News



St. Susanna Parish's Nativity scene (Courtesy of St. Susanna Parish)



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Editor's note: Welcome to NCR's Justice Action Bulletin, where every Tuesday we bring you the latest news on active nonviolence in the service of peace and justice. Do you have news you would like to share? Contact Maria Benevento at mbenevento@ncronline.org.

WASHINGTON — Catholics and other faith leaders were among some 215 people who were arrested during a peaceful demonstration in support of the Dream Act and Temporary Protected Status Dec. 6, according to an email from Eli McCarthy, director of justice and peace for the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, who was one of those arrested.

Catholics who attended the protest on Capitol Hill also included Sara Benitez of Faith in Public Life, Franciscan Sr. Marie Lucey and Jason Miller of the Franciscan Action Network, Scott Wright of Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach and Gerry Lee of the Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns.*

Approximately 15,000 people participated in the demonstration, which included speeches from Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) and Rep. Luis Gutiérrez (D-Ill.) according to a report from Common Dreams. Recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, also known as DACA, also shared how many days they have left before they are vulnerable to deportation. Gutiérrez, Rep. Judy Chu (D-Calif.) and national leaders of the United Farm Workers were among those arrested on the Capitol building's steps.

McCarthy encouraged people who were not able to attend the protest to support immigrants in other ways, such as boycotting Wells Fargo and Bank of America in response to their funding of private prisons and their contributions to key politicians such as President Donald Trump, Rep. Paul Ryan, Sen. Mitch McConnell and Sen. Marco Rubio.

*List of Catholics attending updated with addition of Gerry Lee



From left: Sara Benitez, Sr. Marie Lucey, Scott Wright, Eli McCarthy and Jason Miller (Franciscan Action Network/Aimee Roberge)

BALTIMORE — Friends and family of peace and justice activist Dean Pappas, who passed away Nov. 4 after battling pancreatic cancer for over a year, held a memorial service for him on Dec. 9.

According to an obituary in the Baltimore Sun, Pappas helped plan the 1968 Catonsville Nine draft board raid, where nine people including Daniel and Phillip Berrigan poured napalm on draft files in protest of the Vietnam War; Pappas made the napalm.

Pappas also founded the Baltimore Defense Committee and Teachers Against the War in Vietnam and promoted the civil rights movement and fair housing. Later, he founded the People's Free Medical Clinic and was active in the Democratic Socialists of America.

DEDHAM, MASS. — St. Susanna Parish, a Catholic church located in a suburb of Boston, is making a statement about gun violence this year by including planks with

the locations and death tolls of 16 mass shootings in their outdoor nativity scene, CNN reported Dec. 6.

The parish's Pax Christi chapter came up with the idea to show the contrast between Jesus' message and violence and to encourage prayers for victims of shootings, their family members and even perpetrators of shootings. A banner outside the display reads: "If only you knew the things that make for peace."

"Surely, the Prince of Peace, the gift waiting to be birthed once more, calls us to disarm our hearts, lay down our weapons, and seek the means of lasting peace," said Pat Ferrone, chair of the St. Susanna Pax Christi committee, in a Dec. 6 press release.

AUSTIN, TEXAS — Members of the Austin Sanctuary Network are leading a caravan from Austin to San Antonio to file a stay of removal application for Alirio Gámez, a Salvadoran immigrant who has claimed sanctuary in the First Unitarian Universalist Church for the past three months, the Houston Chronicle reported Dec. 5.

Gámez fled violence in El Salvador in 2015 and sought asylum in the U.S. He was held in three different detention centers before receiving a denial of his application. Staying in First Unitarian protects him from deportation because immigration officials have a policy of not conducting enforcement actions in "sensitive" spaces such as churches and schools.

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LANCASTER COUNTY, PA. — Twenty-two protesters who were arrested Oct. 16 for attempting to stop the construction of the Atlantic Sunrise pipeline on land belonging to the Adorers of the Blood of Christ entered pleas during a preliminary hearing Dec. 4, Lancaster Online reported.

Seven of the protesters pleaded not guilty and will go to trial in an attempt to draw attention to the injustice of the situation.

According to Lancaster Online, the thirteen who pleaded no contest were ordered to pay a fine of $100 and perform 10 community service hours. Two others pled guilty in order to enter the Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition program for first-time

offenders. A 16-year-old who was also arrested will be processed through the juvenile court system.

The Adorers have sued the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in an attempt to stop pipeline construction; they were initially unsuccessful but have an appeal pending in a federal appeals court.

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