



STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH *All of God's Creation*

Social Justice Committee, Holy Cross Parish, Mt. Airy, October 29, 2023

Take the Side of Peace

“War does not solve any problem: it sows only death and destruction, foments hate, proliferates revenge. War cancels out the future, it cancels out the future. I urge believers to take just one side in this conflict: that of peace.” —Pope Francis, General Audience, 18 October 2023

“Since the horrific attack on civilians in Israel by Hamas on October 7 and the retaliatory bombings and siege of Gaza by Israel, thousands of lives have been lost, and the numbers of deaths and wounded are mounting. **We grieve the unspeakable loss of life on all sides** and grow more concerned each day for the people taken captive by Hamas, the people in Gaza in desperate need of humanitarian aid, and the escalating violence.

After the devastating bombing of the Al-Ahli hospital in Gaza City that killed hundreds of civilians on October 17, Pope Francis described the situation in Gaza as ‘desperate’ and urged all Catholics to take ‘only one side’ in the Israel-Hamas conflict, the side ‘of peace.’” (Sisters of Mercy, *Nonviolence Action Alert*, 10/20/23)

On Friday, October 20, Pax Christi USA and more than two dozen other national Catholic organizations, including the Sisters of Mercy Justice Team, sent a [letter](#) to President Joe Biden, urging him to **take the necessary steps to de-escalate the conflict in Israel-Palestine**, including calling for a humanitarian ceasefire and for all parties to prioritize corridors for humanitarian aid for the people in Gaza; and to prioritize steps to secure the immediate release of hostages and ensure international protection for civilians.

The letter states, “As people of faith, we condemn Hamas’ attacks and taking of hostages on October 7, and Israel’s retaliatory violence that impacts all the people in Gaza. We mourn the loss of all life. We respond to conflict in accord with commitments to such sacred dignity, to just peace, and to accountability rather than retribution.

We affirm that each person has been created in the image and likeness of the God of Love ... If we continue to send weapons to this conflict, we will increase the dehumanization, destruction, and trauma of all communities involved. Yes, everyone has a right to defense. Yet, how we choose to defend can either perpetuate cycles of violence and trauma, or it can break cycles of violence and trauma. Now is the time to call for de-escalation and ceasefire before more lives are lost and the conflict spreads.” (*Pax Christi USA*)

“Even though limited aid has started to move, it is a drop in an ocean of need, and will not come close to providing the scale of help urgently needed by two million people who are cut off from food, water, fuel, and other essentials.” (*Mercy Corps*, 10/21/23)

[Can you join in urging the Biden administration — as a key ally of the Israeli government — to call for a ceasefire, the flow of humanitarian aid, and work to reunite hostages taken by Hamas with their families?](#) (*Win Without War*, moveon.org)

Comments on this column may be directed to the Social Justice Committee at socialjustice@holycrossphl.org.