

Dear friends,

I am very happy to greet you on this 75th anniversary of Pax Christi International. Why is it so important to celebrate this anniversary? Because it means a stop to an infernal mechanism of death and destruction, denial of human rights, violence between people.

A stop! It was not the end of all violence and domination of the weak by the strong. The 75 years that have just passed have shown us that people have lost nothing of the capacity to destroy, to sow death, to kill hope. But 75 years ago, men and women stood up to say: “the other is not my enemy, he’s my brother, she is my sister”; the differences that there are between us, if we know how to welcome them, are not an obstacle or a danger for us, but on the contrary a richness, which will offer us new possibilities to develop ourselves and to help each person to achieve happiness.

75 years ago men and women decided to be reconciled and this decision changed the face of humanity.

It introduced into our history the possibility of reversing the curve of hatred, mistrust, fear of the other, of building a world where justice, peace, solidarity take place between people.

History shows that it is never easy to achieve this, that we must tirelessly seek together new ways to get closer to each other, to know and to accept ourselves better, to remove from our path anything that could implicate our condition as a creature in the image of God: that is the challenge to be taken up. Pax Christi International, for 75 years, has met it by committing to justice and peace, where violence between people still reigns too often. It is not simply a question of making speeches, but of carrying out concrete actions where people and their hopes for the future are threatened.

This work is done by international organizations from the Second World War, but what gives so much importance to Pax Christi International is that this work begins and continues with the conversion of hearts and behaviors of each and this conversion is not the work of politicians, nor diplomats, but the work of men and women who believe in peace, justice and freedom.

Pax Christi International aims to spread this around the world by all the technical and human means available thanks to the progress made to transform relations between people.

I have the privilege as bishop and co-president of Pax Christi International with Sister Teresia Wamuyu Wachira to devote time and energy to this mission, supported by an international office of peace activists, relayed by teams of experts who form an international network of sentries; but also with the support of sympathizers who recognize the importance, and even the necessity, that such a network exists, to prevent humanity from giving in to these old temptations of violence and exclusion.

Together we must explore and develop the means of bringing people together, fighting against all forms of phobia of the other, of withdrawal into oneself.

Today, the world is not immune to racist and sexist abuses, the questioning of human rights, inequalities, injustices, and violence. But there is no lack of reasons to hope for a reconciled humanity. The first is that for 75 years the inversion of the curve of relations between people in favor of nonviolence, respect, and familial care can continue, despite all the economic obstacles, political, powerful particular interests that stand in our history. Technological progress offers us ever more efficient means of bringing peoples together. And for those who recognize themselves in the Word of God, the call of Christ to love continues to echo in hearts.

Bishop Marc Stenger, Co-President of Pax Christi International