



Pax Christi USA

Pax Christi USA announces conscientious objection registry

June 2025 — Pax Christi USA is pleased to announce the launch of the [Ben Salmon No Just War Registry for Conscientious Objectors](#). This registry was first conceived by members of Pax Christi New York State out of deep concern for the possibility of another military draft.

[Use this link](#) to watch a 2020 video from DePaul University's Center for World Catholicism & Intercultural Theology, with Mike Baxter discussing the life and significance of Ben Salmon.

Although many faith traditions hold a conscientious objector registry for congregants, until now, none existed specifically for Catholics who do not wish to participate in war-making. Through conversation and prayer, this project was intentionally and collaboratively crafted by the Pax Christi USA National Council and staff to provide a dedicated framework to equip young Catholics in documenting and affirming their conscientious objection to war.



Conscientious objection was a key focus for Eileen Egan and Gordon Zahn, Pax Christi USA's founders. It was considered one of the four priorities of Pax Christi USA in the mid-1970s, and it was through the contribution of Pax Christi USA that support of conscientious objection was listed in the [1983 US bishops' pastoral, "The Challenge of Peace."](#)

Building on this history, and a long tradition of Catholic war resisters including the Berrigan brothers, Ben Salmon, Franz Jägerstätter, and Dorothy Day, all of whom upheld the Gospel of nonviolence in turbulent times, **we invite young Catholics to sign a proclamation document affirming their faith-led belief in Gospel nonviolence.** The original testimonies will be held by the signers, with copies sent to the Pax Christi USA office in Washington, DC

which will act as the central archive. In the event of a military draft or call to war, these documents will serve as formal statements of conscientious objection.

“As a Catholic Vietnam-era conscientious objector, I applaud Pax Christi USA for establishing the Ben Salmon No Just War Registry for Conscientious Objectors. My own experience of defending my application for conscientious objector status in 1969 to my local draft board, three Catholic World War II veterans who couldn’t understand how a Catholic could be a conscientious objector, even though I had letters of support from one of my parish priests and two of my teachers at the high school and college levels, both well-known and highly respected Catholics in their communities, shows how helpful it would have been for me to have such a Registry as a resource. This initiative will ensure that no American Catholic is ever in such a vulnerable position again.” – Mike Moran, Pax Christi Massachusetts

“As a Marine Corps veteran who served in combat and now walks a path of faith and recovery, this project by Pax Christi USA is deeply meaningful. When I was younger and in uniform, I struggled to reconcile my Catholic faith with the realities of war. A resource like this—rooted in peace, justice, and spiritual support—would have offered hope and grounding during some of my darkest moments. For Catholic members of the military today, it can serve as a bridge: between service and conscience, between trauma and healing, between silence and solidarity.” – Cory Will, GySgt, USMC (Ret.)

To bring this resource to fruition, however, we need your help.

- Pray for us as we launch this project, as well as for all victims of war.
- Welcome friends into conversations about peacebuilding and learn more about the history of Catholic civil disobedience.
- Please share the news of this registry widely, with your parish, within your communities, and especially with any young Catholics you know.

Our hope is that this registry will not only be legal support, but another seed in a growing network of solidarity.

To learn more about Pax Christi USA’s Conscientious Objector Registry Project, or to register as a CO, [use this link](#) to download the PDF file which includes background information and the Proclamation Document for signing.