later. Everything is connected.

The document has seven headings, each significant in itself and each building on what preceded it. Under each heading there were parallel quotations from *Querida Amazonia* and *Listening to the People of the Land* set out in columns (easy to read!) It is worthwhile to list these headings :

- Treating Indigenous Peoples as Lesser and their lands as Empty
- Listening and Dialogue Provide a Way Forward
- Let's be Mindful of Indigenous Identity and Sense of Community
- A Consumerist Economy Diminishes Natural and Social Ecologies
- Contemplation and Care for Mother Earth
- The Gospel and Culture
- The Christian Churches and Power Sharing (referenced only *Listening to the Peoples of the Land*)



The Dominican Sisters Zoom Study Group; Top row: Sandra Winton, Jacqui Ryan, Jan Ogilvy.
Bottom row: Judith McGinley, Mary Anna Baird, Elizabeth Mackie.. Photo: Jacqui Ryan OP

Nuclear Power: Living in the shadow of tragedy of Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant.

Many of us will remember the pictures sent through our news channels on March 11th, 2011 of the tsunami sweeping deep into the interior of Fukushima and surrounding areas following the magnitude 9 earthquake. Many lives were lost that day and the damage was extensively seen in the pictures broadcast around the world. However, the true impact of the tsunami and earthquake would be felt for days and months afterwards when it was revealed that Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant was badly damaged and nuclear radiation and contamination was happening.

Nuclear power, portrayed to be safe by many powerful countries, was now seen as a potential catastrophe for the world. Assurances of the safety of nuclear power as well as design of the buildings to withstand any natural disaster had long been the assurances to concerned residents living in the shadow of such installations. Mother Nature proved on March 11th, 2011 that this was not correct.

Radioactive water containment is still the biggest concern for residents who live on the coast and the area surrounding the disused power plant. Leakage either controlled or uncontrolled into the sea is raising concern of the safety of eating fish and shellfish in the area. Assurances by authorities of the safety in the area has done little to reassure locals and trust in their government's response went down in the aftermath of events of March 2011.

Later in 2011, the Catholic Bishop's Conference began writing a document for the abolition of Nuclear Power in Japan. The English translation of the document was supposed to have only taken a year – but it has taken a lot longer as new information and new learning saw re-writings and additions to the original text. Finally, at the beginning of July 2020, the English translation of *“Abolition of Nuclear Power: An Appeal to from the Catholic Church in Japan”* by the Catholic Bishop's Conference of Japan was released.



From within the covering letter, at the beginning of the document, the Catholic Bishops of Japan wrote (In November 2011):

‘...we as members of the human race, have responsibilities to protect all life and nature as God’s creation, and to pass on a safer and more secure environment for future generations. In order to protect life, which is so precious, and beautiful nature, we must not focus merely on economic growth by placing priority on profitability and efficiency but decide at once to abolish nuclear plants’
and

‘Although nuclear power plants have been supplying energy in the context of “peaceful use” to society until now, they have also released an enormous amount of radioactive waste such as plutonium. We are going to place custodial responsibility of these dangerous wastes on future generations for centuries to come. We must consider this matter to be an ethical issue.’
(p4)

The full document is 240 pages long and can be downloaded from
https://www.cbcj.catholic.jp/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/ABOLITIONofNUCLEAR_POWER.pdf

Fiji ratifies UN nuclear weapon ban treaty.

On the 7th of July, Fiji became the 39th nation to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

The Fijian ambassador to the United Nations, Satyendra Prasad said “the treaty has particular resonance in the Pacific as a region that has suffered from decades of nuclear testing by colonial powers”.

Almost 300 Fijian soldiers participated in the British nuclear testing programme in the Malden and Kiritimati Islands in the 1950’s. Many of these soldiers developed cancers and other illnesses related to radiation exposure. To this day, the British Government refuses to compensate the Fijian soldiers who took part in the programme.

Fiji and other Pacific Island Nations were instrumental in building support for the negotiation of the nuclear weapon ban treaty. In 2016, a working paper was submitted to the United Nations that highlighted the lived experience of nuclear weapons in the Pacific where more than 300 atomic and hydrogen bombs were tested over 50 years.

Source material : icanw.org

Since the above piece was written, Botswana has now ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and becomes the 40th Nation to do so. This means that the treaty needs to obtain the ratification of 10 other nations to become a legally binding document.

COVID-19 & Humanitarian Disarmament

In June, an open letter from Civil Society began making the rounds digitally to all global civil society groups. This open letter states ‘that humanitarian disarmament can lead the way to an improved post-pandemic world and calls on states, international organizations and civil society to follow it’s lead to create a ‘new normal’.

Key points within this letter are:

- A ‘new normal’ should go beyond the field of public health to deal with other matters of ongoing international concern, including the humanitarian consequences of arms and armed conflict as well as peace and security more broadly.
- Humanitarian disarmament is an approach to governing weapons that puts people first... seeks to prevent and remediate arms-inflicted human suffering and environmental damage through the establishment and implementation of norms.
- The money spent on nuclear arsenals and other military expenses could be better used for humanitarian purposes, such as health care or social spending.
- The principles of inclusion and non-discrimination are fundamental to humanitarian disarmament.
- States should adopt a cooperative approach to addressing the human and environmental harm inflicted by arms and increase their assistance to affected states. Such a co-operative mindset, reinforced by the pandemic experience should carry over to other multilateral efforts to create, implement and adopt international norms.

COVID-19 & Humanitarian Disarmament cont.

This letter was written by the *Armed Conflict & Civilian Protection Initiative*, based in the Harvard Law School in Cambridge Massachusetts, USA.

It has been signed by 209 organisations, at the time of writing this, including Pax Christi International and Pax Christi Aotearoa New Zealand.

To read the letter in full and perhaps share with other civil society groups to consider signing go to <https://humanitariandisarmament.org/covid-19-2/open-letter-on-covid-and-humanitarian-disarmament/>



Remembering the Rainbow Warrior

10th of July marked the 35th anniversary of the bombing of the original Rainbow Warrior in Auckland's Waitematā Harbour by French agents. It was a blatant act of state terrorism that killed one person.

The purpose behind this atrocious act was that the French wanted to stop the protesting of their nuclear testing at Moruroa atoll. Instead the act became the catalyst for more action against the nuclear movement and led to greater anti-nuclear solidarity in New Zealand and the wider Pacific. Ultimately it caused a halt to the nuclear testing programme of the French.

As we remember the Rainbow Warrior and the victories in stopping nuclear testing in the Pacific, let us also remember that the suffering for the communities who have lived through and are still living through the consequences of the variety of nuclear testing programmes through out the entire region. Many are still fighting for compensation; many are dealing with damaged atolls that are coming under renewed pressure with the impacts of climate change. Many are fearing the possible failure of "containment" measures put in place to prevent radio-active contamination, as shown in the Marshall Islands with cracks appearing on the concrete dome that holds such waste left by the US nuclear testing regime.

Let us remember all these people and communities who are still fighting as we remember the victories in bringing an end to such testing.

Time to create a more equitable, compassionate, just and reflective world

Pax Christi International, a network which includes dozens of national sections and hundreds of local groups around the world, shares the deep mourning of the families of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and all of those whose deaths have been precipitated by 400 years of systemic racism in what is now the United States of America. For too long, the lie of white supremacy has corroded right relationships within our human family; it is time to dismantle these systems which harm us all, some much more significantly than others.

The Pax Christi movement was founded 75 years ago in France at the end of World War II; its goal was and continues to be true reconciliation and just peace through active and engaged nonviolence. We are touched by the widespread, multiracial, multigenerational nonviolent movement that is at the heart of the civic unrest in the United States. We pray that our U.S. sisters and brothers in their diversity will persist in their pursuit of a reconciled society.

But how challenging reconciliation is in a situation devoid of truth, mercy, justice and peace! COVID-19 has exposed intrinsically interconnected expressions of systemic violence, including economic injustice, ecological destruction, militarism and racism. While the current crisis was precipitated by the blatantly racist abuse of police power in the United States, the sins of white supremacy and systemic violence are evident around the world. We pray for a peaceful and just resolution to this crisis and for the deep global transformation that will be necessary in a postpandemic world.

Across the globe, people have expressed their solidarity for those in the United States who cry out for justice, who demand accountability from law enforcement and government agents, who yearn for equity and dignity for all. We celebrate these public witnesses – in Kenya, in New Zealand, in the Netherlands, in France and so many other places, as they are a reverberating reminder of our connection and unity.

We pray for the strength and fortitude of those in the United States who are striving with great effort to build a more just and loving world. Equally, we invite not only those of the United States but the global population to reflect and take constructive actions that will assist in creating a more equitable, compassionate, just and reflective world not only for the present but for future generations – a world where all will have life and have it more abundantly.

Pax Christi International, June 2020

Source: Pax Christi International. paxchristi.net

DIARY DATES

- July 30th World Day of remembering those people who have been trafficked.
- August 6 Hiroshima Remembrance Day
- August 19 International Day of World's Indigenous Peoples.
- Sept 1st - Season of Creation
- Oct 4th
- Oct 8th David Wakim Lecture, given by John Minto

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Pax Christi is an independent Catholic social justice organisation . We work hard to address issues of peace and justice at a local, regional and global level.

If you want to know more about Pax Christi, to join meetings, or to set up group meetings in your area, please contact paxchristiaotearoa@gmail.com or ring 09 377 5541 / 021 729944

Pax Christi relies on volunteers & donations to enable the work to continue.

To make an online donation our a/c name and number is: Pax Christi Aotearoa New Zealand 03-01730353-867-00 Please contact us for a receipt. Your support is greatly appreciated.

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