

Pax Christi USA 50th Anniversary: 1972-2022

Washington, D.C.

Virginia Dorgan, Mary Beth Moore, SC, Director of Centro Corazon de Maria, and Kathleen Kanet participated in the 50th Anniversary Conference of Pax Christi USA, “**Seeing through the Prism of Justice**” from August 5-7, 2022. They experienced a joyful, moving celebrative series of events with prayers and hope for the future.



Sisters Kathleen, Mary Beth & Virginia

The Conference opened with a Keynote address given by Bishop John Wester. Bishop Wester spoke in a very personal way about his visit to Hiroshima. He told stories and reflected on how moved he was when learning about the children who were in the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki when the United States dropped nuclear bombs, in August 1945. These school children seeing the light and running to the light, were evaporated in that horrid light! Coming home to Santa Fe, New Mexico, Bishop Wester visited a museum which had a place of honor for the planes, named Little Bob and Fat Man, that carried and dropped the bombs. It was in that museum, that he decided to call for a serious conversation about nuclear disarmament for our nation.

The text of Bishop Wester’s keynote address can be found on this link:

<https://paxchristiusa.org/2022/08/17/archbishop-john-westers-keynote-address-pax-christi-usa-national-conference/>



Bishop Wester, Kathleen & Virginia

The highlight for many at the conference, was the speech Marie Dennis gave as she received the 2022 Teacher of Peace Award. Marie began her thanks by outlining the state of the world when Pax Christi USA began its mission fifty years ago. Unfortunately, the state of today’s world seems the same and even more treacherous. Yet, her presentation was filled with hope in her belief that “we are on the threshold of a new way of being, and a new paradigm”. In this hope Marie, so beautifully, projected that nonviolence is the constitutive Way and

Mission of Jesus and a call to all of us. Marie cited violence as the underlying cause of all evil. She said that therefore following the nonviolent Jesus is our only and final recourse.

The text of Marie Dennis presentation can be found on this link:

<https://paxchristiusa.org/2022/08/08/marie-denniss-teacher-of-peace-2022-acceptance-speech/>



Marie Dennis with Bishop Stowe

As Kathleen registered for the Conference, an elderly man saw that she was an RSHM asked if she knew Sr. Margaret Weiner. He told Kathleen that his wife, a cousin of Margaret's, had gone to place Margaret's photo in the room holding memories and stories of Pax Christi members. Later Kathleen saw and took a picture of a photo with Marjorie Keenan, one of the early members of Pax Christi. The photo below is of Marjorie from many years ago!



Sr. Marjorie Keenan with early members of Pax Christi

Bishop John Stowe, OFM, Pax Christi President, was the presider and homilist for Sunday's the rich and joyful closing Liturgy. He began the homily with these words: "Do not be afraid any longer little flock..." He then continued to say, that even in the Church we are afraid because we live in a scary world and among those who promote fear and division. Even in the Church there are "wolves" among us: when "Catholics promote the death-penalty and are rewarded for doing so, there are those eager for vengeance and retaliation, when we are willing to bless armaments but not some couples, when the voices of women are not being heard in the concerns about abortion, when the institution cannot bring itself to say "Black lives matter," and when the self-proclaimed uber-Catholics insist that they know more and better than the pope."

Here is the link to his homily: <https://paxchristiusa.org/2022/08/09/pax-christi-usa-remains-vigilant-after-50-years/>



Bishop Stowe & Bishop Wester

(Photo by Chris Ponnet used with permission)

Those who planned and prepared this outstanding Conference created an exceptional celebration. Gratitude and joy were expressed with music, art, dancing, and shared memories. The prayer and liturgies, in addition to the wonderful presentations gave us hope.

Kathleen Kanet, RSHM