

February 17th 2026

Your Excellency,

We write to you today as members of Pax Christi Pennsylvania (PA), a network of local groups from Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, West Chester, and Philadelphia, “grounded in the Gospel and Catholic social teaching” and “rejecting war, preparation for war, every form of violence and domination, and personal and systemic racism.”¹ We are part of Pax Christi USA, a section of Pax Christi International, the official Catholic peace movement.

This time of year it is fitting to recall Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s challenge that militarism, along with racism and poverty, remains one of the “triple evils” of injustice embedded within our society. These past few weeks, between time of year we remember Dr. King and the preparation for Lent, one of those evils in particular, a shocking surge of militarism, revealed itself through:

- a preemptive military strike violating the national sovereignty of Venezuela and inflicting civilian casualties²
- threats of unilateral intervention directed at Mexico, Colombia, Iran, and Cuba
- geopolitical demands to acquire the sovereign territory of Greenland
- undermining the UN and other international organizations in conflict resolution
- establishing a so-called pay-to-play “Board of Peace” for Gaza that does not satisfy the need for justice to build peace³
- threats to deploy the U.S. military in domestic police actions
- terrorizing and killing of civilians by heavily armed federal agents in Minneapolis⁴
- allowing the expiration of the New START treaty, which limits nuclear weapons stockpiling

We stand horrified by these unjust actions that sow chaos and threaten human life. As members of Pax Christi Pennsylvania, we live the charism of gospel nonviolence: to be peacemakers (Matthew 5:9), to “put away the sword” (Matthew 26:52), to live the truth

¹“Our Vision – Pax Christi USA.” Pax Christi USA, <https://paxchristiusa.org/about/our-vision/>. Accessed January 2026.

² “Pax Christi USA responds to US action in Venezuela.” Pax Christi USA, <https://paxchristiusa.org/2026/01/03/pax-christi-usa-responds-to-us-action-in-venezuela/> Accessed January 2026.

³ “Pax Christi International declaration on the so-called “Board of Peace.” *Pax Christi USA*, <https://paxchristiusa.org/2026/01/24/pax-christi-international-declaration-on-the-so-called-board-of-peace/> Accessed January 2026.

⁴ “Statement in response to ICE shooting in Minneapolis.” Pax Christi USA, <https://paxchristiusa.org/2026/01/08/statement-in-response-to-ice-shooting-in-minneapolis/> Accessed January 2026.

in nonviolent, loving service (Ephesian 4:15), to build the God's kingdom of justice, peace, and joy (Romans 14:17).

We look to Pope Leo XIV who, in his opening *Urbi et Orbi* blessing moments after being elected, reminded the world that the gospel is “**unarmed and disarming**.”⁵ Weeks later in his letter to Pax Christi USA, the Holy Father encouraged us to form “local communities into ‘houses of peace’ where one learns how to defuse hostility through dialogue, where justice is practiced and forgiveness is cherished.”⁶

With this in mind, we ask you, our shepherds, in the name of the unarmed and disarming gospel of Christ:

- Name and speak more boldly against the injustice of militarism revealed in recent weeks
- Encourage brother clergy to preach and teach about the need for just peace
- Avoid “both-sidesism” by recognizing that there are structural, unjust differences in power that require prophetic clarity rather than neutrality⁷
- Participate in public, prayerful, nonviolent witness as direct action
- Provide the faithful People of God direction about how to promote peace and justice in the face of increased violence fueled by militarism.

There comes a time when faith impels action, to promote meaningful change in our communities. We look to you, our bishops, for leadership. Now is the time for you to speak about this militarism that seeped into the policies of our country.

Additionally, in years past, Pax Christi could look—and find—the support of our bishops, particularly through their membership in Pax Christi and its work for justice. We members of Pax Christi Pennsylvania invite you to join us as formal members of this movement, to teach about Christ's work of peacemaking and nonviolence to our siblings in faith, to help form them into peacemaking apostles. We stand ready to support your ministry in these challenging times.

In Christ's peace,

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⁵ “First Blessing 'Urbi et Orbi' of the Holy Father Leo XIV (8 May 2025).” *The Holy See*, 8 May 2025, <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/urbi/documents/20250508-prima-benedizione-urbietorbi.html>. Accessed 26 January 2026.

⁶ “Message of the Holy Father Leo XIV to the Participants in the National Assembly of Pax Christi USA.” *The Holy See*, <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/pont-messages/2025/documents/20250720-messaggio-pax-christi.html>. Accessed January 2026.

⁷ CCC par. 2242 on civil disobedience to civil authorities acting unjustly. Previously, Pope Saint John XXIII in his encyclical *Pacem in Terris* reminds us that governments that use threats against their own people do not advance the common good (par. 48). More recently, Pope Leo XIV echoes the CELAM Conference and Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi Te* in reminding us about the role of social sin in society, and how the church's mission is in solidarity with those harmed by social sin. See *Dilexi Te*, no. 90-95.