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Colloquium on Revitalizing Catholic Engagement on Nuclear Disarmament

Bishops, policy specialists, scholars and students gathered April 25-26 at Stanford University for the Colloquium on Revitalizing [U.S.] Catholic Engagement on Nuclear Disarmament to discuss the ethics of nuclear weapons and ways to achieve nuclear disarmament. "Nuclear weapons present an existential threat to mankind," said former U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, one of the hosts of the event. He said he welcomed "the important moral and religious voice that the Catholic community in the United States contributes to this effort." The event was hosted by

Stanford's Hoover Institution and Freeman Spogli Institute with support of the Nuclear Threat Initiative. It was sponsored by the U.S. bishops' international committee, Notre Dame's Office of the President and Kroc Institute, Georgetown's Berkley Center, and Boston College. This event launched what be a larger project focusing on the challenges of reducing and eliminating nuclear weapons. [Read more](#).

A PEACEBUILDING CHURCH: NEWS

Nigeria: Letters on Dialogue and Peace

"When the girls are back home, and the Boko Haram are disarmed, (I say 'when' not 'if') there will still be the tedious task of dialogue, reconciliation, mutual forgiveness and peace, for which the force of religion will be most needed. This will demand that religious communities join hands and call on the One God who takes care of us all," wrote John Cardinal Onaiyekan, Archbishop of Abuja, Nigeria. Over the course of May, Cardinal Onaiyekan wrote three letters from Rome with his reflections and suggestions to address the kidnapping of the girls and the conflict with Boko Haram. [Read the letters](#) (docx file).

Burundi: New Diocesan Synods

Monsignor Gervais Banshimiyubusa, Bishop of Ngozi and President of the Episcopal Conference of Burundi, told the Fides News Agency during his *ad limina* visit to Rome about new Diocesan Synods which will be organized throughout the country. "Through the Synods we want to ensure that every believer from Burundi deepens his/her Christian vocation and for every single community to think about its own way of coming together to contribute to peace and national reconciliation," he said. [Read more](#).

Democratic Republic of Congo: Religious Leaders for Electoral Integrity

Religious leaders in the Democratic Republic of Congo created the Integrity Commission and Electoral Mediation (CIME) after a participating in a workshop organized by the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI). According to Radio Okapi, its mission is to ensure free, transparent, and peaceful elections. [Read more](#) (in French).

Reconciliation Process in South Sudan

On April 5, 2014, the National Platform for Peace and Reconciliation was issued by three nationally-mandated institutions: the Committee for National Healing, Peace and Reconciliation (CNHPR); the South Sudan Peace and Reconciliation Commission; and the Specialised Parliamentary Committee for Peace and Reconciliation. The principals of the three entities acknowledge that they "rely heavily on the moral authority, infrastructure and outreach of the church and its leaders for access and support to all our communities. Our most critical partner is the churches and religious community." Read statement. Three reconciliation initiatives have already been undertaken with women leaders, the Yirol community, and Dinka and Nuer pastors. [Read more](#):

Sri Lanka: Reconciliation Needed for Peace

A group of bishops from Sri Lanka visited the Vatican in early May for their *ad limina* visit. Pope Francis highlighted the Church's role in bringing together a divided nation, saying, "As the country seeks to come together and heal, the Church is uniquely positioned to provide a living image of unity in the faith." While in the Vatican, the Bishop of Jaffna, Mgr. Thomas Savundranayagam, said their ministry as Bishops and Christians is reconciliation. He criticized the government for not showing appropriate empathy and sorrow for civilian victims. "Solidarity and mutual acceptance are fundamental: we have to live together in this little town, freeing it from division and hatred, growing in harmony. This is the only hope for Sri Lanka. The Church has a prophetic role in this process."

Israel: Peace in the Holy Land

"The path of dialogue, reconciliation and peace must constantly be taken up anew, courageously and tirelessly," Pope Francis said during his trip to the Holy Land. The Pope reminded his audience that Jerusalem means "city of peace," and called for peace in the region. "May efforts and energies be increasingly directed to the pursuit of a just and lasting solution to the conflicts which have caused so much suffering." Read the full text of his address to Israeli government officials [here](#).

Panama: Pastoral Congress on Human Mobility

The first Pastoral Congress on Human Mobility, organized by the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM) and other organizations, took place May 12-16 in Panama City. More than 130 people from various countries around Latin American and the Caribbean participated. The closing statement from the Congress describes issues of suffering and violence against migrants and others and outlines their commitments to migrants, itinerant people, the people of the sea and tourism, refugees and displaced persons. [Read more](#) (in Spanish).

RESOURCES

Book: *Catholic Church Leadership in Peace Building in Africa* (Paulines Publications Africa, 2014)

Edited by Elias O. Opongo, SJ, and David Kaulemu, "This book is a collection of articles from different voices in Africa, expressing the role of many Christian leaders who have transformed the society through their lives and commitment to justice and reconciliation." [Learn more](#).

Book: *A Vision of Justice: Engaging Catholic Social Teaching on the College Campus* (Liturgical Press, 2014)

Edited by Susan Crawford Sullivan and Ron Pagnucco, "This book draws together the insights of social scientists, historians, and theologians in order to introduce readers to central topics in Catholic Social Teaching and to provide concrete examples of how it is being put into action by colleges and college students." The book will also be published by [Catholic University of Eastern Africa Press](#). [Learn more](#).

Book: *Restorative Justice, Reconciliation, and Peacebuilding* (Oxford University Press, 2014)

Edited by Jennifer J. Llewellyn and Daniel Philpott, “The twin concepts of reconciliation and restorative justice, both involving the holistic restoration of right relationship, contain not only a compelling logic of justice but also great promise for resolving peacebuilding’s tensions and for constructing and assessing its institutions and practices. This book furthers this potential by developing not only the core content of these concepts but also their implications for accountability, forgiveness, reparations, traditional practices, human rights, and international law.” [Learn more](#).

eBooks: Conciliation Resources’ *Accord* Series

The peacebuilding NGO Conciliation Resources has made their *Accord* series available as free ebooks. “Accord projects examine specific conflicts globally and common peacebuilding themes. Accord publications present case studies of experiences and insights of local and international practitioners and experts, and people affected by conflict, to build an inclusive and participatory analysis. We develop policy conclusions and recommendations for best practice.” The ebooks are [available here](#).

Report: *Local Peace Processes in Sudan and South Sudan* (U.S. Institute of Peace, *Peaceworks*, May 2014)

In this 32-page report, Jacqueline Wilson offers an in-depth analysis of local peace processes. Citing the work of the Sudan Inter-Religious Council as just one example, she notes the importance of religious actors in successful peace processes: “respected religious leaders may play key third-party roles, such as convening or mediating, and many willingly embrace exceedingly challenging peace efforts.” [See article](#)

Manual: *Strategic Community Peacebuilding in Practice*

This manual from Catholic Relief Services is designed to offer practical tools for peacebuilding projects in communities, bringing theory to the level of practice. Using the example of a peacebuilding project in Timor-Leste, the manual highlights effective practices for different stages of the process. [Learn more](#), [read online](#), or [download PDF](#).

Booklet: *King Leopold’s Mines*

This report, by Josep Maria, SJ, a theologian and economist, and Emmanuelle Devuyst of the Jesuit European Social Centre, discusses mining in the Democratic Republic of Congo; its impact on the Congolese people; and political, economic, and social implications. Read the [full report](#) (PDF) or a [summary article](#). The report is also available [in Spanish](#) (PDF).

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The Catholic Peacebuilding Network (CPN) is a voluntary network of practitioners, academics, clergy and laity from around the world which seeks to enhance the study and practice of Catholic peacebuilding, especially at the local level. The CPN aims to deepen bonds of solidarity among Catholic peacebuilders, share and analyze “best practices,” expand the peacebuilding capacity of the Church in areas of conflict, and encourage the further development of a theology of a just peace. While it is a Catholic network, the CPN believes that authentic and effective Catholic peacebuilding involves dialogue and collaboration with those of other religious traditions and all those committed to building a more just and peaceful world.

Gerard Powers, Coordinator
Cathy Laake, Program Assistant
Catholic Peacebuilding Network
Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies
100 Hesburgh Center
Notre Dame, IN 46556, USA
[574.631.6970](tel:574.631.6970) (ph)
[574.631.6973](tel:574.631.6973) (fax)
www.cpn.nd.edu