



# J/P ALERT

CONFERENCE OF MAJOR SUPERIORS OF MEN JUSTICE AND PEACE OFFICE



*February 2012 (en español)*

- [USCCB Immigration Conference](#)
- [Guantanamo Bay Anniversary](#)
- [Business Transparency on Trafficking and Slavery Act](#)
- [Pax Christi Changes Meetings](#)
- [25 Years of Moving Minds: Consistent Life](#)
- [The Palestinian Summer Celebration](#)
- [Ecumenical Advocacy Days](#)

## *USCCB Immigration Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah: Welcoming Address (excerpts)*

*[The address excerpted below was given at the opening of the Salt Lake City Immigration Conference (January 11, 2012)*

*by Bishop John C. Wester, bishop of Salt Lake City and chair of the USCCB Committee on Migration and Refugee Services. The complete address can be found on the [Justice for Immigrants web site.](#)]*

...

It seems as if time is up as well in terms of waiting for comprehensive immigration reform, at least if you believe some people in Washington. But it is the American public, including the Catholics, who will decide the final outcome. So many people—so many of you—have worked so hard these past years to achieve what seems like an elusive goal. Yet, we must never give up hope, and I fully believe that one day we will be successful. In the meantime, we must always keep focused as we advocate for immigration reform in this complex and constantly changing landscape in our country today.

This is an important time in the immigration debate in this nation. While Congress has failed to address this issue, our state legislatures and local governments are not hesitating to attempt to fill the vacuum. Instead of one consistent national policy, we are now confronted with hundreds of State and local immigration policies, the majority of which are harmful to immigrant families and communities.

...

Although the moment seems dark and the prospect of comprehensive immigration reform in Congress distant, I believe that the work the church is doing on immigration on a State and local level—both in the past and in the months ahead—could make all the difference in how our nation eventually solves this problem.

Let me explain. Rather than looking at the moment as a daunting—if not impossible—challenge, we should rather look upon it as an opportunity. You may be asking yourself how fighting a record number of restrictive State immigration laws and local law enforcement initiatives could be an opportunity.

Well, it is clear that Congress will not act on this issue unless a strong national consensus emerges, where the majority of Americans agree on a path forward and communicate that to their federal, elected officials. The only way that will happen is if the American people are educated on the issues and the realities of immigration, and that can only occur if the issue is right in front of them, being debated in their local communities.

This gives us the opportunity to go to Catholics and educate them on the immigration issue, to introduce them to immigrants, and to show how life without the hard work of immigrants would affect them. We can and should take advantage of this moment to organize locally, to improve our advocacy and communication, so that we are prepared when the next chance for immigration reform happens at the federal level.

And it will, no doubt. Different laws, particularly enforcement-only initiatives, played out in fifty States are bound to fail, since they will not fix a broken federal immigration system. Immigrants, over 70 percent of whom have been here five years or longer, are not leaving; they are just hiding in fear. The American public will begin to understand that the issue must be addressed comprehensively, on a federal level, and a consensus will emerge. As Winston Churchill once said, "Americans eventually do the right thing, once they have tried everything else."

Our voice, the voice of the Catholic community, and of so many other communities as well, must be part of that consensus and help to shape it. That is why we must continue to fight the battle locally and remain a voice of faith in the debate.

We also must continue to fight because of the real suffering that is occurring in immigrant families and communities. There are four million U.S. citizen children who have one or more undocumented parents. The combination of Federal-State enforcement partnerships and federal enforcement actions has led to an unprecedented separation of families. Nearly a quarter of those deported in the last year were part of a family with a U.S.-citizen—most likely a child. They also have led to a record number of deportations over the past three years, as is evidenced by over one million persons who have been deported during that period.

...

Lest there be any confusion, I think it is important to say that the Catholic Church understands and readily acknowledges the role that enforcement and the rule of law play in our system. Nonetheless, as many here in Utah and across the country might argue, we do not believe enforcement alone is the answer. Rather, it must be coupled with humane reforms in our legal immigration system that will allow immigrants to play by a fair and equitably administered set of rules. That is not the case in our current system -- only the federal government can achieve this balance.

...

In his address to the New World Congress on the Pastoral Care of Immigrants in 1985, Blessed Pope John Paul II, of happy memory, stated: "Every human being has the right to freedom of movement and of residence within the confines of his own country. When there are just reasons in favor of it, he must be permitted to migrate to other countries and to take up residence there. The fact that he is a citizen of a particular state does not deprive him of membership in the human family, nor of citizenship in the universal society, the common, world-wide fellowship..." While Catholic teaching does place limits on this right, the Holy Father clearly sees the importance of recognizing a dignity in all human beings, given to them by God himself. This means that nation states have an obligation to facilitate legal migration to the greatest extent possible in order to protect and honor human dignity. This is particularly true in our country where we have been so blessed.

What is more, we are not only called to honor our fellow human beings but to love them, as Christ himself has mandated. This is especially true of the immigrant, of those who have travelled great distances, endured countless hardships and established themselves in our society as trustworthy neighbors.

We have just concluded the Christmas season, celebrating the birth of our Lord the Savior. As an infant, He and the Holy Family fled Herod as refugees. As an adult, He was an itinerant preacher -- a migrant Himself -- with "no place to lay His Head." He taught us that in the stranger, we see Him. Do not forget that when you are witnessing before the public square on behalf of our immigrant brothers and sisters, you are witnessing for Him, "for whatsoever you do for the least of my brethren, you do unto Me."

God bless you.

## *Groups mark 10th anniversary of first detainees imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay*

**Washington, D.C.** – On January 11, 2012, the [National Religious Campaign Against Torture](#) (NRCAT) helped organize and lead national events in Washington marking the 10th anniversary of the day the first detainees were imprisoned in the U.S.-controlled detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The 66 organizations co-sponsoring the events in Washington joined together in a call for the U.S. government to close the detention center at Guantanamo Bay.



Through a rally at Lafayette Park, a human chain, and an interfaith service, participants, who also expressed opposition toward detention provisions in the 2012 National Defense Authorization Act that violate human rights, gathered together in solidarity to urge President Obama to keep his campaign promise and shut down Guantanamo. The detention center has become a symbol of an era in which the U.S. government used torture as an interrogation technique.

Rev. Richard Killmer, Executive Director of NRCAT, said, "Guantanamo is the symbol of our country's violation of our deepest values," he said in his remarks. "Regardless of how it is operated now compared to how it was operated in earlier years, it stands in the minds of hundreds of millions of people in our nation and around the globe as the place where America broke faith with itself and used torture as an interrogation technique. Torture is immoral, illegal, and never justifiable -- without exception.

"Guantanamo is a symbol of our nation's vulnerability to abandon our principles and commitment to the rule of law in times of crisis. It is a stain on our image and reputation. It weakens our moral authority and influence around the world, and it puts our troops and our citizens abroad in danger. The challenge for the United States is to assure that U.S.-sponsored torture never happens again.

The Washington events were part of several vigils and protests that NRCAT co-sponsored across the country, including commemorations in Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle and Ann Arbor. Additional information on the National Religious Campaign Against Torture's efforts encouraging the United States government to close the detention center at Guantanamo Bay is available at [www.nrcat.org/close\\_guantanamo](http://www.nrcat.org/close_guantanamo).

## *Business Transparency on Trafficking and Slavery Act*

Members of [US SIF](#) (The Forum for Sustainable and Responsible Investment – Formerly the Social Investment Forum [SIF]) and [The Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility](#) (ICCR) submitted a [letter](#) to The Honorable John Boehner (Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives) and The Honorable Eric Cantor (Majority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives) seeking their support on the **Business Transparency on Trafficking and**

**Slavery Act (HR 2759).** The letter strongly encourages them to support investors, companies, workers and consumers by moving this important legislation forward in an expeditious manner.

This letter was drafted, reviewed and contributed to by a broad coalition of experts and members of US SIF and ICCR.

CONTACT:

Susana McDermott

Director of communications, ICCR

212-870-2938

[smcdermott@iccr.org](mailto:smcdermott@iccr.org)

## *Pax Christi Announcement of regional meetings for 2012, rescheduling of national conference to 2013*



Dear Pax Christi USA members,

As many of you already know, we had planned to have our 2012 National Conference in Washington, D.C. this coming July, at the Catholic University of America. At our recent National Council meeting, we revisited this decision in light of the changes which have taken place over the course of the last few months, especially the completion of the move of our national office to Washington, D.C. and the hiring of a new Executive Director. **Our discussion led us to decide on a different strategy for this coming year -- a strategy which we think embodies bold, new directions for Pax Christi USA and accomplishes some of the most important tasks we see before us as we enter into a new moment for the organization.**

As we move forward, there is a sense that a new direction is called for in these times—a direction which raises up a new generation of leaders throughout our organization, which authentically embraces communities of color, which attends to and cultivates the gifts and experiences of members working for peace and justice in cities and towns throughout our nation, and which binds all of us together more strongly so that we can speak with one voice on the issues about which we are passionate and present a unified witness to the values we all share as gospel-based peacemakers.

*While this past year was a time of transition for us as Pax Christi USA, we want this next year to be a year of building up.*

**We have decided to move the 2012 National Conference from the beginning of our 40th anniversary year to the end of that year instead -- the summer of 2013 -- and to host the National Conference in Washington, D.C. During 2012 the national staff in collaboration with the national council members will participate in a series of regional meetings building up to the 2013 National Conference. We invite our Pax Christi regional and local leaders, Pax Christi USA Anti-Racism team, Pax Christi USA Ambassadors of Peace and individual members -- to meet with, listen to, and dream with Pax Christi USA members throughout the nation at a variety of locations.**

As regions are approached to participate in this dialog, it is our desired hope that this effort

will be widely embraced. We believe that this outreach to the regions can be effective and cut down on expenses during these difficult financial times. This will also offer an opportunity for many of you to meet with Sr. Patricia Chappell, SNDdeN, our new Executive Director.

The broad strokes of these meetings would include the participation of Sr. Patty and a national leadership delegation formed from among national staff and the national council members. These meetings would adhere to a general template crafted by the national staff based on a reflection, action, reflection process to fit regional realities and needs. And the insights and ideas which come out of these regional meetings will be incorporated into the planning of the 2013 National Conference and our organizational plan for the years to come.

Now is the time for us to hearken to one another's voices and experiences, to draw on the love and hope each one of us have for Pax Christi USA. Let us throw open wide the doors and windows and invite everyone to the table. And let us plan together how to take Pax Christi USA forward into the future, in thanksgiving for all those who brought us to this place, inviting us into and challenging us to be the "peace of Christ" for the world.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about hosting a regional meeting in 2012, please contact Johnny Zokovitch at 352-219-8419 or [johnnypcusa@yahoo.com](mailto:johnnypcusa@yahoo.com).

In Christ's peace,

**Sr. Josie Chrosniak, HM**  
National Council Chair, PCUSA

**Sr. Patricia Chappell, SNDdeN**  
Executive Director, PCUSA

## *25 Years of Moving Minds: Consistent Life*

### **Network for Peace, Justice and Life to Gather**



[Consistent Life](#), formerly the Seamless Garment Network, has worked to move the mind of the community to respect every life: the prisoner on death row, the child in the

womb, people threatened by war and poverty. Now we are celebrating our 25th Anniversary and looking to shape the future of the Consistent Life Ethic.

Founded in 1987 at a conference of peace, justice and life groups, Consistent Life is committed to the protection of life which is threatened in today's world by war, abortion, poverty, racism, capital punishment and euthanasia. We believe that these issues are linked under a 'consistent ethic of life'. We challenge those working on all or some of these issues to maintain a cooperative spirit of peace, reconciliation and respect in protecting the unprotected.

The 25th Anniversary will be celebrated at a conference hosted by Consistent Life in Chevy Chase, Maryland, March 9-11, 2012. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet and network with a diverse group of national/international Consistent Life Ethic supporters which include about 200 member groups such as: Evangelicals for Social Action, Feminists for Life of America, Secular Pro-life, Orthodox Peace Fellowship in North America, Disabilities Perspective and many more.

Major plenary speakers at the Conference include the Rev. Dr. Johnny M. Hunter, National Director of the Life Education And Resource Network (LEARN, Inc.); Dr. Catherine Meeks, a distinguished activist, writer and speaker; and Aimee Bedoy, youth activist and Executive Editor of Life Matters Journal. There will be panels and workshops on Consistent Life Ethic

topics such as historical retrospective on the movement, integrating faith and secular views, educations of youth on life issues, nourishing the Consistent Life Ethic in today's political climate, and plans for the next generation. There will be gatherings of religious and other constituencies, and an optional public witness action.

For further information, please visit the [Conference web site](#) or the [Consistent Life web site](#), or contact Bill Samuel at [president@consistent-life.org](mailto:president@consistent-life.org) or 301-943-6406.

## *The Palestinian Summer Celebration 2012*



[Siraj Center](#) continues to organize unique visits and encounters in Palestine and the Holy Land. The Palestinian Summer Celebration 2012 (**June 17 - August 12, 2012**) offers a

unique opportunity to experience life in Palestine first hand, to live with a local family, to volunteer with a local community organization, to travel in Palestine and the Holy Land, to meet with different speakers, to **learn Arabic at Bethlehem University**, to practice preparing Middle Eastern Cuisine and, of course, to learn Palestinian Folk Dance.

- The Palestinian Summer Celebration, **everything is optional**, means participants can choose what they like to do and where they want to live, the price is generated based on each one's choices.
- The Palestinian Summer Celebration, provides students with a unique opportunity to **learn Arabic at Bethlehem University and gain a University transcript** that the students can use at their own universities in each one's country.
- The Palestinian Summer Celebration, **enables you to meet people**, not just from Palestine, but from all over the world.
- The Palestinian Summer Celebration, **tours all over Palestine and the Holy Land**, tours that enable participants to learn about the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

For more information: [www.sirajcenter.org/](http://www.sirajcenter.org/).

## *Ecumenical Advocacy Days, March 23-26, 2012*



[Come to the 10th Annual EAD, March 23-26, 2012, in Washington, DC](#) where we will explore Economy, Livelihood, and Our National Priorities through the lens of Isaiah 58. Join other Christians in seeking a global economy and a national budget that break the yokes of injustice, poverty, hunger, and unemployment throughout the world -- heeding Isaiah's call to become "repairers of the breach and restorers of streets to live in."

In a global economy based on scarcity, corporate greed, and individualism, we will seek God's alternative vision for global community: one that breaks the chains of injustice and creates the possibility of a sustainable livelihood with dignity for all, thus living into a reality of God's abundance.

[Register Online Now](#) or [Download the EAD Brochure and Registration Form](#) (PDF)

Come to "Is This the Fast I Seek?," EAD's Tenth Anniversary Celebration, March 23-26, 2012 in Washington, DC, and help shape our national priorities. Ecumenical Advocacy Days for Global Peace with Justice is sponsored by the ecumenical Christian community and is grounded in biblical witness and our shared tradition of justice, peace and integrity of creation. Our goal is to strengthen our Christian voice and mobilize for advocacy on specific U.S. domestic and international policy issues.

**CMSM**



- *assists major superiors in their role as leaders;*
- *promotes dialogue and collaboration with the conference of bishops and other major groups in church and society;*
- *provides a corporate influence in church and society.*

8808 Cameron St., Silver Spring, MD 20910-4152  
Tel: 301-588-4030 • Fax: 301-587-4575 • [www.cmsm.org](http://www.cmsm.org)

This newsletter is sent to members and associate members of CMSM.  
It is also sent to justice and peace directors of CMSM member organizations,  
and to others who have expressed an interest.  
If you fall into the last category and no longer wish to receive this newsletter,  
send an e-mail to [postmaster@cmsm.org](mailto:postmaster@cmsm.org) and you will be removed from the list.