

Catholics for Peace and Justice

December 2009 Newsletter

I am finishing this newsletter just hours away from President Obama's announcement to deploy 30,000 plus more men and women in uniform to Afghanistan. Mr. Obama tells us that once the American people hear the plan we'll be okay with sending 30,000 plus more American soldiers to war. I am gravely skeptical.

"God help me remember and care for those stuck fighting a war, living in a war, fearing a war, or seeing a war as their only option. Give me the courage to speak and act for their dignity."

As we enter the Advent season, imagine a new world. Pray for God's peace. Be peace. Act for justice. Take Action. There is much to be done.

God's peace and love –



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Prayer Service for Peace: Faces of Immigrants – January 13

Mark your calendars for our next prayer service for peace on Wednesday January 13, 7 pm at Blessed Trinity Parish. Tim Muth will speak with us on the Faces of Immigrants as we pray for peace for our neighbors who have migrated to this country, our legislators who will be enacting laws, and ourselves who are seeking peace, justice and human dignity for all.

Blessed Trinity parish is located at 4717 N. 38th St., Milwaukee

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Response to Obama Troop Increase to Afghanistan – Rally Wednesday, Dec 2

Peace Action and Veterans for Peace

The following **Rally will take place in Milwaukee** opposing the increased deployment of troops to Afghanistan by the Obama Administration

MILWAUKEE - Wednesday, Dec 2 - Response to President Obama's action:

5 pm - Gather at 3rd and Wisconsin in front of the Federal Bldg. We will be protesting during rush hour, so plan on traffic. Speakers and others actions are in the works.

Milwaukee Rally Statement

The U.S. occupation of Afghanistan is over 8 years old and a certified disaster for democracy and self-determination. Despite Obama's anti-war campaign rhetoric, the administration is now preparing to announce a new invasion of U.S. troops into Afghanistan. This is a dangerous move for the Afghan people, and for taxpayers in the U.S.

The defense budget signed by President Obama on October 28th this year allocates \$680 billion to military spending, while the American people are suffering the economic effects of Obama's occupations. Democrats and Republicans are arguing about the cost of a healthcare bill, but Pentagon officials have told the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee in the House that every gallon of gasoline delivered to US troops in Afghanistan costs American taxpayers \$400.

The U.S. installed "democracy" in Afghanistan has been a complete failure, with nearly one-third of the ballots for Hamid Karzai thrown out due to fraud. Yet, the United States continues to work with a deeply corrupt government, some of which is still on the CIA payroll.

It will cost U.S. taxpayers \$750,000 to send one soldier to Afghanistan for one year. At this rate, the troops surge will cost roughly the same as sending three million young people to college for a year. Therefore we demand an end to unjust occupation, and demand money to save jobs, save homes, and save education in a time of crisis. We condemn any escalation or continuation of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Community members and organizations will rally on Wednesday, December 2nd at 5:00pm outside the Federal Building on the corner of 3rd and Wisconsin. We will be protesting during rush hour, so plan on traffic.

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Rethink Afghanistan House Parties

Did you want to view the film, but didn't have time? Host a Rethink Afghanistan House Party. CPJ has copies of the film available for viewing in your home with friends and family. Contact Debra Schneider at djschneider@wi.rr.com to obtain a copy of the DVD for home viewing. The film provides excellent background in particular on the issues of cost of the war, culture, and the role of India and Pakistan.

Rethink Afghanistan is a ground-breaking documentary in 6 parts focusing on the key issues surrounding the war - What military escalation will achieve, The effect on the stability of Pakistan, Cost of the war, Civilian Casualties and US Airstrikes, The impact on women, and a discussion by former CIA agents on victory in Afghanistan. The war in Afghanistan is at a critical juncture. It is important that we educate ourselves on the issues and direct our opinions and the facts to the policy makers of our country. October marks the 8th year of war.

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Christmas in Afghanistan and Iraq – Don't Forget the Soldiers

From Debra Schneider

There are two young men that have been in my prayers these past months and will continue to be in my prayers. Both of them are sons of friends. Both of them are serving in the military. One is "in the front line" in Afghanistan. I have conversations with his Mom and Dad, members of my parish, about the war, about prayer and about coping with the fear of having their son on the constant edge of not returning – like his comrades who have already been killed. When we have these conversations we may not agree on the war, but we do agree that these soldiers with rifles are our kids. They went to the local high school. They were confirmed at our church or one down the street. They are loved by God. They are suffering in ways that I, who have never served in the military during time of war, will ever completely comprehend. We can and should reach out to them in ways of peace.

I suspect that nearly every parish in our archdiocese has individuals – sons, daughters, grandsons or granddaughters – that are currently serving in the military that we can reach out to through prayer, letters and care packages. Find out who they are. Send them a letter and a care package. Pray for them. Addresses and needs can be obtained from parents and grandparents. Letters and packages can be put together as service projects by families or Christian Formation classes. Get creative. Boxes are free from the post office for sending items to the troops overseas. They simply need to be picked up from the Post Office. Large flat rate boxes (\$11.95 to send - up to 70 lbs.) and two different size medium flat rate boxes (\$10.35 to send - up to 70 lbs.) are available. Be Peace.

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Healthcare Update – The Senate Is Negotiating Your Healthcare

From Mary Krolkowski

In mid-November, HR 3962, a compromise Health Reform bill, was passed by the House of Representatives. That done, further action must now be undertaken by the US Senate to iron out differences between HR 3296 and the various health reform bills that have been posed in the Senate. Unfortunately, this is not a transparent process; it is the political give-and-take, behind closed doors, negotiating that will be going on in the next weeks.

Three health care reform bills are before the Senate:

- S 1796 sponsored by Senator Baucus was forwarded by the Finance Committee.
- S 1679 sponsored by Senator Harkin came out of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.
- S 703 sponsored by Senator Sanders, has not been released by the Senate Finance Committee.

Both S 1796 and S1679 are philosophically based on tweaking the current health care system so it will work better. They include commitment to employer-mediated insurance plans as the norm for most citizens. They both prescribe the minimum coverage required of insurance plans, and prohibit insurance corporations from dropping people's coverage or refusing to cover them due to pre-existing conditions. Both bills provide funding

for insurance corporations and private organizations to promote wellness programs and community health initiatives. Funding for research to improve the effectiveness of medical treatments is provided under both bills.

S 1796 and S1679 both include weak “public option” allowances. S 1796 allows private organizations to set up not-for-profit, insurance cooperatives. S1679 establishes a voluntary (state) government-run insurance plan as an option to corporate insurance plans.

The weakness of both bills is their bolstering of the insurance industry as the usual intermediary between people’s health care needs and the health care they receive. In this model, the public is forced to support the corporate insurance industry; everyone is required to purchase health insurance, or face a fine. No caps are put on the cost of premiums or co-pays. The winners under this system are the insurance companies, who will have more subscribers, some paid by government funding and others through individual funds, and no incentives to trim the costs. The net effect could be merely supersizing a dysfunctional system.

S 703 is an alternative bill that is not yet out of committee and not attracting much media attention, but altogether takes health care out of realm of industry. It establishes a system of tax-supported universal coverage, with each state responsible for its own citizens. This differs from HR 676, the Kucinich bill, in that administration would be the responsibility of each state, rather than of the federal government.

The voice of the public must be heard now, as a counter-balance to the current Senate negotiations from which the public is excluded. More information on the bills can be found by Googling their numbers or using an online site such as www.opencongress.org. **Then each one of us is responsible to make our opinions known to our elected officials, whether or not they care to listen at this point.** [Contact your Legislator](#)

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Justice for Immigrants Campaign

Legislative action on Comprehensive Immigration Reform is anticipated to begin this month with the submission of a bill by Rep. Gutierrez from Illinois in December followed by the introduction of a bill by Sen. Charles Schumer of New York. The Milwaukee Archdiocese in collaboration with the US Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB] will be ramping up its efforts and on January 6 will be re-launching a national campaign to support comprehensive immigration reform. This effort is designed to educate and engage Catholics around the country on this critical issue. For this campaign to be successful, **we need representatives in every parish to help educate members of their parish and to assist in organizing advocacy for reform.** Materials are being prepared, but representatives from each parish are needed to implement the campaign. Please contact S. Josephe Marie Flynn, SSND jflynn@ssnd-milw.org or Rob Shelledy at ShelledyR@archmil.org to Get Involved Now.

Begin your involvement by promoting some of the events on immigration that are listed in this months CPJ newsletter at your parish.

Resources for Immigration

www.justiceforimmigrants.org

www.catholicsforpeaceandjustice.org Menu item “Immigration”

http://www.catholicsforpeaceandjustice.org/immigration_33.html

www.reformimmigrationforamerica.org .

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International Human Rights Day Letter Writing Campaign – Dec 10

From S. Lillia Langreck

On December 10, the world celebrates the 61st anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, the Declaration sets out a broad range of fundamental human rights and freedoms to which all women and men, everywhere in the world are entitled, without any distinction. Human Rights Day is a special day of social justice focus for the entire School Sisters of Notre Dame global congregation!

Let Your Voice Be Heard! Once again this year, the SSND Global Justice & Peace Commission is sponsoring a human rights day write-a-thon. Stop by the Notre Dame of Elm Grove All Purpose Room (APR) at 13105 Watertown Plank Road in Elm Grove on December 10 between 9:00am – 5:00pm to write letters on behalf of individuals at risk of human rights abuses and to sign post cards supporting comprehensive immigration reform. From 4:00 – 4:30 pm you are invited to join us in the APR for an inspirational program featuring a sing along and S. Lillia Langreck's stirring reflection, "What Pro-Life Means to Me." All are welcome!

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Letters for Amnesty International Identified Prisoners of Conscience – Dec 6

Co-sponsored by the Candlelight Coalition and UU Church West and open to the public.

Join in the Amnesty International Global Write-A-Thon Potluck, Sunday, Dec. 6th, 6pm at the Unitarian Universalist Church West, 13001 W. North Ave.

Enjoy fellowship at a potluck and write letters of support to 10 prisoners of conscience identified by Amnesty International. In doing so you'll be inspired by the stories of these individuals who have sacrificed so much in their quest to make their communities more just and peaceful. This annual writing campaign produces tens of thousands of letters and results in the release or improved conditions for a number of the prisoners each year. Make it a family event with your older elementary, middle school and high school children. So bring your family, your friends, a dish to pass, 10 non-denominational greeting cards and a pen. Questions? Contact Ann Heidkamp (heidkama@wi.rr.com or 414-771-8099)

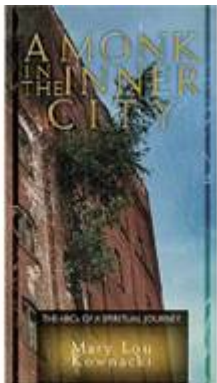
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JUST Books – A Monk in the Inner City

From Jim Gill

A Monk in the Inner City, by Mary Lou Kownacki OSB

Many centuries ago the ancient Desert Fathers and Mothers moved into the wilderness, leaving behind the compulsions of the world in order to draw near to God. For Mary Lou Kownacki, a Benedictine nun and long-time peacemaker, her wilderness is the inner city of Erie, Pennsylvania, surrounded by poor families trying to survive and keep hope alive amidst drugs, violence, and despair. From this outpost on the margins, she observes the world in poetic meditations, written with the passion of a prophet and the heart of a mystic. "I write about days when spiritual security, not fear, was a neighborhood's gift to children. It is one way of trying to stretch my monk's robe until it embraces the suffering world."



These searing, insightful, and painfully honest meditations by an urban monk allow each of us to look more deeply into our own hearts and experiences.

--Paul Wilkes, author, of Beyond the Walls: Monastic Wisdom for Everyday Life

What is "JUST" BOOKS?

JUST Books is a book discussion group focusing on social justice themes and spirituality based on the successful "Seattle Reads" or "Oprah's Book Club", where large numbers of people read the same book at the same time, followed by optional one-time group discussions. CPJ has started its own similar club to get a large number of folks reading a peace/justice related book in order to raise consciousness on the topic. Our hope is that these discussions will offer all of us an avenue to share and learn from each other and in the process be re-energized for our mission.

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Give Fair Trade Gifts for Christmas

From Mike Howden

Please remember to shop Fair Trade and Sweatshop Free at locally owned businesses as far as possible this gift giving Season. We welcome you to visit Four Corners of the World Fair Trade Store at 5401 West Vliet Street in Milwaukee during our expanded daily hours till Christmas but also remember that you can find businesses throughout Southeastern Wisconsin which sell beautiful Fair Trade items which make wonderful gifts. A directory of these businesses can be found on the Racine Public Library web site at www.racinelibrary.info/CommunityInfo .

In solidarity during this Season of Peace,
The Board members and manager of Four Corners of the World

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Update on Common Ground Campaigns

The Common Ground website is currently up to date with news on CG campaigns www.commongroundwi.org .

Synopsis of current campaigns and efforts

- The next Youth Jobs team meeting is Tuesday, December 1 at 7:00 pm at Progressive Baptist Church, 8324 W. Keefe Ave., Milwaukee. You are welcome to join this month or in January.
- An Information Session on the Foreclosed Homes Campaign was held on November 19. Go to <http://www.jsonline.com/news/milwaukee/72087287.html> to read an article on the Information Session in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.
- A series of listening sessions at various congregations are currently underway in Waukesha County. The next CG information session is scheduled for February.
- Health Care Coop for small businesses in Wisconsin is "on hold". The CG team is monitoring the outcome of federal healthcare legislation

Catholics for Peace and Justice is a member of Common Ground. Want to get involved? Contact Debra Schneider at djschneider@wi.rr.com

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"If It Is To Be Fought,..." Rep Obey's "Share the Sacrifice Act of 2010"

By Walter Pincus, Washington Post Staff Writer, Tuesday, December 1, 2009

Who is going to pay for the \$30 billion or more to be added to the cost of the Afghan war based on what President Obama discusses tonight?

Chairman David Obey (D-Wis.) of the House Appropriations Committee has an answer: "If we have to pay for the health-care bill, we should pay for the war, as well." he told ABC News last week.

Obey did more than talk. On Nov. 19, with little fanfare and 10 Democratic co-sponsors, **he introduced a bill, the Share the Sacrifice Act of 2010**, which adds a chapter to the Internal Revenue Code titled "**Temporary Afghanistan War Surtax.**" On the day he introduced the measure, Obey stated, "Regardless of whether one favors the war or not, if it is to be fought, it ought to be paid for."

[READ THE ARTICLE](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/11/30/AR2009113004067.html?wpisrc=newsletter&wpisrc=newsletter) <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/11/30/AR2009113004067.html?wpisrc=newsletter&wpisrc=newsletter>
[Read the ACT](#)

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We Need Beds Please

From Deb Schneider

Do you have a spare bed/mattress that needs a new home? The inner city St. Vincent de Paul, Vets for Peace, and others helping the poor and the homeless are in dire need of beds that are in decent shape. Please contact Debra Schneider djschneider@wi.rr.com . Tables, chairs and appliances in good condition are also often needed.

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The Militarization of Catholic Jesuit University Education - Not Your Father's Military

The Nonviolent Cow

St. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus, became a "soldier of Christ," laying down his worldly weapons before the statue of the Black Madonna at Montserrat and exchanging his royal clothes for the rags of a beggar. Both before and after his conversion, he was a Catholic; but only after his conversion was his first loyalty to Jesus and not to the state.

The modern Jesuit university, Marquette University being one example, is doing the reverse. It is taking up the weapons of war at the request of the government and is adapting its Christian values to accommodate military education and training. It still calls itself Catholic, but has made itself beholden to the governing authority, with its immense military establishment, and in the process is marginalizing the teachings of Jesus and of the Church..... [READ MORE](#)

<http://www.nonviolentworm.org/NonviolentActions/TheMilitarizationOfCatholicJesuitUniversityEducation>

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United Nations World Summit on Food Security

A global renewed commitment to end hunger

World leaders convened at Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO] Headquarters for the World Summit on Food Security unanimously adopted a declaration pledging renewed commitment to eradicate hunger from the face of the earth sustainably and at the earliest date. Poor countries need the development, economic and policy tools required to boost their agricultural production and productivity. Investment in agriculture must be increased because for the majority of poor countries a healthy agricultural sector is essential to overcome hunger and poverty and is a pre-requisite for overall economic growth. [READ MORE](#) at

http://www.fao.org/wsfs/world-summit/en/?no_cache=1

The gravity of the current food crisis is the result of 20 years of under-investment in agriculture and neglect of the sector. Directly or indirectly, agriculture provides the livelihood for 70 percent of the world's poor.

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Remembering Women of Faith of Las Americas – Dec 2

Those of all faith traditions are invited to join together in prayerful remembrance and celebration of the many women of faith of Las Americas. We remember especially, Our Lady of Guadalupe, "Patroness of the Americas," whose feast day we celebrate on December 12th, and the four American Churchwomen who, in their faithful service to the poor of El Salvador, were martyred on December 2nd, 1980. **Date:** Wednesday, December 2nd at 6:30 pm. **Location:** St. Hyacinth Catholic Church 1414 W. Becher Street.

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Global Awareness for Solidarity Reflection and Celebration – Dec 6

Global Awareness for Solidarity [formerly Central American Awareness Committee] of Southeastern WI invites you to "Blessed are the Compassionate...Celebrating Two Wisconsin Women Missioners" a reflection and celebration on **Sunday, December 6 from 1:45 to 4:30 pm**. The event will focus on Mary J McCormick, from Holy Rosary Parish in Milwaukee, who was a missionary in Bogota, Columbia, and Carol Piette, M.M., from St. Mary Parish in Appleton, who was a missionary in Chile and El Salvador. The event highlights a new kind of beatitude: "Blessed are the compassionate, for they will show us the way." Reflection will be offered by Bishop Richard Sklba with Personal Tributes by Mary McCormick's Family and by Joan Ratermann, M.M. and A "Call

to Compassion" by Margaret Swedish. **Location:** Holy Rosary Church of the Three Holy Women at 2011 N. Oakland Avenue, Milwaukee. [FLYER](#)

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Shine a Light from Coast To Coast – Posada – Dec 18

National Days of Interfaith Action will take place beginning with the International Human Rights Day, December 10th, through the International Migrants Day on December 18, 2009.

Immigrants and diverse faith communities from across the country will be coming together to shine a light on the urgent need for just and humane immigration reform.

In Milwaukee an interfaith vigil - posada [advent tradition] will be held on **Friday, December 18, 2009 at Voces de la Frontera, 1027 S 5th St., at 6:30.** This event is being sponsored by the New Sanctuary Movement, Voces de la Frontera, and MICAH. For more information contact Voces de la Frontera at www.vdlf.org, or Milwaukee Inner-city Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH) at www.micahempowers.org.

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Immigration Reform: A Faith Mandate – January 12

Panelists: Edward Fallone, Assoc. Professor at Marquette Law School will provide an overall picture of the current immigration system and why it needs reform. Rachel Ida Buff Associate Professor of History and Coordinator Of Comparative Ethnic Studies at UWM will provide an historical overview of immigration in the U.S. **Date:** Tuesday, January 12, 7 pm to 8:30 pm. **Location:** St. Mary's Church, Room 312, 9520 W. Forest Home Avenue, Hales Corners

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Hope in a Broken World – Jan 16

The Spiritual Meaning of Ecological Crisis

Our world's intricate interwoven fabric of life has become seriously frayed by our industrial and post-industrial way life. The human being, as part of the delicate balance of life, is affected by this crisis both physically and spiritually. In this reflective program, we will explore the broken state of the world and the human spirit within that world. We will seek to articulate together a spirituality of hope that can help us live as healing presence within the Earth.

Date: Saturday, January 16, 2010, 9 am to 3:30 pm. **Location:** St. Joseph Center, 1501 S. Layton Blvd., Milwaukee. Fee: \$55 including lunch. Contact Casa Romero at 414-224-7564 or casaromero@wi.rr.com, or the Center to BE at 414-672-5932 or wilbur.centertobe@sbcglobal.net to register and for more information.

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Prayer and Reflections

On the Experience of War and Our Returning Service Women and Men

Though hostilities cease and life moves on, and though loved ones yearn for their healing, veterans often remain drenched in the imagery and emotion of war. War teaches hard lessons. After war or other traumatic loss, we are different forever. We can neither get the old self back nor return to a state of innocence. War invades, wounds and transforms our spirit and very soul. Our society, community, and loved ones must come to understand the full circle of a warrior, not just the training to kill, but the restoration of the heart and soul upon return.

[Reflection: When a Soldier Comes Home](#)

Human Dignity and Human Rights: Prayer from November Prayer Service on Human Dignity from Jim Fowler

[Opening Prayer Litany](#)

[Prayer Response](#)