

## OLQP MISSION STATEMENT

Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church is dedicated to witnessing the teachings of Jesus Christ, especially the Gospel of Saint Matthew, Chapter 25:31-46. Our mission is to nurture the spirit and to encourage the potential of those we serve through liturgical celebration, educational endeavors and social ministries. The parish will continue to identify with its origin as a Black parish. As a multi-ethnic congregation we will seek to promote racial harmony and social justice. While our primary focus is within the immediate community, we will also work to provide for the well-being of the downtrodden everywhere. In this we strive for our parish community to be a caring, sharing, and loving family.

### Welcome to OLQP Catholic Church!

¡Bienvenidos a OLQP iglesia católica!

#### Contact / Contacto:

2700 19th St S, Arlington VA 22204

703-979-5580, office@olqpva.org

#### Office Hours

##### Horas de oficina

Monday-Friday — 8:30am to 4:30pm

Lunes a viernes — 8:30am a 4:30pm

#### Website / sitioweb:

www.ourladyqueenofpeace.org

#### Live Stream Mass Schedule:

##### Horario de Misas de transmisión en directo:

December 27-28 6pm and 1pm in Spanish

27-28 diciembre 6pm y 1pm en español

#### MASSES / MISAS:

Weekdays / *Días laborables:*

Mon-Fri. 12pm / *lunes a viernes 12pm*

#### Weekend Mass Schedule /

*Horario de Misas de fin de semana:*

**Saturday Vigil** — 5:30pm

*Misa de vigilia sábados - 5:30 pm*

**Sundays** — 8:00am, 9:30am, 11:15am,  
1:00pm (Spanish) & 6:00pm (Young Adult)

*Domingos — 8:00 am, 9:30 am, 11:15 am,*

*1:00 pm (español) y 6:00 pm (Misa de jóvenes adultos)*

#### DECLARACIÓN DE MISIÓN DE OLQP

La parroquia de la iglesia católica Nuestra Señora Reina de la Paz se dedica a dar testimonio de las enseñanzas de Jesucristo, especialmente el Evangelio de San Mateo, Capítulo 25:21-46. Nuestra misión es nutrir el espíritu y alentar el potencial de aquellos a quienes servimos a través de la celebración litúrgica, labores educativas y ministerios sociales. La parroquia continuará identificándose con su origen como una comunidad afro-americana, pero reflejando una congregación multi-étnica y continuará promoviendo la armonía racial y la justicia social. Si bien es cierto que nuestro enfoque principal es la vecindad comunitaria, continuaremos trabajando para proveer por el bienestar de los más necesitados en general. Es así como nos esforzamos para hacer de nuestra comunidad parroquial una familia que comparte y se preocupa por sus miembros.

## OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE CATHOLIC CHURCH

December 28, 2025



## FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

### Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God

Wednesday, December 31, 5:00pm Vigil Mass

Thursday, January 1, 2026, 11:00am, Bilingual

### Solemnidad de la santísima Virgen María, Madre de Dios

Misa de vigilia — miércoles, 31 de diciembre, 5:00pm

jueves, 1ro de enero, 2026, 11:00am, bilingüe



Get up,  
awake the child  
and his mother  
and flee to Egypt.

*Matthew 2:13*

Levántate,  
toma al niño y a su madre,  
y huye a Egipto.

*Mateo 2,13*

Iglesia Católica Nuestra Señora Reina de la Paz

28 de diciembre de 2025

Fiesta de la Sagrada Familia de Jesús, María y José

## A Consistent Ethic of Life Catholic Community

### SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION / PREPARACIÓN SACRAMENTAL

#### **Baptism / Bautizo:**

Please email Baptism Coordinator Mary Ann Suhocki, baptism@olqpva.org.  
Por favor mande un correo electrónico a la coordinadora de los bautizos, Mary Ann Suhocki, baptism@olqpva.org.

#### **Marriage Preparation/ Preparación para el matrimonio:**

Please contact the parish office at least six months before your wedding date to complete requirements.  
Por favor llame a la oficina de la parroquia seis meses antes de su matrimonio para completar todos los requisitos.

#### **Reconciliation / Reconciliación—Confesión:**

Fr. Ray Hall Library  
*Biblioteca Fr. Ray Hall*  
Sat, 4:45-5:15 pm & by appointment.  
Los sábados: 4:45-5:15 pm, y por cita previa.

### SUNDAY COLLECTIONS / COLECTAS DEL DOMINGO

Sunday Collections / Colectas del domingo: \$11,895  
Christmas Collection: \$17,949  
ParishSoft Giving - weekly avg.: \$11,289

#### **Word & Eucharist Missalette/**

##### **Misal Palabra y Eucaristía**

Today's readings can be found on page 144  
Las lecturas de hoy se encuentran en la página 145

### BULLETIN DEADLINE / PLAZO PARA EL BOLETÍN

Wednesday 9am — office@olqpva.org

### OUR SICK AND HOMEBOUND STRENGTHEN US /

#### **NUESTROS ENFERMOS Y CONFINADOS NOS FORTALECEN**

**PLEASE PRAY FOR / POR FAVOR OREMOS POR:** Christiana Achebe, Suri Barahona, Grace Bialecki, Cindy Bianga, Francis Bilgera, Joseph Leopold Bissonnette, Precious Bowens, April Brassard, Dave Brassard, Evie Brown, Lynne Burgh, Chris Bruns, Mary Callow, Brody Carroll, Antonio Fernandez Castillo, Louise Chambers, Fred Clarke, Carmen Rosa Claire, Chris Comer, Jeff Cory, Adele Crump, Mary DaLuca, Cheryl Darby, Donna Davis, Jim Davis, Adrienne DiCerbo, Calista Downey, Tim Felker, Elizabeth (Bunny) Foster, Yvette Francoise, Anne Fullerton, Joseph Funk, Iva Futrell, Trishann Ganley, Francine Gemmill, Fred Gladbach, Jo Marie Griesgraber, Melanie Guitreaux, Joe Harrington, Harris Family, Linda Hawkins, Clare Hayden, Dee Hickey, Pamela Hoef, Jan Hyland, Patrick Hynes, Pat Johnson, Sharon Jourdan, William Kahl, Gus Karns, Ruth Klarman, Carmen Andrea Lara, Alexa LaRue, Patrick Lawrey, John Lawyer, Lidia Montero Lopez, Olga MacKenzie, Wil McBride, Stefan McGuigan, Martha Gladys Medina, Maria Magdalena Medrano de Ventura, Eileen Melia, Frances Mierzwa, Arthur Miller, Mary Miller, Betty Mills, Yvonne Mockler, Carmen Montijo, Dorothy Moran, Rosemary Morrissey, Luis R. Muñoz, Zoe A. Muñoz, Chelsea Murray, Connie Murray, Paul Murray, Dorothy Myrtle, Mario Amel Najarro, Karen Newman, Stephen Nutter, Julie O'Brien, Peggy O'Brien, Patrick Ogden, Carol Pacello, Roy Paco, Neil Parent, Catherine Parr, Mary Pasquarella, Mark Pazich, Minnie Pazich, Hazel Pulliam, Paul Ramirez, Santos Ramirez, Jacob and Jaxson Rivera, Maritza Roldan, Marco Cristiaan Rufolo-Roger, Josefina Salgado, Carolyn Santos, Jane Shepard, Donna Smith, Jeffrey Smith, Mary E. Smith, Lora Smolenski, Suzie Snedgen Warner, Eva Souza, Grace Starbird, George Stewart, Michael Arthur Sweat, Nancy Urquizo, Alma Reyes Valentin, Carina Vaquez, Robin Vogel, Robert & Maureen Wallace, Jim Webster, Al Williams, Kate Witkowski, Lauren Wolfe, Mary Woods

### **FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH**

#### **FIESTA DE LA SAGRADA FAMILIA**

Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14 (17A); Colossians 3:12-17;  
Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23  
Sirácida 3,2-6, 12-14 (17A); Colosenses 33,12-17;  
Mateo 2,13-15, 19-23

#### **THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD**

##### **SOLEMNIDAD DE LA EPIFANÍA DEL SEÑOR**

Isaiah 60:1-6 (20A); Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6; Matthew 2:1-12  
Isaías 60,1-6 (20A); Efesios 3,2-3a, 5-6; Mateo 2,1-12

### **MASS INTENTIONS, DECEMBER 27 – JANUARY 2 FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH INTENCIONES DE LAS MISAS, 27 DICIEMBRE – 2 ENERO**

#### **FIESTA DE LA SAGRADA FAMILIA**

##### **Saturday, December 27th**

5:30 pm Peg Cardillo (D) by Kate Wilson

##### **Sunday, December 28th**

8:00 am Candy Hill (Anniversary)(D) by Michael Hill  
9:30 am Daisy Mae Harmon (D) by Minkisi Ministry  
11:15 am Thanksgiving, Aryan Khetarpaul (L) by Jude & Amit Dias  
1:00 pm Gilberth Silva Camaño (D) by Doris y Gilberth Silva, Jr.  
6:00 pm Gloria Leyden (D) by OLQP Faith Formation Team

##### **Monday, December 29th**

12:00 pm Jonathan Hargrove (Birthday) (D) by Emma Grayeb

##### **Tuesday, December 30th**

12:00 pm For The Parish

##### **Wednesday, December 31st**

5:00 pm - Vigil-Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God  
For The Parish

##### **Thursday, January 1st**

12:00 pm - Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God  
For The Parish

##### **Friday, January 2nd**

12:00 pm Mayarí Xbalanqué Loza Muñoz (Birthday) (L)  
by parents & siblings

### **SACRAMENTAL LIFE OF THE PARISH / VIDA SACRAMENTAL DE LA PARROQUIA**

This weekend we welcome three new Christians. Este fin de semana le damos la bienvenida a tres nuevos cristianos.

**Elliott Anthony Russell, Oliver Mason Hill &**

**Leonidas Fernando Pasquel**

Baptized December 27 / Bautizados el 27 de diciembre

### **OLQP PARISH STAFF / PERSONAL DE LA PARROQUIA**

*Pastor / Párroco:* **Fr. Tim Hickey, CSSp**, thickey@olqpva.org

*Parochial Vicar / Párroco Asociado:* **Fr. Martin Vu, CSSp**, mvu@olqpva.org

*Parochial Vicar / Párroco Asociado:* **Fr. Pontien Kenfack, CSSp**, pkenfack@olqpva.org

*Deacon / Diácono:* **Dcn. Tony Remedios**, tremedios@olqpva.org

#### **Parish Office / Oficina parroquial**

*Business Manager / Gerente de Negocios:* **Christina Kozyn**, ckozyn@olqpva.org

*Social Justice & Outreach Minister / Ministro de Justicia Social y Acercamiento (bilingüe):* **Sally Díaz-Wells**, sdiazwells@olqpva.org  
*Youth & Young Adult Minister / Ministro de Adolescentes y Jóvenes Adultos:* **Rebecca Grant Jenkins**, rgrantjenkins@olqpva.org  
*Faith Formation Director / Director de Formación de Fe (bilingüe):*

**Cecilia López Oetgen**, clopez@olqpva.org

## JUST A THOUGHT...or two...

As we gaze upon the manger on this **Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph** it is easy to be filled with a warm and fuzzy feeling, and that is not a bad thing, and it is wonderful; however, let us not forget how difficult the trip, how cold the night and how frightening the circumstances...giving birth in an animal barn!

Let us reflect on the reality that God's very Self became human and was born into a family, not in a palace grand but in a lowly manger. When I reflect on the Holy Family, my mind turns the very real and very human struggles they faced...not only having to give birth in a stable but the fact that they had to flee to Egypt to avoid Herod's execution of the children of Bethlehem and the surrounding region.

It is almost unconceivable to think that God was made a refugee and had to flee to a foreign country from where he was born...to avoid becoming a victim of genocide.

And that ultimately Mary would have her heart pierced when her Son would be executed by the state. And so Mary too understands the suffering of mothers and fathers who have lost children to war, violence and sickness.

So, as we celebrate the Holy Family let us know that our God understands the struggles of human families and that "God is with us"...Emmanuel...in the midst of all of our struggles and our sorrows, as deep and as overwhelming as they may be. We are not alone.

Let us know that God journeys with the migrants, refugees and immigrants of this world, just as we are called to do. So as we draw near to them...we draw near to God! As we advocate and work to help our immigrant and refugee sisters and brothers...we do so with Christ, who knows firsthand their struggles, *and who works with us*, and shares in their journey.

What struggling families might I be able to reach out to in order to ease their struggles? How might I be Christ to someone who is struggling right now?

In the story of the Holy Family there is a message for us today about those who are made refugees...about those who are driven from their homeland by war, violence and poverty...seeking safety and a better life for themselves and their children.

In a country that more and more shuns refugees and immigrants, I wonder if we would have received Joseph, Mary and Jesus into our country as refugees?

Over and over again in the Gospels Jesus warns us that our treatment of others is in fact our treatment of God! Jesus told his followers that when we welcome the stranger we welcome him! And likewise, when we turn away the stranger we turn away Christ!

We, as a country, so often invoke the name of God. But, do we as a nation really understand the implications of proclaiming that "we are one nation under God"? Do our elected members of the House and Senate really understand that? Do they show it by the laws they enact or block from becoming law?

How many millions of people fall through the economic safety net of this country and are forced to exist — not live — in unbelievable conditions because of the callousness, and selfish political aspirations of many of our elected officials and some of those who elect them?

As we celebrate the feast of the Holy family and fix our eyes upon the peaceful manger scene, let us never forget that this family we gaze upon was once driven from their homeland and made refugees in an alien land.

As we, as a country, fight for economic and social reform and comprehensive health care and immigration reform, I believe that the reality of the Holy Family's struggles may be fertile ground for further reflection on what we are called to as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Christmas blessings,

Fr. Tim

**THE GIVING TREE** – Support SEEC Day Laborers! We invite you to support the parish in providing lunch for SEEC day laborers. Each week a group of volunteers shop, prepare and package lunches for Shirlington Day Laborers through the Brown Bag Lunch Program. The Giving Tree in the sanctuary during Christmas time supports this effort: take a ‘brown bag angel’ ornament from the basket under the giving tree in the sanctuary, place your donation inside the ornament and hang it on the tree. The tree will be in the sanctuary through the Christmas season.

**WALK WITH THE HOLY FAMILY STARTING IN ADVENT!** To benefit Catholic Relief Services, the Virginia CRS Chapter will be hosting a state-wide virtual walk-a-thon fundraiser, “Walking with the Holy Family”, from November 30<sup>th</sup> to January 4<sup>th</sup>. Through Advent and the Christmas Season, walk on your own time in solidarity with families who must leave their homelands due to food insecurity, violence, or instability and raise funds to support CRS programs throughout the world. To participate or for more information, visit [bit.ly/VACRS](http://bit.ly/VACRS) or scan the QR code.

#### YOUTH MINISTRY:

- **TEEN NIGHT** is on winter break until January 4th. Have a continued blessed Advent and Joyful Christmas season!
- **MISSED THE INFORMATION SESSION FOR THE WYD 2027** Pilgrimage to Saigon, Vietnam and Seoul, Korea but are still interested? There will be a zoom information session, Tuesday, January 6th. Please contact Rebecca Grant Jenkins: [rgrantjenkins@olqpva.org](mailto:rgrantjenkins@olqpva.org).

#### INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

Evening and weekend activities (except scheduled Masses): OLQP follows the decision of Arlington Public Schools for cancellation of evening and weekend activities. Those traveling outside the local school district should use their best judgment. For the most up-to-date information for Arlington Public Schools, please call 1-866-322-4277 or visit:

[www.apsva.us/post/inclement-weather-announcements/Parish Office Staff and Weekday Activities](http://www.apsva.us/post/inclement-weather-announcements/Parish-Office-Staff-and-Weekday-Activities), 8:30am-4:30pm: Office and weekday activities follow the decision of the Federal Government. Tune in to your local radio and tv stations for updated information or visit:

[www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/snow-dismissal-procedures/](http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/snow-dismissal-procedures/)

Masses: The decision to cancel Masses within the Diocese of Arlington is made by Bishop Burbidge and broadcast on local radio and tv stations.

*To the extent it's possible, notice will be placed on the parish website and recorded on the phone message. Please use your best judgement when traveling outside the immediate area.*

**THE GIVING TREE** -- ¡Apoye a los jornaleros de SEEC! Los invitamos a apoyar a la parroquia al darle almuerzo a los jornaleros de SEEC. Cada semana un grupo de personas voluntarias que forman parte del Brown Bag Lunch van de compras, preparan y empaacan almuerzos para los jornaleros de Shirlington. El Giving Tree en el santuario durante la temporada de Navidad apoya este esfuerzo. Tome un ornamento, “un ángel de papel”, de la canasta que está debajo del “giving tree” en el santuario, ponga su donación dentro del ornamento y cuélguelo en el árbol. El árbol va a estar en el santuario durante la temporada navideña.

#### ¡CAMINE CON LA SAGRADA FAMILIA EMPEZANDO EN ADVIENTO!

Para beneficiar los Servicios de ayuda de las Caridades católicas, el capítulo de Virginia va a patrocinar un *walk-a-thon* virtual para recaudar fondos, “Caminando con la Sagrada Familia”, del 30 de noviembre al 4 de enero. Durante el Adviento y la temporada navideña, camine a su propio ritmo en solidaridad con las familias que tienen que abandonar sus patrias debido a la inseguridad alimentaria, la violencia o la inestabilidad y recaudar fondos para apoyar los programas de la CRS por todo el mundo. Para participar o para obtener más información, visite [bit.ly/VACRS](http://bit.ly/VACRS) o escanee el código QR.



#### MINISTERIO DE ADOLESCENTES:

- **NOCHE PARA ADOLESCENTES** está de vacaciones hasta el 4 de enero. ¡Qué sigas teniendo un Adviento bendecido y una feliz temporada navideña!
- **¿TE PERDISTE LA SESIÓN INFORMATIVA PARA LA PEREGRINACIÓN WYD 2027 A SAIGÓN, VIETNAM Y SEÚL, COREA**, pero todavía estás interesada/o? Vamos a tener una reunión informativa por Zoom el martes, 6 de enero. Por favor contacta a Rebecca Grant Jenkins, [rgrantjenkins@olqpva.org](mailto:rgrantjenkins@olqpva.org).

#### NORMAS ANTE LA INCLEMENCIA DEL CLIMA

Las actividades nocturnas y de fin de semana (con excepción de las misas programadas): OLQP sigue la decisión de las Escuelas Públicas de Arlington para la cancelación de actividades nocturnas y de fin de semana. Las personas que estuvieran fuera del sistema escolar local deben utilizar su mejor juicio. Para obtener la información más actualizada sobre las Escuelas Públicas de Arlington, por favor llame al 1-866-322-4277.

Personal de la Oficina Parroquial: las actividades de la Oficina y del día siguen la decisión del Gobierno Federal. Sintonice las emisoras de radio y televisión locales para obtener información actualizada.

Misas: La decisión de cancelar las misas dentro de la Diócesis de Arlington es hecha por el obispo Burbidge y transmitida por las estaciones de radio y televisión locales.

En la medida de lo posible, el aviso será colocado en el sitio web de la parroquia y en el mensaje telefónico.

***Programs that are open to the entire community, but offered in English only.  
Programas que le dan la bienvenida a toda la comunidad, pero que solo se ofrecen en inglés.***

**MATTHEW 25 WILL BE CLOSED  
through Friday, January 2nd**

Please hold all donations until January 3 when we open once again. This gives our hard-working volunteers an opportunity to be with their families for the holiday. Many thanks for your continued support.

**MATTHEW 25 IS IN NEED OF COATS**

Please review your coat closet — Matt 25 is in need of car length coats or jackets. We will begin taking donations on Saturday, January 3, when we reopen after the holidays. Please consider donating a coat.

**PARISHSOFT GIVING—OLQP's E-giving Platform**

If you were an active Faith Direct user, your record was upgraded to ParishSOFT Giving. If you are accessing your account for the first time since the upgrade (9/23), you will need a password reset – please contact Christina in the parish office to request that: [ckozyn@olqpva.org](mailto:ckozyn@olqpva.org). ParishSOFT Giving uses the same email address for your user name as you used with Faith Direct. You just need a new password.

Login [here](#) to view your scheduled gifts, payment information, and to view the last four weeks of your contribution history. Use the same link to add, delete and edit your scheduled gifts – once logged into your ParishSOFT Giving account, click on “scheduled” and “history” to access this information.

New online donors, please click [here](#) to setup a one-time gift or recurring gift by completing the Give Now form. Use the dropdown arrow to select the fund you would like to contribute to: Sunday Collection, Pastor's Outreach, Food Pantry, etc.

Need help? Please contact OLQP's Business Manager, Christina [ckozyn@olqpva.org](mailto:ckozyn@olqpva.org) or contact ParishSOFT Giving donor support at 866-930-4774 option 6 or [donorsupport@parishsoft.com](mailto:donorsupport@parishsoft.com).

Thank you for your support and generosity. It's vital to the good work of OLQP and very much appreciated!  
<https://giving.parishsoft.com/App/Giving/FD-271>

**NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH  
Thank you for your support!**

The Building Forever Families ministry would like to thank all the parishioners who donated items to our annual collection for kids in local foster care.

Thanks to your generosity, we were able to provide many giftcards to Arlington County's child welfare agency, which were given to children and teens last weekend at their annual holiday party. We also passed along your many donated items to Comfort Cases, a local organization that provides backpacks full of supplies and small gifts for kids in foster care throughout the region. As always, we appreciate your care and support for our most vulnerable kids -- thank you! If you're interested in learning more about adoption, foster care, or the Building Forever Families ministry, contact [DebralphOLQP@gmail.com](mailto:DebralphOLQP@gmail.com).

**GABRIEL PROJECT will be closed** until Wednesday, January 7, 2026. Please hold all donations until Monday, January 5th. Many thanks for your continued support.

**ENVIRONMENTAL BOOK DISCUSSION W/THE AUTHOR**

Have you ever wondered what you can do to help solve the climate crisis? Join the Integrity of Creation ministry and author Lawrence MacDonald for a discussion of his book "Am I too old to save the planet? A boomer's guide to climate action" in the Parish library on February 11 at 7:00PM. All are welcome! For more information and a chance to win a free autographed copy of the book, email Dan Herrera ([herrerawildlife@gmail.com](mailto:herrerawildlife@gmail.com)).

**ECO-TIP from OLQP's Integrity of Creation Team:** A New Year's Resolution to Care for Creation: Popes Francis and Leo have invited us to become aware and reflect deeply on the environmental degradation around us and its consequences. They are asking us to examine our lifestyles through sound ecological virtues, to strive for greater simplicity, focus less on material things, and to take action.

What will we do in the New Year to demonstrate our care for creation and gratitude for this great gift from God?

**POST CHRISTMAS SUSTAINABILITY TIPS:** Looking for bargain priced ornaments and decorations for next year? Visit your favorite thrift shops or mark-down shelves in retail stores. Save Christmas cards to cut into gift tags next year. Recycle old tree lights (MOM's Organic Market takes them). Compost your tree or leave in your yard to shelter animals.

**HAITI CHRISTMAS DRIVE**

As we celebrate the joy of Christmas, we are reminded of Christ's call to love and care for one another—especially our brothers and sisters most in need. The Haiti Christmas Drive, in support of our twin parish, St. Joseph's in Medor, Haiti, does just that. The drive continues through December 31.

Thank you to everyone who has already shared so generously. Through your gifts, 2,400 children are receiving an education at five primary schools and one secondary school, adults are gaining opportunities to increase their incomes and plant trees, and families are benefiting from a clean water program that prevents water-borne illness.

If you have not yet contributed, it is not too late. Your gift is a beautiful expression of the Christmas spirit—bringing hope, dignity, and love to our parish family in Medor. Here's how you can make a difference....

1. Donate online at:

<https://www.ourladyqueenofpeace.org/haiti-ministry.html>

2. Write a check payable to Our Lady Queen of Peace with "Haiti" on the memo line and mail to the parish office (2700 19th St S., Arlington 22204) or place it in the collection basket.



# Day 1 of Kwanzaa: Umoja / Unity

Every day from December 26-January 1, Pax Christi USA will share a reflection on one of the seven principles of [Kwanzaa](#). Pax Christi USA National Field Organizer **Stephen Niamke** has prepared each piece to show how Kwanzaa is an effective approach to community organizing — *a celebratory, nonviolent, Afrocentric approach to wellness, justice, and peace*.

In 2024, [Executive Director Charlene Howard](#) wrote, “Kwanzaa is an African American holiday ... to celebrate family, community and culture. Although it was not designed to be a religious holiday, the seven principles possess a spiritual quality that is evident in holy scripture and resonates with our principles of Catholic Social Teaching inspired by Pope Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum*. The binding thread is acknowledging that we thrive in community and common care for one another.”

## Day 1: Umoja/Unity: The foundation of family, community wellness, and nonviolent organizing TO STRIVE FOR AND MAINTAIN UNITY IN THE FAMILY, COMMUNITY, NATION, AND RACE

**1 Corinthians 12:12-27:** In this passage, the body is described as many parts, each dependent on the other. While Kwanzaa is secular, such scripture can serve as a complementary lens for families who draw from faith traditions without allowing theology to eclipse culture.

**The Kwanzaa ceremony:** When the black candle is lit on the first day of Kwanzaa, it does more than begin a celebration. It

establishes a worldview. It reclaims a culture. It inspires hope. It promotes a familial and community tradition. Umoja, unity is not presented as an aspiration to be achieved someday, but as a discipline to be practiced daily. It is the moral and relational foundation upon which all other principles of Kwanzaa rest.

**Umoja in the family: Creating a sense of belonging and shared responsibility:** Within the family, Umoja strengthens bonds by reframing family life as a collective endeavor rather than a set of parallel individual pursuits. In a society that often prioritizes individual success over communal well-being, Umoja teaches children and adults alike that *we rise together, or not at all*. Practicing Umoja in the family can include:



## A Christmas Message from Fr. Frantz of St. Joseph, Medor, Haiti...

Dear Fathers Tim, Martin, and Pontien, and everyone at Our Lady Queen of Peace,

In the Gospel reading on Christmas Day, we read: “Alleluia. Alleluia. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests.” Therefore, on behalf of all the parishioners of Medor and in my own name, we wish you a Merry Christmas of peace, love, joy, solidarity, hope, and happiness.

On this holy and blessed day of Christmas, we ask for the grace of peace for the whole world and especially for Haiti. May Jesus, Who shared in the human condition, bring joy to all who are sad, sorrowful, or grief-stricken. May He bring love to those who are victims of hatred. May He bring comfort and healing to those who are ill. May He bring hope for a better future to all in need.

May the infinite and unconditional love of God, bursting forth at Christmas, fill the hearts of the members of our two parishes: Our Lady Queen of Peace and Saint Joseph, so that the bond of friendship, solidarity, and shared mission that has existed since 1997 may continue to flourish through our collaboration in the areas of education, agroforestry, access to clean water, and sanitation, for the glory of God and the salvation of humankind.

As we celebrate today the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God, who became flesh, our Savior, may God our Father continue to bless our friendship, our solidarity, our shared mission, and our fraternal unity; may He bless every family in our two parishes, and fill our homes with peace, love, joy, hope, and happiness.

Amen, Merry Christmas,

With all our affection and gratitude!

Father Frantz Aimé, Parish Priest of Saint Joseph of Medor,

All the members of the Parish Council, And all the parishioners of Saint Joseph



- Shared rituals such as meals, storytelling, and reflection
- Collective problem-solving rather than blame
- Practicing and instilling intergenerational respect and accountability
- An understanding that individual choices affect the whole
- Regularly reviewing the principles of Kwanzaa as a family or community and how they apply to particular times or circumstances
- Creating a family album, sharing traditional recipes, tracing one's family tree to the extent possible

For children in particular, Umoja provides a counter-narrative to messages that suggest they must navigate the world alone. It affirms that they belong to something enduring and supportive. This sense of belonging is not sentimental; it is protective. Research consistently shows that strong family cohesion is associated with improved mental health, resilience, and emotional regulation which are critical assets in a racialized society.

#### **Umoja as community wellness: Countering fragmentation and internalized racism:**

At the community level, Umoja is a curative practice in the face of the division and fragmentation deliberately produced by racism, economic exploitation, and social policy. Disinvestment, mass incarceration, housing segregation, and competition for scarce resources have all contributed to divisions within African American communities. Umoja challenges the lie that survival requires separation. By affirming shared identity and mutual responsibility, Umoja counters internalized racism, the unconscious adoption of negative beliefs about one's own people. It reasserts collective dignity and reframes success as communal advancement rather than individualized accomplishments. Umoja is a form of reclamation that instills a certain type of pride and optimism that directly contributes to success.

From a wellness standpoint, communities grounded in Umoja are better equipped to:

- Respond collectively to harm and crisis
- Support mental and emotional health through mutual care
- Reduce isolation and alienation
- Foster environments where people are seen, known, and valued
- Implementing a regular practice of a family or community caucus, especially when there has been a crisis in the family or incidents of racism have occurred.

Perhaps most importantly, Umoja is therapeutic. Racism is not only structural; it is psychological. It teaches separation, suspicion, and scarcity. Umoja interrupts that teaching by insisting on connection. For African Americans who have experienced betrayal or exclusion—even within faith communities—Umoja offers a form of belonging that does not require assimilation or erasure. It restores trust incrementally, through practice rather than proclamation. As the first principle, Umoja asks a simple but profound question: *Who are we committed to being together?* Every candle lit after it depends on the answer. And for that matter, the overall wellness of the African American community is directly related to how the principle of Umoja is lived out in daily life.

**Umoja as a strategy for nonviolent community organizing:** For African American families and communities shaped by histories of enslavement, segregation, and ongoing racial violence, Umoja is both restorative and resistant. It helps to heal what centuries of oppression have fractured. It fortifies what justice requires. It is required for resiliency, individual and collective wellness, and to spawn hope for the future.

In the context of organizing for justice, equity, equality, and peace, Umoja is indispensable. Movements fail not only because of external opposition, but because of internal fracture. Umoja provides the ethical glue that holds coalitions together over time. Unlike organizing models that rely solely on opposition—defining unity by what people are against—Umoja builds solidarity around shared values and shared destiny. This is particularly important in nonviolent movements, like Pax Christi USA, where discipline, trust, and moral coherence are essential.

Umoja in organizing means:

- Prioritizing relationship-building over transactional engagement
- Valuing consensus and collective leadership
- Addressing internal conflict with accountability rather than expulsion
- Ensuring that strategy aligns with community-defined values
- In depth communal study on the history of effective organizing within the African American community.

The African proverb *Ubuntu*, “*I am because we are, we are because I am.*” captures these strategies succinctly. One's humanity and effective resistance through organizing are not isolated; they are realized through relationships. And those relationships include the immediate and extended family, the broader community, the Ancestors, and the yet unborn. We are all needed to bring about effective change.



<https://paxchristiusa.org/>

DECEMBER 26, 2025



## HAITI CHRISTMAS DRIVE 2025

**We are blessed by our partnership with St. Joseph parish in Medor, Haiti. Your gifts enable the people of Medor to strengthen their community.**

### YOUR GIFTS MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE

- **\$50** purchases school materials for three primary school students
- **\$100** purchases supplies for 183 to participate in an environmental education program
- **\$500** provides five trainings for an average of 35 male and female farmers to improve crop production, soil and water conservation, and tree planting
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- **\$5,000** pays for one year of primary school education for 60 students

#### How to Donate:

- Place a check made out to OLQP with "Haiti" on the memo line in the collection basket or mail it to the parish office.
- Give online at <https://www.ourladyqueenofpeace.org/haiti-ministry.html>
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**Our mission is to support sustainable, community-based development in partnership with our twin parish, St. Joseph of Medor, Haiti.**



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**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV  
FOR THE LIX WORLD DAY OF PEACE**

**1<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 2026**

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**Peace be with you all:  
Towards an “unarmed and disarming” peace**

“Peace be with you!”

This ancient greeting, still in use today in many cultures, was infused with new life on the evening of Easter on the lips of the risen Jesus. “Peace be with you” (Jn 20:19, 21) is his Word that does not merely desire peace, but truly brings about a lasting transformation in those who receive it, and consequently in all of reality. For this reason, the Apostles’ successors give voice every day throughout the world to the most silent of revolutions: “Peace be with you!” [From the very evening of my election as Bishop of Rome](#), I have wanted to join my own greeting to this universal proclamation. And I would like to reiterate that this is the peace of the risen Christ – a peace that is unarmed and disarming, humble and persevering. It comes from God who loves us all unconditionally. [1]

*The peace of the risen Christ*

The Good Shepherd, who gives his life for the flock and has other sheep not of this fold (cf. Jn 10:11,16), is Christ, our peace, who has conquered death and broken down the walls of division that separate humanity (cf. Eph 2:14). His presence, his gift and his victory continue to shine through the perseverance of many witnesses through whom God’s work carries on in the world, becoming even more visible and radiant in the darkness of our times.

The contrast between darkness and light is not only a biblical image describing the labor pains of a new world being born; it is also an experience that unsettles us and affects us amid the trials we face in our historical circumstances. In order to overcome the darkness, it is necessary to see the light and believe in it. This is a call that Jesus’ disciples are invited to live in a unique and privileged way; yet it also finds its way into every human heart. Peace exists; it wants to dwell within us. It has the gentle power to enlighten and expand our understanding; it resists and overcomes violence. Peace is a breath of the eternal: while to evil we cry out “Enough,” to peace we whisper “Forever.” Into this horizon the Risen One has led us. Sustained by this conviction, even amid what [Pope Francis](#) called “a third world war fought piecemeal,” peacemakers continue to resist the spread of darkness, standing as sentinels in the night.

Sadly, it is also possible to forget the light. When this happens, we lose our sense of realism and surrender to a partial and distorted view of the world, disfigured by darkness and fear. Many today call “realistic” those narratives devoid of hope, blind to the beauty of others and forgetful of God’s grace, which is always at work in human hearts, even though wounded by sin. Saint Augustine urged Christians to forge an unbreakable bond with peace, so that by cherishing it deeply in their hearts, they would be able to radiate its luminous warmth around them. Addressing his community, he wrote: “If you wish to draw others to peace, first have it yourselves; be steadfast in peace yourselves. To inflame others, you must have the flame burning within.” [2]

Dear brothers and sisters, whether we have the gift of faith or feel we lack it, let us open ourselves to peace! Let us



welcome it and recognize it, rather than believing it to be impossible and beyond our reach. Peace is more than just a goal; it is a presence and a journey. Even when it is endangered within us and around us, like a small flame threatened by a storm, we must protect it, never forgetting the names and stories of those who have borne witness to it. Peace is a principle that guides and defines our choices. Even in places where only rubble remains, and despair seems inevitable, we still find people who have not forgotten peace. Just as on the evening of Easter Jesus entered the place where his disciples were gathered in fear and discouragement, so too the peace of the risen Christ continues to pass through doors and barriers in the voices and faces of his witnesses. This gift enables us to remember goodness, to recognize it as victorious, to choose it again, and to do so together.

### *An unarmed peace*

Shortly before being arrested, in a moment of intimate confidence, Jesus said to those who were with him: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives." And he immediately added: "Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid" (*Jn 14:27*). Their distress and fear were certainly connected to the violence soon to befall him. But, more deeply, the Gospels do not hide the fact that what troubled the disciples was his nonviolent response: a path that they all, Peter first among them, contested; yet the Master asked them to follow this path to the end. The way of Jesus continues to cause unease and fear. He firmly repeats to those who would defend him by force: "Put your sword back into its sheath" (*Jn 18:11*; cf. *Mt 26:52*). The peace of the risen Jesus is unarmed, because his was an unarmed struggle in the midst of concrete historical, political and social circumstances. Christians must together bear prophetic witness to this novelty, mindful of the tragedies in which they have too often been complicit. The great parable of the Last Judgment invites all Christians to act with mercy in this awareness (cf. *Mt 25:31-46*). In doing so, they will find brothers and sisters at their side who, in different ways, have listened to the pain of others and freed themselves inwardly from the deception of violence.

Although many people today have hearts ready for peace, they are often overcome by a great sense of powerlessness before an increasingly uncertain world. Saint Augustine had already pointed out this particular paradox: "It is not difficult to possess peace; it is, perhaps, more difficult to praise it. To praise peace, we may find that we lack the necessary talent; we search for the right ideas and weigh our words. But to have peace, it is there, within reach, and we can possess it without effort." [3]

When we treat peace as a distant ideal, we cease to be scandalized when it is denied, or even when war is waged in its name. We seem to lack those "right ideas," the well-considered words and the ability to say that peace is near. When peace is not a reality that is lived, cultivated and protected, then aggression spreads into domestic and public life. In the relations between citizens and rulers, it could even be considered a fault not to be sufficiently prepared for war, not to react to attacks, and not to return violence for violence. Far beyond the principle of legitimate defense, such confrontational logic now dominates global politics, deepening instability and unpredictability day by day. It is no coincidence that repeated calls to increase military spending, and the choices that follow, are presented by many government leaders as a justified response to external threats. The idea of the deterrent power of military might, especially nuclear deterrence, is based on the irrationality of relations between nations, built not on law, justice and trust, but on fear and domination by force. "Consequently," as [Saint John XXIII](#) had already written in his day, "people are living in the grip of constant fear. They are afraid that at any moment the impending storm may break upon them with horrific violence. And they have good reasons for their fear, for there is certainly no lack of such weapons. While it is difficult to believe that anyone would dare to assume responsibility for initiating the appalling slaughter and destruction that war would bring in its wake, there is no denying that the conflagration could be started by some chance and unforeseen circumstance." [4]

Moreover, it should be noted that global military expenditure increased by 9.4% in 2024 compared to the previous year, confirming the trend of the last ten years and reaching a total of \$2718 billion (or 2.5% of global GDP). [5] Furthermore, the response to new challenges seems to involve not only enormous economic investment in rearmament, but also a shift in educational policies. Rather than fostering a culture of memory that preserves the hard-won awareness of the twentieth century and the millions of victims, we now see communication campaigns and educational programs – at schools, universities and in the media – that spread a perception of threats and promote only an armed notion of defense and security.

And yet, "those who truly love peace also love the enemies of peace." [6] Saint Augustine thus advised not to burn bridges or persist in reproach, but to prefer listening and, where possible, engaging in discussions with others. Sixty years ago, [the Second Vatican Council](#) concluded with a renewed awareness of the pressing need for dialogue between the



Church and the contemporary world. In particular, the Constitution [Gaudium et Spes](#) drew attention to the evolution of warfare: “The hazards peculiar to modern warfare consist in the fact that they expose those possessing recently developed weapons to the risk of perpetrating crimes like these and, by an inexorable chain of events, of urging people to even worse acts of atrocity. To obviate the possibility of this happening at any time in the future, the bishops of the world gathered together to implore everyone, especially government leaders and military advisors, to give unceasing consideration to their immense responsibilities before God and before the whole human race.” [\[7\]](#)

Reiterating the appeal of the Council Fathers, and considering dialogue to be the most effective approach at every level, we must acknowledge that further technological advances and the military implementation of artificial intelligence have worsened the tragedy of armed conflict. There is even a growing tendency among political and military leaders to shirk responsibility, as decisions about life and death are increasingly “delegated” to machines. This marks an unprecedented and destructive betrayal of the legal and philosophical principles of humanism that underlie and safeguard every civilization. It is necessary to denounce the enormous concentrations of private economic and financial interests that are driving States in this direction; yet that alone would not be enough, unless we also awakened conscience and critical thought. The Encyclical [Fratelli Tutti](#) presents Saint Francis of Assisi as a model of such awakening: “In the world of that time, bristling with watchtowers and defensive walls, cities were a theater of brutal wars between powerful families, even as poverty was spreading through the countryside. Yet there Francis was able to welcome true peace into his heart and free himself of the desire to wield power over others. He became one of the poor and sought to live in harmony with all.” [\[8\]](#) This is a narrative that we are called to continue today, and that means joining forces to contribute to a disarming peace, a peace born of openness and evangelical humility.

#### *A disarming peace*

Goodness is disarming. Perhaps this is why God became a child. The mystery of the Incarnation, which reaches its deepest descent even to the realm of the dead, begins in the womb of a young mother and is revealed in the manger in Bethlehem. “Peace on earth,” sing the angels, announcing the presence of a defenseless God, in whom humanity can discover itself as loved only by caring for him (cf. *Lk* 2:13-14). Nothing has the power to change us as much as a child. Perhaps it is precisely the thought of our children and of others who are equally fragile, that cuts to the heart (cf. *Acts* 2:37). In this regard, [my venerable predecessor](#) wrote that “human fragility has the power to make us more lucid about what endures and what passes, what brings life and what kills. Perhaps for this reason, we so often tend to deny our limitations and avoid fragile and wounded people: they have the power to question the direction we have chosen, both as individuals and as a community.” [\[9\]](#)

[John XXIII](#) was the first pope to advocate “integral disarmament,” which can only be achieved through renewal of the heart and mind. In [Pacem in Terris](#), he wrote: “Everyone must realize that, unless this process of disarmament be thoroughgoing and complete, and reach people’s very souls, it is impossible to stop the arms race, or to reduce armaments, or — and this is the main thing — ultimately to abolish them entirely. Everyone must sincerely co-operate in the effort to banish fear and the anxious expectation of war from our minds. But this requires that the fundamental principles upon which peace is based in today’s world be replaced by an altogether different one, namely, the realization that true and lasting peace among nations cannot consist in the possession of an equal supply of armaments but only in mutual trust. And we are confident that this can be achieved, for it is a thing which not only is dictated by common sense, but is in itself most desirable and most fruitful of good.” [\[10\]](#)

An essential service that religions must render to a suffering humanity is to guard against the growing temptation to weaponize even thoughts and words. The great spiritual traditions, as well as right reason, teach us to look beyond blood ties or ethnicity, beyond associations that accept only those who are similar and reject those who are different. Today, we see that this cannot be taken for granted. Unfortunately, it has become increasingly common to drag the language of faith into political battles, to bless nationalism, and to justify violence and armed struggle in the name of religion. Believers must actively refute, above all by the witness of their lives, these forms of blasphemy that profane the holy name of God. Therefore, alongside action, it is more necessary than ever to cultivate prayer, spirituality, and ecumenical and interreligious dialogue as paths of peace and as languages of encounter within traditions and cultures. Throughout the world, it is to be hoped that “every community become a ‘house of peace,’ where one learns how to defuse hostility through dialogue, where justice is practiced and forgiveness is cherished.” [\[11\]](#) Now more than ever, we must show that peace is not a utopia by fostering attentive and life-giving pastoral creativity.

At the same time, this should in no way detract from the importance of the political dimension. Those entrusted with the highest public responsibility must “give serious thought” to the problem of achieving more humane relations between



States throughout the world. This adjustment must be based on mutual trust, sincerity in negotiations and the faithful fulfilment of obligations. Every aspect of the problem must be examined, so that, eventually, a point of agreement may emerge from which sincere, lasting, and beneficial treaties can be initiated.” [12] This is the disarming path of diplomacy, mediation and international law, which is sadly too often undermined by the growing violations of hard-won treaties, at a time when what is needed is the strengthening of supranational institutions, not their delegitimization.

In today’s world, justice and human dignity are at an alarming risk amid global power imbalances. How can we live in this time of destabilization and conflict, and free ourselves from evil? We need to encourage and support every spiritual, cultural and political initiative that keeps hope alive, countering the spread of “fatalistic terms, as if the dynamics involved were the product of anonymous impersonal forces or structures independent of the human will.” [13] For, as has been suggested, “the best way to dominate and gain control over people is to spread despair and discouragement, even under the guise of defending certain values.” [14] Against this strategy, we must promote self-awareness in civil societies, forms of responsible association, experiences of nonviolent participation, and practices of restorative justice on both a small and large scale. [Leo XIII](#) had already made this clear in his Encyclical [Rerum Novarum](#): “The consciousness of his own weakness urges the human person to call in aid from without. We read in Scripture: ‘Two are better than one, for they have the advantage of their society. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up’ ( *Eccles 4:9-10*). And further: ‘A brother that is helped by his brother is like a strong city’ ( *Prov 18:19*).” [15]

May this be one of the fruits of the [Jubilee of Hope](#), which has moved millions of people to rediscover themselves as pilgrims and to begin within themselves that disarmament of heart, mind and life. God will surely respond to this by fulfilling his promises: “He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord” (*Is 2, 4-5*).

From the Vatican, 8 December 2025

LEO PP. XIV

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[1] Cf. [Apostolic Blessing “Urbi et Orbi,” Central Loggia of the Vatican Basilica](#) (8 May 2025).

[2] Saint Augustine of Hippo, *Serm.* 357, 3.

[3] *Ibid.*, 1.

[4] John XXIII, [Encyclical Letter \*Pacem in terris\*](#) (11 April 1963), 111.

[5] Cf. *SIPRI Yearbook: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (2025).

[6] Saint Augustine of Hippo, *Serm.* 357, 1.

[7] Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World [Gaudium et Spes](#), 80.

[8] Francis, [Encyclical Letter \*Fratelli Tutti\*](#) (3 October 2020), 4.

[9] Francis, [Letter to the Directors of “Corriere della Sera”](#) (14 March 2025).

[10] John XXIII, [Encyclical Letter \*Pacem in Terris\*](#) (11 April 1963), 113.

[11] Leo XIV [Address to the Bishops of the Italian Episcopal Conference](#) (17 June 2025).

[12] John XXIII, [Encyclical Letter \*Pacem in Terris\*](#) (11 April 1963), 118.

[13] Benedict XVI, [Encyclical Letter \*Caritas in Veritate\*](#) (29 June 2009), 42.

[14] Francis, [Encyclical Letter \*Fratelli Tutti\*](#) (3 October 2020), 15.

[15] Leo XIII, [Encyclical Letter \*Rerum Novarum\*](#) (15 May 1891), 50.

