

# WORLD & NATION

## Pax Christi: Put fewer guns, more butter in budget

By Tracy Early  
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — Pax Christi USA joined with several other groups April 16 to use the deadline day for tax filing as a vehicle for their campaign to redirect much of the Pentagon spending to social needs.

In New York, David Robinson, program director of Pax Christi, issued a statement declaring that "the Pentagon takes more money from the annual discretionary budget than nearly all other government programs combined."

He called for "investing in national security based on a well-nurtured, healthy and well-educated population rather than on extravagant new weapons and outmoded defense strategies."

President Bush's budget "includes a \$14 billion increase for the Pentagon, while programs addressing poverty, job

training, school repair, nutrition and children's health care remain the same or are cut," Robinson said.

Pax Christi, the Catholic peace movement based in Erie, Pa., joined with the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Children's Defense Fund and other religious and private organizations to convey their views to media representatives in Washington, Chicago and Wichita, as well as New York.

Robinson said that, in the past, local units of Pax Christi had sometimes used the day for filing income taxes as an occasion for protests against military spending, but that this was the first year for such action by the national organization.

A statement produced by Pax Christi and endorsed by leaders of more than 100 religious communities said the "bloated military budget" was "a direct theft from the lives and futures of those who are poor."

## Curfew

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"The liturgy of the Easter Vigil may not be celebrated on any other evening," he added.

Archbishop Pilarczyk had been scheduled to preside at the Easter Vigil at St. Peter in Chains Cathedral. The service was canceled. At the 11 o'clock Mass the following morning he welcomed the catechumens who were to have been baptized the night before.

A few city parishes reportedly held the Easter Vigil service earlier in the evening instead of canceling it.

Although the daytime ecumenical Way of the Cross, Way of Justice was not affected by the curfew, it usually goes through neighborhoods affected by the violence.

After consulting with organizers of the event, the police canceled their parade permit and the service was changed to an hour of prayer in Fountain Square. Archbishop Pilarczyk participated and spoke briefly at the service.

Luken, who is Catholic, flatly ordered people to "stay home" from evening services when he instituted the curfew.

"Church services cannot be an exception," he said. "Despite the actions of many people of good will, the violence in our streets is uncontrolled and runs rampant. The time has come to enact serious measures and to quell the violence."

The violence erupted after the shooting death of 19-year-old unarmed Timothy Thomas, who was wanted by police for 14 nonfelony warrants. The policeman charged with the shooting, Officer Steve Roach, said he believed Thomas was reaching for a weapon.

A grand jury has been convened to in-

vestigate the shooting, but the African-American community has grown increasingly concerned over police actions.

Since 1995, 15 men and one boy — all African-Americans — have been killed by Cincinnati police officers. In March, the American Civil Liberties Union and the Cincinnati Black United Front filed a lawsuit accusing the department of 30 years of illegally targeting, harassing and profiling African-Americans.

Violent protests began the night of April 9 outside Cincinnati's main downtown police station, District 1. The following afternoon gangs of African-American youths began roving downtown streets, smashing windows and overturning garbage cans and street vendor carts.

Windows also were smashed at City Hall, which is adjacent to the Catholic Cathedral of St. Peter in Chains. The rioting gang swelled to more than 1,000 as it moved north, just one block from the Cincinnati Archdiocese's headquarters.

Archbishop Pilarczyk told employees to leave work early if they feared for their safety, and most did so. Just three blocks away, on the border of the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood, several police and news helicopters could be heard circling continuously.

The two Catholic schools in Over-the-Rhine, St. Joseph's and St. Francis Seraph, canceled classes April 11, the last day before their scheduled Easter recess April 12-16.

St. Anthony Messenger, the Catholic magazine, book and video publishing house located just one block from the site of the fatal shooting April 7, shut down that same day and told employees to stay home. By the morning of April 16 more than 750 people had been arrested in connection with the rioting and looting or for violating the curfew.

The statement, scheduled for publication in the Jesuit magazine America, said that the religious communities were directly aware from their own ministries of the needs of the poor, and that these ministries needed more government reinforcement rather than less.

"Our nation could have all the funds necessary to meet these needs if only our government would choose to spend less on the military and more on education, health care, housing, job training and other social needs," the religious orders said.

Their statement, "The Time Has Come to Drop Our Stones," was presented as a response to the campaign launched by Pax Christi last year called "Bread Not Stones: A National Catholic Campaign to Redirect Military Spending."

Keyed to the question of Jesus, "Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone?" (Matthew 7:9), the campaign was launched at a Washington press conference March 23, 2000, by Bishop Walter F. Sullivan of Richmond, national president of Pax Christi, and Auxiliary Bishop Thomas J. Gumbleton of Detroit.

Their statement, signed by 34 bishops, called for "a national Catholic campaign of prayer, study and action to end exor-

bitant military spending in order to provide for the needs of all our people."

In September, Pax Christi followed up by launching a national bus tour to carry the campaign message to cities from Los Angeles to Portland, Maine.

The bus was provided by Business Leaders for Sensible Priorities, founded by Ben Cohen of Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream, and carried visual aids to dramatize the size of military spending in relation to the amounts of federal money devoted to social needs.

At the New York press event on "Tax Day," Dominican Sister Kathleen Phelan, a member of the Pax Christi executive committee, talked about how religious congregations like her own had worked to help children in need.

Her order is assisted by state funding that would be affected by cutbacks in federal programs, she said.

"The disproportionate amount allocated for military spending at the cost of our children's future must stop," she said.

Robinson called for the Pentagon to save money by "fulfilling our commitments to eliminate our nuclear arsenal" and by "putting an end to failed and outdated defense programs like the V-22 Osprey, the F-22 fighter and the Navy's new aircraft carrier."



Reuters/CNS

## Reunited

Navy Lt. Patrick Honeck, a crewman from the U.S. plane that had a midair collision with a Chinese military jet April 1, is greeted by his family on his return to the Naval Air Station at Whidbey Island in Oak Harbor, Wash., April 14. The crew was detained by the Chinese until April 11.

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