



PCLR Board Members

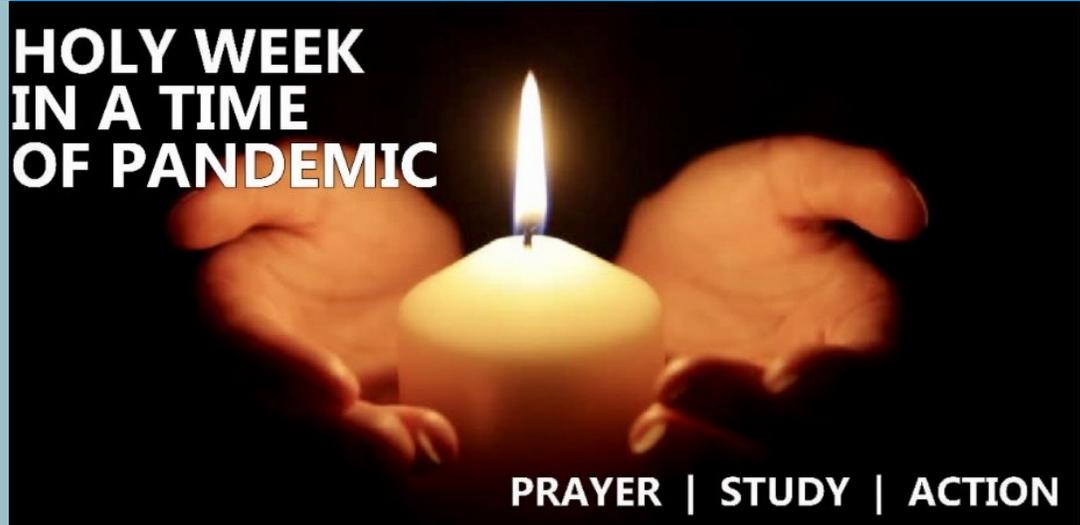
- Sherry Simon (President)
- Mary Hunt (V. President)
- Tamara Tahat (Secretary)
- Sherry Martin (Treasurer)
- Lee Bass
- Susi Blanco
- Sandee Haslauer
- Marian Paquette
- Martina Pierini
- Jan Pipkin
- George Simon

Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. Matthew 5:9

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**HOLY WEEK
IN A TIME
OF PANDEMIC**



PRAYER | STUDY | ACTION

**PRAYER - STUDY - ACTION
CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE**

HOLY WEEK

April 5-12, 2020

The Lenten season is coming to a close and our experience of Holy Week means facing unflinchingly the suffering and isolation, anxiety and disruption that the coronavirus pandemic has brought us. We carry the trauma - physical, mental, economic, spiritual - as Jesus labors under the weight of the cross. **As overwhelming as this moment may be, Jesus walks the way of sorrows with us, and models for us a faith**



that is rooted in the evidence of things unseen and unheard, and yet tightly held onto nevertheless. Easter feels a long way away. The central mystery of our faith that suffering and death are not final offers little consolation as we worry for loved ones who are sick, grieve family and friends who have died, fear the loss of our jobs and bills that go unpaid, and feel acutely the distance that separates us as we shelter alone. We find ourselves, I think, in a not-so-different space than the one that the early discipleship

Peace Offerings

community found itself: struggling in the midst of loss, grief and uncertainty; gripped by a state of confusion in that time between the cross and the empty tomb.

As we enter Holy Week, we hope that in some small way, you feel the accompaniment of others with the Pax Christi USA family. We hope that the opportunities we have provided for Lent—and especially since the onset of the pandemic—have offered some measure of solidarity that you are not praying, studying or acting alone, that even when we are in our homes and physically separated from one another, we are nevertheless still “together.” We are community to one another, the body of Christ in the world, and we’ll be there to continue walking with you in the days, weeks and months ahead.

We hope you’ll continue to join us in reciting this [special prayer written by Pax Christi USA National Council member Michelle Sherman](#) for the Pax Christi USA community to pray throughout this crisis. Below you’ll find a [poignant reflection written by PCUSA Ambassador of Peace Rev. Joe Nangle, ofm](#) on the passion of Jesus and the readings for Palm Sunday in light of this current moment. And we invite you to join us on Good Friday from your homes for a [Virtual Way of the Cross for Economic and Ecological Justice](#) that we are co-sponsoring along with several of our partners, led by our friends at the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns.

You can find additional opportunities to

respond to the coronavirus pandemic at [this link](#) and all of our earlier resources for Lent are archived on our [special Lenten webpage](#).

Peace be to each of you during Holy Week. **And thank you for the witness you have maintained and modeled throughout these difficult times.** Such times are exactly why we strive to be the peace of Christ in the world today.

In solidarity,

Johnny Zokavitch

Executive Director,

Pax Christi USA

10 Things to Do in Self-Isolation

1. Incorporate a new skill-set. YouTube is a great tool for figuring out how to do that thing you’ve always wanted to learn.
2. Meditate or pray. Remember how you always wanted to take time for that but never had the time?
3. Cook wonderful meals for yourself or your family.
4. Read all of those books sitting by your bed.
5. Watch some of those movies you have lined up on Netflix.
6. Talk to you family/friends either in person or via FaceTime/Zoom/phone.
7. Write your experiences during this time in a journal so you never forget.
8. Take surprises to friends and leave them on their porch. Don’t forget to tell them to look!
9. Complete some of those endless projects around the house.
10. Hug your spouse. Hug your kids. Hug your dog. Hug yourself.

Peace Offerings

PEACE PARTNERS

Peace Partners highlights various peace and social justice organizations that share our vision: active promotion of peace in our neighborhood, state, country and world. The goal is to increase awareness of the many organizations in our area that work for peace through social justice and invite joint ventures between these groups to increase the effectiveness of our mission.



STREET MINISTRY

Gala Tallent is the founder of Street Ministry, a Little Rock group that supplies food to individuals who live outside without housing. Pax Christi has been working with Street Ministry and Settled Souls during the coronavirus crisis, helping provide food for several individuals in need during this difficult time. Street Ministry is a part of the [Arkansas Homeless Coalition](#), a nonprofit organization with membership open to all persons engaged in or interested in networking and advocacy on behalf of those who are on the streets. Participants include service providers, state agencies, faith communities, and interested individual advocates.

To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded. Ralph Waldo Emerson

Breathe

Linford Detweiler

Breathe.

Go on and live your unexpected life.

Inhale love. Exhale surrender.

Trust: all that's in between.

“Behold, all things are become new.”

Really?

There is fear,
there is shock,
there is separation and
there is sadness.

On earth, there always have been,
and always will be—unless, until
a man of sorrows
rides down the dawn on a white horse
with the jukebox turned way up
blasting an unexpected song,
hopefully Satchmo himself
in charge of blowing the horn,
his cheeks bulging,
his eyes wide,
his lungs healthy.
But don't hold your breath.

Breathe.

Go on and live your unexpected life.

Behold, we don't know what the future holds.

We never did. We never will.

How much oxygen is there in exhaled air?

All the best priests, pastors, rabbis,
and all the best friends
learn to leave elbow room for mystery.

Never trust anyone who is afraid of saying,
As far as I know.

Breathe.

Go on and live your unexpected life.

Does your favorite coffee mug still feel good in
your hand? Did the tree swallows return
limpid in the air? They did here.

Are people you love still near?

Breathe deep into your lungs while you still can.

Even in the best of times the expiration date remains unknown.

Breathe.

Go on and live your unexpected life.

Inhale love. Exhale surrender.

Trust: all that's in between.

Peace Offerings

PAX CHRISTI LITTLE ROCK LIVE EVENTS CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Due to the importance of sheltering in place to minimize the impact of the coronavirus on society, Pax Christi LR is **cancelling all scheduled live meetings and activities** until further notice. **The Pilgrimage for Peace** will be rescheduled later in the year once health officials indicate that the danger for viral contagion is gone.

However, there will be a Zoom PCLR Board meeting scheduled for Thurs., April 16 at 6:30 pm. All board members will be invited to join. If you are not a board member and want to participate, please call 501-258-8653.

SOLES4SOULS

Over the past month, 2735 corks have been donated to Soles4Souls. Added to the total number (16,695) previously sent off, our total is now 19,430. Save your corks and bring them to our next PCLR meeting, drop them off at 415 N. McKinley St., #1040, or call 258-8653 and we'll pick them up. Thanks to each of you for your help!

A LETTER FROM YOUR FUTURE FRANCESCA MELANDRI

The acclaimed Italian novelist, Francesca Melandri, who has been under lockdown in Rome for almost three weeks due to the Covid-19 outbreak, has written a letter to fellow Europeans “from your future,” laying out the range of emotions people are likely to go through over the coming weeks.

I am writing to you from Italy, which means I am writing from your future. We are now where you will be in a few days. The epidemic's charts show us all entwined in a parallel dance.

We are but a few steps ahead of you in the path of time, just like Wuhan was a few weeks ahead of us. We watch you as you behave just as we did. You hold the same arguments we did until a short time ago, between those who still say “its only a flu, why all the fuss?” and those who have already understood.

As we watch you from here, from your future, we know that many of you, as you were told to lock yourselves up into your homes, quoted Orwell, some even Hobbes. But soon you'll be too busy for that.

First of all, you'll eat. Not just because it will be one of the few last things that you can still do.

You'll find dozens of social networking groups with tutorials on how to spend your free time in fruitful ways. You will join them all, then ignore

Peace Offerings

them completely after a few days.

You'll pull apocalyptic literature out of your bookshelves, but will soon find you don't really feel like reading any of it.

You'll eat again. You will not sleep well. You will ask yourselves what is happening to democracy.

You'll have an unstoppable online social life—on Messenger, WhatsApp, Skype, Zoom...

Coronavirus: the week explained—sign up for our email newsletter.

You will read more.

You will miss your adult children like you never have before; the realization that you have no idea when you will ever see them again will hit you like a punch in the chest.

Old resentments and falling outs will seem irrelevant. You will call people you had sworn never to talk to ever again, so as to ask them: "How are you doing?" Many women will be beaten in their homes.

You will wonder what is happening to all those who can't stay home because they don't have one. You will feel vulnerable when going out shopping in the deserted streets, especially if you are a woman. You will ask yourselves if this is how societies collapse. Does it really happen so fast? You'll block out those thoughts and when you get back home you'll eat again.

You will put on weight. You'll look for online fitness training.

You'll laugh. You'll laugh a lot. You'll flaunt a gallows humor you never had before. Even people who've always taken everything dead seriously will contemplate the absurdity of life, of the universe and of it all.

You will make appointments in the supermarket queues with your friends and lovers,

so as to briefly see them in person all the while abiding by the social distancing rules.



You will count all the things you do not need.

The true nature of the people around you will be revealed with total clarity. You will have confirmations and surprises.

Literati who had been omnipresent in the news will disappear, their opinions suddenly irrelevant; some will take refuge in rationalizations which will be so totally lacking in empathy that people will stop listening to them. People whom you had overlooked, instead, will turn out to be reassuring, generous, reliable, pragmatic and clairvoyant

Those who invite you to see all this mess as an opportunity for planetary renewal will help you to put things in a larger perspective. You will also find them terribly annoying: nice, the planet is breathing better because of the halved CO2 emissions, but how will you pay your bills next month?

You will not understand if witnessing the birth of a new world is a grandiose or a miserable affair.

You will play music from your windows and lawns. When you saw us singing opera from our balconies, you thought "ah, those Italians." But we know you will sing uplifting songs to each other, too. And when you blast I Will Survive from your windows, we'll watch you and nod just like the people of Wuhan, who sung from their windows in February, nodded while watching us.

Many of you will fall asleep vowing that the

Peace Offerings

very first thing you'll do as soon as lock-down is over is file for divorce.

Many children will be conceived.

Your children will be schooled online. They'll be horrible nuisances; they'll give you joy.

Elderly people will disobey you like rowdy teenagers: you'll have to fight with them in order to forbid them from going out, to get infected and die.

You will try not to think about the lonely deaths inside the ICU.

You'll want to cover with rose petals all medical workers' steps.

You will be told that society is united in a communal effort, that you are all in the same boat. It will be true. This experience will change for good how you perceive yourself as an individual part of a larger whole.

Class, however, will make *all* the difference. Being locked up in a house with a pretty garden or in an overcrowded housing project will not be the same. Nor is being able to keep on working from home or seeing

your job disappear. That boat in which you'll be sailing in order to defeat the epidemic will not look the same to everyone nor is it actually the same for everyone: it never was.

At some point, you will realize it's tough. You will be afraid. You will share your fear with your dear ones, or you will keep it to yourself so as not to burden them with it, too.

You will eat again.

We're in Italy, and this is what we know about your future. But it's just small-scale fortune-telling. We are very low-key seers.

If we turn our gaze to the more distant future, the future which is unknown both to you and to us too, we can only tell you this: when all of this is over, the world won't be the same.



SAVE THE DATE

PCLR VIRTUAL BOARD MEETING

THURSDAY, APRIL 16 at 6:30 PM

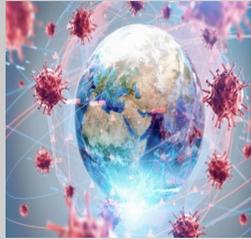
INVITATIONS TO BE SENT VIA ZOOM

**INTERESTED NON-BOARD MEMBERS MAY CALL
501-258-8653 TO PARTICIPATE**

Peace Offerings**WHAT HAS THE PANDEMIC TAUGHT US SO FAR?**

Our modern world was dramatically upended just a few short weeks ago when the coronavirus pandemic hit the shores of North America and began its insidious journey to our states, our cities and our neighborhoods. Before the virus landed here, it decimated cities in China, Europe, the Middle East and Australia, providing us with a preview of what was to come. It has been over 100 years since our entire planet has been threatened by a common enemy. In 1918, it was the Spanish flu (Pandemic Influenza) that infected over one third of the world's population and killed approximately 50 million people. We learned once again from that deadly viral march that we are not invincible as a species and that the only constant in our lives is change, over which at times we have no control.

So once again, we are faced with a deadly outbreak that has caused us to take shelter, maintain physical distance and discontinue life as we knew it. Hopefully, most of us are staying home, minimizing contact



with others so that we might “flatten the curve” and help spare the lives of our neighbors.

We have already experienced the grief and anxiety that comes from having control over our lives wrested out of our hands and knowing friends or relatives who have come down with the virus. Our hope at this point is only that we can minimize the damage that this virus does to our people and our society.

In living through these initial weeks of fear, however, I have begun to see signs of change around me that are not all bad. Change that would have never happened if we had been left in charge of our lives. There are times when nature (God) forces our hands and leads us down an unexpected path that actually may serve to better our lives in the long run. That is, if we pay attention and learn from our experience. Certainly, a vaccine will be found and this pandemic will be quelled over the next months. But will we hold onto some of the knowledge gained from this forced experiment? Will we find the silver lining of change around this dark cloud of pandemic? Let's be thoughtful as we go through these days. Perhaps if we remember the lessons of these present moments, we won't forget the things we have learned when we have the opportunity to

Peace Offerings

return to our more “normal” lives.

Here are some things that I think we might actually learn from living through this pandemic.

We are all physically connected.

This has been proven once again by the rate at which the coronavirus has spread from person to person across the globe. We have had to adopt isolation tactics, stay at home and/or stay six feet apart to keep the virus from spreading rampantly. So, even though this is a negative side effect of our connectivity, we now see how influential singular behaviors of one person can be on others. Many others. Paradoxically, we are isolating to protect those we love.

Since the beginning of our voluntary isolation, I have been intensely aware of how much I miss being in the close presence of others. I miss hugs and handshakes and intimate conversations. This sensory deprivation lets me know that I was receiving something vital from others. I suppose that it is only in the absence of something that we grow to appreciate it. So now I really pay attention when strangers smile and say hi to me from a distance; when the clerks in the stores are kind and thoughtful; when friends leave unexpected gifts on my doorstep. People have amazingly found alternatives to

the physical touch we so took for granted. Whether it is singing from balconies, visiting on either side of a screen door or meeting outdoors for a chat, I hope we remember the importance of our connections when they become commonplace once again.

There is a terrible disparity between socioeconomic groups in our country that is no longer sustainable.

Of course, we were already aware of this fact, but it has become glaringly apparent in these days of pandemic. Pandemic mortality rates in 1918 and in 2009 were highest among those with the lowest socioeconomic status (SES). The current pandemic will certainly follow the same trends, widening the social and economic divisions that also make the virus deadlier. Because, you see, when you cannot shelter in place you are more likely to catch the disease. And you are more likely to die from it due to lack of good medical care. This is a problem that we should all be concerned about as it only reinforces the spread of the disease. Research has found that in an epidemic, poverty and inequality can significantly increase rates of transmission and mortality for everyone.

Although the two major risk factors generally thought to make the coronavirus deadlier for those who catch it are old-age and pre-existing health conditions, recent studies suggest a third factor-low socioec-

Peace Offerings

onomic status. Low income is associated with higher rates of chronic health conditions such as diabetes or heart disease. Preventative care and health education have steadily tilted toward the educated and well-off. As a result, people in the lower socioeconomic bracket are about 10% likelier to have a chronic health condition. These conditions make the coronavirus up to 10 times more deadly according to recent data from the Chinese Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The knowledge we gather from this research should make it obvious that it would be advantageous to everyone to more thoroughly address the system of inequities that have contributed to the socioeconomic divide. Healthcare should be a human right provided to all. Taking steps to house those without homes and provide food for the hungry is imperative (Jericho Way, Settled Souls). We are learning that we are all on the same boat in a pandemic and we must care for one another or eventually all sink together. I believe this will become more apparent as we move forward over the next few weeks and months, so let us begin to develop models of healthcare, insurance, housing, and sustenance that shelter us all.

The world can slow down/prevent climate change. It seems that there are lessons to be learned from our reactions to this pandemic on how we can actually make the needed changes to slow down climate change and

simply be good stewards of our planet. Of course, nothing makes up for all the suffering and pain caused by the rising death rate, lost livelihoods, and widespread privations caused by this viral outbreak. A silver lining in these dark days, however, is the fact that the current decrease in fuel emissions could be severe enough to cut in half this year's addition to the CO2 concentration in the atmosphere. That would have been thought an impossible achievement just two months ago. The question is, how can we maintain some of these changes after we go back to "business as usual?" Even though there are no clear models being put forth currently to suggest behavioral/cultural changes in emission output, there are some promising changes in our social consciousness during this time that give us hope:

- Science's value is being restored. The scientists rather than the politicians are being heard, i.e., Dr. Fauci.
- The need for proactive government to protect our well-being as a society is being recognized.
- There is increased understanding that simplicity isn't austerity, frugality doesn't mean deprivation and we can do without a lot of our luxuries if it serves a higher purpose.
- There is renewed appreciation of social solidarity. If we can make millions of ventilators and face masks, then we can find a way to make wind turbines and solar panels. We can do so much, so quickly to survive.

Editorial-Sherry Simon

Peace Offerings

SOWING SEEDS OF DIVISION

George K. Simon, PhD

Hardly a day goes by that I don't see an article written by a noted cleric or theologian posted



Pope Francis

online railing against the “evils” promulgated by progressive forces within the Church. One commentator asserted that Pope Francis himself is partly responsible for inviting the “wrath of God” in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic because he dared to receive the Pachamama statue offering of an Amazonian indigenous tribesperson while witnessing the tribe’s historic cultural ceremony. There are many other similar stories. And they all stoke the same fire. As a result, we have become as polarized and divided within our beloved Church (i.e. conservatives vs. progressives) as the world has long been politically.

Some ultra-traditionalists would have you believe that the Church has always had Latin as its liturgical language, that its doctrines and dogmas have al-

ways been the same since the time of Peter, and that its practices have remained unchanged from the era of the catacombs until Vatican II and its heretical teachings demolished everything sacred to the faith. I wish I were making this up. I’m not.

Jesus talked about sowing seeds and building His kingdom (i.e., ushering the reign of God in the hearts and minds of all persons). And he gave us *one* command to guide us in the task. He even made that command “new,” in the sense he reframed it in a way we could more easily understand. “Love,” he commanded, and do so “in the manner I have shown you.” It’s a straightforward and simple command. And it wasn’t a suggestion. But it’s so very hard to do: to stop judging and radically love – even the least among us and even those who hate and do wrong by us. And he also told us the standard by which we would all be judged. Did we feed the hungry; did we clothe the naked, etc., whenever and wherever we encountered Him in such a condition.

Peace Offerings

He did not say we'd be asked if we dared to take communion in the hand, or did we commit the cardinal sin of facing an altar that was facing us. But the standard he did give us is hard and counter-intuitive to the way we all live. It's much easier to stick your tongue out, close your eyes, and behave reverently when receiving the host.

Real piety, according to Jesus, has to do with poverty of spirit and goodwill toward all. And real devotion to Him lies in heeding his command. So I think we must all pray for the conversion of the hearts of those who want to convince us that to be a good Catholic – indeed, a good Christian – means to be devoted to every traditional religious practice.

I love our faith and its beautiful practices. But it's much easier to practice ritual and feel righteous than it is to practice the kind of "all the way to the cross love" that Christ commanded those who claim him as Lord and Savior to display with their words and actions. And I think the ever-growing po-

larization truly plaguing the world attests to that truth. The sowers of division among us have stayed steady on their path and are already reaping the harvest of their efforts. We are as divided as ever. And we're often at each other's throats. Ironically, in many ways this pandemic seems to be reminding us of what really matters in life and is making us work together again. Some see it as a plague and punishment for progressive ideas circulating among us. But perhaps it is a true gift and grace, for what unites is always of God. And what divides has long been the work of the evil one, doing as he did from the very beginning, appealing to our ego and vanity of knowing better than God Himself the true pathway to piety.



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