



# J/P ALERT

CONFERENCE OF MAJOR SUPERIORS OF MEN JUSTICE AND PEACE OFFICE



December 2013 ([en español](#))

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## Accomplishments This Year

Below are some of the accomplishments CMSM and other coalition partners have enjoyed this past year. **Thank you for your participation!**

1. **Syria:** We helped prevent a major increase in the violence and the U.S. from bombing Syria.
2. **Immigration:** We helped move an immigration bill through the Senate, increase the role of spiritual fasting in our movement, and stir a growing, creative social movement for immigration reform.
3. **Israel/Palestine:** We helped encourage the U.S. to make this a priority and create the conditions for negotiations presently ongoing.
4. **Drones:** We helped raise this issue on the political agenda, supported the development of USCCB policy on this issue, while illuminating an emerging "justpeace" frame for analyzing such issues.
5. **Economic Justice:** We helped update the Faithful Budget developed by our ecumenical advocacy coalition, and promoted it broadly in Congress.
6. **Pentagon Spending:** We helped educate our communities and generate U.S. policy that cut the pentagon budget for the first time in 15 years!
7. **Restorative Justice:** We helped educate the religious and NGO advocacy groups about the potential for RJ, as well as key State Department officials.
8. **Justpeace:** We helped develop a key educational and advocacy conference around this emerging approach to conflict. This Ecumenical Advocacy Days conference is coming up Mar. 21-24, 2014.



## Immigration Fast 4 Families



Over 10,000 people joined in solidarity fasts with the fasters in tents, in the cold, over the past month. Five people fasted only with liquid for 22 days straight near the steps of the U.S. Capitol! The culminating event included pray-ins and sit-ins to occupy the offices of more than 170 Republican and Democratic lawmakers for about one hour.

"Immigration Advocates Undeterred as House Departs Without Action"  
Dec. 13, 2013. *NY Times*.

"As the Republican-controlled House of Representatives wrapped up its work for the year on Thursday with no progress on immigration, leaders from both parties said they would return to the issue early in the new year." Read the [full article](#).

**USCCB's National Migration Week** is coming up on Jan. 5-11. Follow the link [for details and resources](#).

## *Pope's World Day of Peace Message*

Below are excerpts from the Pope's annual World Day of Peace message for Jan. 1, 2014 on the theme of **Fraternity**.

"For this reason, I appeal forcefully to all those who sow violence and death by force of arms: in the **person you today see simply as an enemy to be beaten, discover rather your brother or sister**, and hold back your hand! **Give up the way of arms** and go out to meet the other in dialogue, pardon and reconciliation, in order to rebuild justice, trust, and hope around you! From this standpoint, it is clear that, for the world's peoples, **armed conflicts are always a deliberate negation of international harmony, and create profound divisions and deep wounds which require many years to heal**. Wars are a concrete refusal to pursue the great economic and social goals that the international community has set itself.



"Nevertheless, as long as so great a quantity of arms are in circulation as at present, new

pretexts can always be found for initiating hostilities. For this reason, I make my own the appeal of my predecessors **for the non-proliferation of arms and for disarmament of all parties**, beginning with nuclear and chemical weapons disarmament....

"...I express my hope that the daily commitment of all will continue to bear fruit and that there will be an effective application in international law of the **right to peace, as a fundamental human right and a necessary prerequisite for every other right**" (emphases mine).

### Reflection

Pope Francis offers some profound statements in this message. He calls us clearly to see our perceived enemy as a brother or sister. In this space of deeper fraternity and empathy, Francis appeals for a disarmament that merely "begins" with nuclear and chemical weapons, but that leads to and entails a fuller "disarmament of all parties." Peace is named as a fundamental human right, which is a "necessary prerequisite for every other right."

Thus, it appears that any act of war violates this human right, the other rights dependent on it, and the human dignity the rights flow from. **In this light offered by Pope Francis** and since human dignity is the basic value of our entire Catholic Social Teaching, **how is it possible, especially as Christians, to continue to describe any war as "just?"** Further, is Pope Francis inviting us beyond "just war" and into an emerging "just peace" frame, criteria, and set of practices for engaging acute conflicts?

[The Pope's full message](#) is online.

## *U.S. Drone Strikes Wedding Party*



The tragedy of our violent habits continues as [15 are killed at a wedding party](#) in Yemen and a [two year old is killed in Afghanistan](#). (Also read [another article on the Yemen incident](#).) This is why the "just war" criteria of discrimination is inadequate *and* frequently destructive since it allows for acts like this to occur as long as the stated intention is not to directly kill civilians. But the reality is these killings based on recent history and on U.S. habits are highly foreseeable, and thus should be named unjust. Yes,

we must hold our government accountable to their commitment to transparency and the call to establish international norms on drones. But more to the point and to a lasting justpeace, we must call them to stop armed drone attacks and become technological and human experts in peacebuilding.

## *Israel/Palestine Action Alert*

[Take action](#) to help Palestinians get to work, school, hospital, and home. Call for an end to restrictions on movement.

Over the next few days thousands of visitors from around the world will begin arriving in Bethlehem for the celebration of Christmas. On December 21 a joint simulcast [worship service](#) will take place between the Christmas Lutheran **Church in**

## 3rd Thursdays for Israel/Palestine



**Bethlehem** and the National Cathedral in Washington, DC. And on Christmas Eve the eyes of the world will focus on the city as the celebration held in Manger Square and the midnight mass at the church of the Nativity are broadcast to the world. On Christmas day the thoughts of even more people will briefly turn towards Bethlehem as Jesus' birth in the city and the promise of transformation, reconciliation, and peace are commemorated.

However, **Palestinian movement into and out of the city remains restricted** and those Palestinians given permission to move between Jerusalem and Bethlehem are forced to queue for hours as they wait to pass through the crowded tunnels and turnstiles contained in the terminal hidden just out of sight of the tourists. This is the stark reality to which Palestinians will awake on December 26, and every day.

**Equally hidden will be the destruction that has resulted from the construction of the wall on the land of other Bethlehem area communities** like [Al Walaja](#), [Wadi Fukin](#), Battir, Husan, and Beit Safafa. In the area of these villages the wall diverges significantly from the Green Line -- the formal boundary between the West Bank and Israel - - in order to keep Israeli settlements on the western side of the wall. The villagers -- who are mostly farmers -- will be cut off from their farm land and will have only restricted access to the hospitals, schools, clinics, and stores in the towns of Beit Jala and Bethlehem. Residents of the villages will also be required to apply for permits from the Israeli military in order to remain in their homes and on their land.

[Learn more](#) about movement restrictions in Palestine.

Similar stories can be told about other communities located all along the route of the wall as well as communities deep inside the West Bank which remain isolated as a result of Israeli imposed movement restrictions. While free movement between major West Bank cities has eased somewhat this year, according to the [United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#) **at least 55 West Bank communities remain isolated as a result of roadblocks, barriers, checkpoints** and other movement restrictions, and the number of obstacles to movement inside the West Bank increased to 542 during 2013 from 529 in 2012. Finally, movement between different parts of the occupied Palestinian territory (Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank) remains tightly controlled and Gaza remains under siege with most of its population denied the right to travel.

**This situation must end.**

\*[Click here to contact your Senators and Representative](#). Ask them to support US policy that works for **fuller freedom of movement and access for all Palestinians**. Let them know that you believe Israel's security rests not in controlling the Palestinian population, but in respecting equal freedom for all persons.

## *Haiti Update*

Much has been done to rebuild the destroyed Church structures in Haiti, yet there is still so much more to do. In Late 2011, the construction unit of the **Partnership for Church Reconstruction** ("Proche"), known as the "UOC," became operational in Haiti with two professional staff. Since then, the UOC has received over 100



project applications. Read the [latest report on the progress in Haiti](#).

To date, the Subcommittee for the Church in Latin America (SCLA) of the USCCB has approved over \$10 million USD in grants to [15 reconstruction projects](#). Over 90% of these funds were awarded in 2012. Other funding partners have contributed to these and other projects for a total of nearly 40 projects in various stages of execution.

Follow the link for [more details from USCCB](#).

## *Pope Francis and Fracking*

Pope Francis recently met with people from Argentina on the issue of Fracking. They expressed concerns about an agreement between the Argentine government and Chevron which will entail hydraulic fracturing that risks poisoning water. Read [details on the encounter](#) in the *Foreign Policy* blog.



## *Share Good News!*

As your religious institute participates in justice and peace work, please send us your or others' accomplishments of drawing our society closer to the Reign of God.

Merry Christmas!!

*Eli°*

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

Eli McCarthy PhD sends this newsletter 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.

