

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

December 18, 2012 at 11:40am

Afghanistan journal, part two: bearing witness to peacemaking in a war-torn country

by John Dear

On the Road to Peace

This is part two of my diary from Afghanistan. It's very long, but I offer it to those who are interested in my experience in Afghanistan, where we have waged the longest war in U.S. history. To learn more about the Afghan Peace Volunteers, visit 2millionfriends.org, ourjourneytosmile.com and vcnv.org. Merry Christmas to one and all!

Dec. 6

This afternoon, we drove across Kabul, one of the most polluted, impoverished cities on earth, with its sea of speeding cars, to one of the many refugee camps, where we sat in a U.N. tent listening to camp leaders share their suffering and beg for peace. About 55 families fill this crowded camp, and some of the families have as many as 25 members.

"We are tired of war," the elder began. "We have nothing to live on. We have no work. We do not want our children killed. Who would want this? Finish this war. We don't want anyone else killed. No one in this camp wants the war to continue. We are sick of war."

"One of the main problems," he said, "is that we are not willing to talk to one another. The powers that be must talk. Everyone in Afghanistan is Muslim; there should be no fighting between Muslims. We all know war has no benefit for the people. They want it to end. The war only benefits those in power. There are many widows, orphans, maimed people, hungry, sick and unemployed people. They are sick of this war. The same fighting has been going on for decades and we fear we will never see peace. It's just been a matter of changing those who sit in the chairs of power. The killings just continue. The powers that be have turned Afghanistan into a killing field, their personal playground of war.

"I have not known anything but war my entire life," he continued. "War is a way of life for us. There is nothing else to do but kill people and then get killed and finally become a war hero. We need to talk with one another and find out how to live and how to negotiate. We need to lay down our weapons. But the powers will not allow the people to live in peace. They throw more and more money at our government leaders to divide us all. I wish we could all sit down and talk, but the powers that be will never allow it."

I asked him what his message is to Americans. "My message is that it's been 11 years since America came and started a war here, and nothing has been accomplished. The U.S. needs to leave. They also should help the Afghans unite." Then he spoke about his hopes for the younger generation, that they will stop the killing and learn new ways to live together. "We need to get to the roots of the problems, and solve the problem at its roots, otherwise the tree of war will grow again."

Dec. 7

I began the day sitting with Raz Mohammad, who is 20 and a member of the Afghan Peace Volunteers. He told me his life story and his hopes for peace.

"The war has had a terrible effect on my life and my mind," he began. "I have so many difficulties. I can't study the way I would like to because I have no money and so many family problems. I keep asking myself why so many people fight and kill, why so many people from my village are getting killed. Afghans are totally divided, including young people. Everyone's taking sides."

He described life in his village in the province of Wardak, which has seen nonstop fighting. U.S. soldiers have searched every house, including his, and he no longer feels safe there.

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"I wish they were polite and respectable," he said, "but they come in during the day and hassle us, and at night, their helicopters frighten the children. We have constant surveillance by the U.S. drones.

"My brother-in-law was killed by a U.S. drone in 2008. He was a student, and visiting some friends one summer evening when they decided to walk to a garden and sit there and talk. They were enjoying the evening, sitting in the garden, when a drone flew by and dropped a bomb. Everyone was incinerated. We couldn't find any remains. My sister was left behind with her baby boy. I think the drone attacks were first begun in my province. We hear them about every three nights. They have a low, buzzing sound, like a mosquito. They hover over us. They fly over us during the day, and fly over us during the night, when we can see the spotlight at the front of the drone.

"Occasionally, the large U.S. fighter bombers fly over, and they make a huge noise. All the people of the area, especially the children, are afraid of the U.S. soldiers, the U.S. tanks, the U.S. drones, and the U.S.

fighter bombers. They fear being killed. Over the years, many people have been bombed and killed. Many houses have been destroyed. Two of my 10th-grade classmates were killed in their homes when a U.S. fighter bomber dropped bombs on their homes, killing everyone in the area. When the U.S. bomb our area or a house, everyone dies, including all the women and children. Targeted bombings always end up killing women and children and innocent people, which is why no one should be bombed.

"We should not accept these drone attacks if we are human beings. They are killing innocent human beings. Humanity should not allow this to happen. No one I know wants the war to continue. Ordinary people everywhere are sick and tired of war, yet we're demonized as warriors and terrorists. None of us can tell who is a member of the Taliban and who isn't. If we can't tell who is a member of the Taliban, how can anyone in the U.S. claim to know who is in the Taliban? Meanwhile, our schools, hospitals and local services have all collapsed. The U.S./NATO forces are not helping anyone, only bringing fear and death to the people."

I asked Raz Mohammad about nonviolence.

"I'm learning that we are all human beings and that every human being is capable of being kind, of becoming a friend. We're all the same. Instead of continuing these divisions, we should all try to be friends. Nonviolence for me means helping me understand the possibilities of human friendship."

After my beautiful conversation with Raz Mohammad, I spent the rest of the morning visiting with Abdulhai, a 16-year-old from Bamiyan whose father was killed in the war. Given all that he has been through, it's amazing to see Abdulhai's strength and leadership in the group.

"I didn't understand life at all for a long time," he began. "I remember the day [when he was 6 years old] when the Taliban came to my village, and everyone fled to the mountains. Our family was separated into two groups for six months, and only later did we find out that our father was killed. When we were hiding in the mountains, I thought life was awful. People were not kind to us. We were starving and cold. Even the other relatives we met and stayed with were cruel to us. We were worried about our survival as refugees. My older brother has 'lost his mind' now, and suffers psychologically because of the war. Later, we returned to Bamiyan and started growing wheat and potatoes on a little piece of land to support ourselves. I am very sad about all that has happened.

"In this work for peace, people need to have very big hearts," Abdulhai said to me. "You need a big heart if you are going to relate with others peacefully. Now I realize you also need to think big."

When I asked about his message to Americans, he said, "We want to be friends with you. If you do not know much about us, or think we are all terrorists, come here and meet us, like John."

"I get a negative feeling every time I see someone carrying a weapon," LaLa, another youth, said to us during lunch. "It makes me feel less human."

After lunch, two visitors spoke with us at the Afghan Peace Volunteers house. First, we met with journalist Mohammad Arif, who also works with the transitional justice group, as well as a group that tries to stop violence against women.

"Poverty is pushing people to take up arms," he began, "because they do know what else to do to bring about change. People are desperate to make a living. Education is the key if we are to have a future. Most Afghans are illiterate or unaware. We have to educate them and address their extreme poverty. Education is the best way to increase nonviolence in Afghanistan.

"The U.S. bombings always kill innocent people," he continued. "The U.S. military thinks that any male with a turban is a member of the Taliban, so they try to kill him, and in the process, they kill an innocent person and many other innocent people. This has to stop."

Then we met with Bill Schmitt, the executive director of Catholic Relief Services in Afghanistan. Before coming here, he served as an emergency CRS aid director in Haiti after the horrific earthquake. He has an \$8 million budget and almost 400 people on staff, almost all of whom are Afghans, and oversees the best relief project we have heard about so far. They run a community-based education program and have started schools all over the country where there were none. So far, since 2005, they have founded more than 500 schools and have changed the lives of thousands and thousands of children. They find teachers and classrooms, train the teachers and provide the resources. They also run a livelihood program to help poor people manage their natural resources and improve their agriculture. Then they provide relief during specific emergencies.

I was impressed with Bill and the work of Catholic Relief Services in Afghanistan. CRS now works in more than 100 countries. I have long been a supporter, and have recently tried hard to raise funds for their work in Haiti. Their programs here in Afghanistan are amazing, and I hope many people will also contribute to their projects in Afghanistan. They give me hope.

Dec. 8

My friend Ann Wright arrived this morning, fresh from two weeks in Gaza, where she met survivors of the recent Israeli bombings that killed more than 150 Gazans. Ann is a retired Army colonel and former State Department diplomat who officially reopened the U.S. Embassy in Kabul in 2001, but later resigned from the U.S. government when it began the 2003 war on Iraq. She now works with CODEPINK and Veterans for Peace. When we return to the States, we are scheduled to appear together on "Democracy Now!" with Amy Goodman in New York City.

This morning, we drove across Kabul to a clinic that treats impoverished drug addicts. Drug addiction is a growing problem in Afghanistan. Unemployed youth often travel to Iran, get caught up in drugs and return to Kabul to live with the other homeless addicts under the bridges. The director is a charismatic woman who runs a restaurant and uses all the proceeds to provide shelter and services for this rehab program. Of course, she is in grave danger for doing this and has received many threats.

"This is not a glamorous job and brings no money," she said with a smile, "but I want to help people, and this is one way to meet their needs."

This afternoon, we visited the "Human Rights and Eradication of Violence" organization at their main office and community center. They advocate for women and children and try to help the poor turn away from violence.

"Afghanistan is considered the most corrupt government in the world," the director said. "None of the international aid from other governments ever reaches the people on the bottom. Corruption is at the heart of all the problems."

We want to stop the corruption, the violence the war and the poverty, he said.

At nightfall, we all piled into several vans for the hour and a half drive through heavy traffic to the airport to pick up Mairead Maguire and Ann Patterson. The peace volunteers decided last night they all wanted to go together to welcome Mairead, the Nobel Peace Prize winner from Belfast, Northern Ireland. I was

amazed at this gesture of hospitality, and knew Mairead and Ann will be touched. As we stood in the freezing cold by the entrance to the airport and talked with the soldiers and one another, our excitement grew and grew.

I've known Mairead for many years, probably since 1985, but came to know her and her family well while living and working in Northern Ireland in 1997-1998. We went to Iraq together in 1999, and have worked together at various conferences and events. In 1998, I published a collection of her essays, *The Vision of Peace*, which is now available from Wipf and Stock Publishers). Her colleague Ann Patterson is also a great peace worker. She has served as a counselor for victims of war and genocide in Northern Ireland and Africa. Both Mairead and Ann recently joined our annual protest at Los Alamos, N.M., to lend their support to our campaign to abolish nuclear weapons.

Unfortunately, their visas had the wrong dates, so their passports were retained at the airport and they had a hard time getting out and finding us. They will have to go to the ministry of immigration to get the proper paperwork to leave the country later in the week, but what a thrill when they finally appeared in the darkness of the parking lot. The youth greeted them one at a time, and many pictures were taken. It was a great moment.

As we turned to walk to the car, Mairead said, "Just a moment," and we all watched in stunned disbelief as she then greeted each soldier with a smile and a handshake. One of the youth started to cry and said to me, "She's already teaching me what nonviolence means. We have to be kind to everyone."

I moved over to the hotel to be with Mairead, Ann Wright and Ann Patterson. After we were dropped off, we stayed up late, eating and catching up on news and travels and our various peace projects.

Dec. 9

Back at the peace volunteers' house, I was delighted to see my friend Shane Claiborne, who just arrived for a short visit. A popular evangelical preacher and author, Shane is a co-founder of The Simple Way, an intentional Christian community that serves the poor in inner-city Philadelphia. His waist-long dreadlocks are famous throughout the movement, so it was a shock to see him with very short hair. He shaved his head, he told me, to be in solidarity with the Afghan youth. A beautiful gesture of support.

After breakfast, we visited the women's sewing cooperative again. Mairead spoke beautifully about the need to keep working, to stay hopeful and to be peaceful.

"Peace is possible," she told them. "Keep trying to be at peace with yourself and among yourselves and to be hopeful." Then they shared once again their pain and sorrows.

"Why is there always war?" Sakina asked. "Who will listen to the poor? No one listens to us poor people."

"The U.S. should not send any more money or aid to Afghanistan," the teacher said, "because it just goes to the rich. We are so tired of war. When will we ever find relief? The lack of peace and our sheer fatigue from war is made worse because there is no money and no work. No one is healthy now. Everyone has been affected by the U.S. war. We have to hide from the bombs, run at all times from violence, and constantly search for food. It's a very difficult."

"We have nothing," another woman said. "We don't have good air, food, jobs or education. Who can help us? Who can we trust? Who are our friends? Even if someone tries to help, such as a journalist, he gets targeted with death threats and then killed. What can we do?"

"I've lost all hope," an eighth-grade girl said. "School is a joke. The teaching is very bad. There's nothing to look forward to. I can't imagine my future. I'm worried and scared that the civil war and the massacres will start up again. So I think I should stop going to school and start preparing how to survive."

"In Afghanistan, some people call for women's rights, but we do not have basic human rights," another woman said. "In some countries, people need a permit to hunt animals. Here you do not need a permit for anything. So some people hunt people. We do not even have the rights that animals have in other countries."

"My whole life has been warfare," another woman said, "but it's actually now getting much worse. Everything is painful. Shall I tell you about poverty, fear, hunger or war? Where would I begin? Where can I find hope?"

"Afghanistan is just a big hospital," she continued. "We see death every day, and we're becoming numb to it. The U.S. is running a slaughterhouse, an abattoir where sheep are slaughtered. What can we do? It makes me weep."

"I thought President Obama would care for the oppressed, but he has made things much worse for us," another said. "He is even worse than President Bush. Please ask the people of the U.S. to take to the streets again and do what they can to stop this war now."

Before we broke, the teacher expressed her gratitude for listening to them. She said that for the first time in decades, she felt as if she had been heard.

Later, over lunch, our group reflected on our session with the woman.

"It's very sad," Ann Patterson said, "because they don't see any hope. They have both hopelessness and helplessness together."

"At least they have one another," Ann Wright added, "and they can smile and laugh with each other."

We discussed ways to support the Duvet Project and our hopes that people will continue to give money to pay them a livable wage. To contribute to their quilting project, go to the Duvet Project's website.

This afternoon, we attended a distribution of duvets for poor families. Two separate trucks loaded with more than 100 duvet/quilts followed us. We met in a large barren room with more than 100 desperately poor women. They sat on the floor with Mairead and the other women in our group in the center while we men sat on the edge of the room against the wall. Mairead spoke with them about remaining peaceful and taking care of one another. Then they, too, shared their struggles and pain.

"My husband was killed in the war," one woman said, "and my son was injured and lost his mind, so now I have nothing left."

"I lose my husband in the war," another added, "now I'm struggling to raise my five children alone."

"I have six sons and one daughter, and I have great trouble trying to feed them," still another said. "I have only God to turn to."

Their stories were tragic and hard to hear. After the session, we gathered outside the building and gave each woman two large duvet/quilts. It was a beautiful gesture, and however small, it could make a difference between life and death.

Dec. 10

This morning was utterly amazing. All of us -- the Afghan peace volunteers, Hakim, Mairead, Shane, Ann W., Ann P. and the whole American delegation -- sat on the floor of the main room in the peace volunteers' house and shared our lives, our hopes and our understanding of nonviolence. I was overwhelmed by emotion and consolation. We all were.

"Because I lost my father at the hands of the Taliban," one of the youths said, "I have hated all the other ethnic groups. But now I'm trying to overcome hatred."

"I used to put people in categories and couldn't drink tea with anyone," another said. "Now I'm learning that we are all part of one human family. Now I can drink tea with anyone."

After three or four people took turns speaking, we stopped and watched a few videos of the various actions the peace volunteers have done through the years. They have filmed everything and have an amazing collection of videos. We watched them build their peace park in Bamiyan and install a beautiful statue of peace dove in the park, then watched them build a large peace sign as big as a billboard, lit up with Christmas lights, on the scaffolding around the ruins of the giant Buddhas destroyed by the Taliban several years ago. We also saw a video of their recent peace march in Kabul. They carried banners that read: "We are so tired of war." "We can still be friends." "We can live without war." "Let's take a stand for peace." As we watched the videos, most of the internationals in the circle cried. It was so moving.

"I want to do something for Afghan children," one of the volunteers said, then burst into tears. "Why should Afghan children have to go through this? What have they done?"

"I used to detest other ethnic groups," one youth said, "but now I'm trying to overcome hate and prejudice. You international friends give me hope and strength to do this."

In another video, we watched the peace volunteers present to the U.S. ambassador, who was visiting Bamiyan, a letter addressed to President Barack Obama. The American ambassador was clearly impressed with the youth, promised to pass on the letter and encouraged them to keep working for peace. I was amazed at the audacity of the youth to arrange this meeting and to carry it out with such grace and skill.

"Nonviolence requires listening attentively and speaking mindfully," Patrick said when his turn came. "Here's how I put it: Say what you mean, mean what you say, but don't say it meanly. Nonviolence also requires caring and daring, a heart big enough to love, but definite courage to love."

"The things we have in common are greater than our divisions," Ellen said. "There are no extraordinary people, only ordinary people doing extraordinary things. That's what we're trying to do."

"Every human being is created to love and be loved," Mairead told our group. "We can deepen our love for one another and for life, and as we do, we learn what a beautiful gift life is. We have no right to take the life of another. We want instead to deep our love for others, to help heal the whole human family. For me, nonviolence is love in action to make the whole world better, fairer, more just."

She urged us to let go of our fears, angers and hatred, to make peace with ourselves, and to smile and love

everyone. She said we have to use our suffering wisely, to go through our pain and anger into a deeper love and compassion for others to create new depths of peace. "Celebrate the friendships you have," she concluded, "and you can be happy -- even in the midst of war."

I found this morning's circle of sharing one of the greatest experiences of my life. We not only became close to one another; we helped each other understand the meaning of peace, hope and nonviolence.

"You are my teachers of peace and nonviolence," I told the Afghan Peace Volunteers. I wish every American could hear their heartfelt longings of peace and learn from them the wisdom of nonviolence.

After lunch, we walked down the hall to visit the little kindergarten the youth started to teach the homeless children who live on the street and beg for food. In a matter of days, 50 little boys and girls started showing up to attend these impromptu classes. They are a bit wild, but they smile and laugh and play. Who knows what pain they carry deep within?

As our group of big, tall Americans and internationals entered the room, their eyes grew wide and their mouths fell open. We must have looked like aliens from another planet. Hakim asked Mairead to speak, so she sat on a chair in the front of the room with the kids sitting on the floor in front of her. But within moments, Mairead jumped down on the floor with them, and started telling them how much she loved them and started singing with them. She asked them to sing, and one by one, they stood up and sang or said something (usually a recitation from the Quran). We cheered each child, and afterward, took many group photos. The joy these children gave us was a balm for the sorrow and intensity of the last few days.

This afternoon, we drove across Kabul to visit the Afghanistan parliament. After making it through the military checkpoints and endless security stations, we met with Fauzia Kofi, a young Muslim woman who is a parliamentarian from a remote northeast district bordering on China. She is the chair of the Commission on Women's Affairs, Civil Society and Human Rights, and has announced she will run next year for president. She was warm, welcoming and articulate, but spent most of the time denouncing the Taliban. She lamented the injustices done to Afghan women and children and urged us to help end the war and promote justice for them.

"We need peace with dignity," she said. "I ask friends around the world to offer solidarity and support to help the women and children of Afghanistan who are suffering so much."

This morning, a leading women's rights official was assassinated in northern Afghanistan. We were all aware of the great risks that Kofi has taken by entering the fray and speaking out publicly on behalf of suffering women and children. She is very brave.

Later in the day, we drove across Kabul again to meet with another leading parliamentarian and presidential candidate, Ramazan Bashardost. He placed third in the national election a few years ago. International observers officially declared that Karzai bought more than 1 million votes, and that the runner-up also bought many votes. Nonetheless, the U.S. named Karzai the "legitimate" president. In reality, Bashardost, who had bought or stolen no votes, should be president. He is not only popular because of his open public forums in a tent in Kabul, he is committed to peace and nonviolence. He was recently awarded Radio Free Europe's Gandhi prize.

"We have to stop justifying killing," he explained. "All the politicians are corrupt and support killing someone, but killing anyone is never justified. We should not support anyone who kills another person. We Afghans need to decide what our human values are," he said, so we can stop the killing, violence, corruption and injustice.

"This war is a disaster for Afghanistan, but also for the American people," he said. "It's a tragedy. You are losing money and the lives of your own soldiers. And you are not serving the Afghan people. You are providing security for the war lords, for the war criminals. All your money goes to the war lords. And so, you are the enemy of the Afghan people. You need to change sides. It is time to stop supporting the killers. Every day, the situation gets worse. You Americans have no idea what is really happening here. It's time to change and stop the war. We need free elections. But right now, every single vote is bought. We need a new generation of leaders who have not killed others to emerge. And we need your support to make real peace for the Afghan people possible."

Tonight, back at the hotel, Mairead, Ann, Ann and I spoke live via Skype to a gathering of students and local peace activists at Marquette University in Milwaukee.

Dec. 11

Today is the climax of our visit. We gathered in the compound of Afghan Action for our public event, with journalists and TV crews, to launch the "Two Million Friends" campaign. We call upon the United Nations to negotiate an immediate ceasefire to the war in Afghanistan and to start talks aimed at ending the war and beginning the long road to healing and recovery, the Afghan Peace Volunteers said as they presented their petition to a senior United Nations official.

Two million people have been killed in war in Afghanistan in the last four decades, they pointed out. After 10 years of Soviet war and occupation in the 1980s, then the civil war in the early 1990s led by the corrupt warlords, then the years of oppression under the Taliban, and now 11 years of American war and occupation, everyone is sick of war, they said. Their message was short and to the point: "Stop the Killings. End the war. We want peace." Part of their statement read:

We strongly urge the United Nations to broker a ceasefire in Afghanistan. We ask the United Nations to call on all the parties in the conflict, including competing warlords and the Taliban, the Karzai government, regional players and NATO, to lay down their weapons.

Each day the violence continues means a continuing humanitarian disaster for the people of Afghanistan. It is time for the parties in conflict to seek non-military alternatives and to work cooperatively to allocate the funds and resources necessary for a full reconstruction campaign in Afghanistan. The people of Afghanistan, especially Afghan mothers, cry out for the wars to cease and for their children to be fed and educated. We ask for their cries to be heard.

We believe that a negotiated ceasefire initiated by the United Nations will greatly assist Afghans in their wish to end the war. A ceasefire will pave the way for negotiations, reconciliation and the important responsibility to meet the humanitarian and socio-economic needs of 30 million Afghans.

To sign their statement, go to 2millionfriends.org.

Mairead Maguire spoke from her experience of 30 years of warfare and division in Northern Ireland, calling for an end to the killings and U.S. drone attacks and for the start of dialogue and reconstruction; for a nonviolent solution to the horrific wars and divisions that have destroyed the country; and urgent work to relieve the terrible suffering among tens of millions of impoverished, starving, hopeless Afghans, especially the women and children.

This beautiful call for peace was the high point of our heartbreaking, astonishing eight days in

Afghanistan. Surely this is one of the poorest, most violent, most war-torn, most corrupt and most polluted places on earth, but because of the amazing Afghan Peace Volunteers, it will always be for me one of the most hopeful. They are taking up the challenge of Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan to do what they can for peace, and here they are, making a difference.

After the crowd and the media gathered and the ceremony and speeches began, Ghulamai and Sharif led me to a van and accompanied me across town to the airport for my evening flight to Dubai. There in the back seat, they presented me with a gift: a beautiful, typical black, white and gray Afghan scarf, which is what many Afghan men wear. "It's a gift from the peace volunteers to thank you for being with us," they said. I was so touched and grateful. When I put it on, they said, "There. Now you are one of us."

Dec. 12: Dubai, United Arab Emirates

It's hard to leave Kabul after this extraordinary experience, certainly one of the greatest of my life. I've been to the moon and back and witnessed the worst of poverty and war, but the best of peace and humanity. I sure hope to visit the peace volunteers again, and will try to do what I can to speak out for an end to the U.S. war on Afghanistan. I know that not everyone needs to go to Afghanistan, but I'm convinced that everyone has to do something to stop the long nightmare of war and poverty inflicted by us upon these suffering people.

Most of all, I'm moved and inspired by these Afghan youth who are trying so hard to become people of nonviolence in an entrenched culture of violence and war. If only American youth -- and adults -- would do the same. They have so much to teach us.

"A little of our love is stronger than the wars of the world." That's the slogan they carved into their peace statue in Bamiyan. It's become their motto, their mantra, their belief, their hope. They're learning from Gandhi that love and nonviolence are more powerful than all the wars and weapons of the world, because love and nonviolence come from the God of peace.

Sitting here in Dubai, waiting for my 15-hour flight back to America, I join their prayer for peace and look with them to the God of peace.

"Help us end the U.S. war and occupation of Afghanistan, God of peace. Help us end the suffering of the Afghan people, especially its women and children. Make us all peace volunteers, that we, too, might become people of peace and nonviolence and learn one day to live in love with one another."

A fitting Christmas prayer for peace.

John Dear will speak for the abolition of nuclear weapons with Martin Sheen and Archbishop Desmond Tutu on March 1 in Oslo, Norway. He will lead a retreat, "Jesus the Peacemaker," April 5-7 in Pennsylvania. To see John's speaking schedule or to invite him to speak in your church or school, go to John Dear's website. One of John's essays appears in the new book *A Faith Not Worth Fighting For*. His book *Lazarus, Come Forth!* explores Jesus as the God of life calling humanity (in the symbol of the dead Lazarus) out of the tombs of the culture of war and death. John's talk at the 2011 Sabeel conference in Bethlehem is featured in the new book *Challenging Empire*. John is profiled with Dan Berrigan and Roy Bourgeois in a new book, *Divine Rebels* by Deena Guzder (Lawrence Hill Books). This book and other recent books, including *Daniel Berrigan: Essential Writings*; *Put Down Your Sword* and *A Persistent Peace*, are available from Amazon.com.

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