

## **Announcement of the Pax Christi Peace Award 2008**

### **Call for an International Day of Fasting and Praying for Justice on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October 2008**

The 2008 Pax Christi International Peace Award will be awarded to the Franciscan priest, **Dom Luiz Flávio Cappio**, the bishop of Barra in the state of Bahia, Brazil, and the members of the Brazilian community who have worked with him.

The Pax Christi International Peace Award is presented each year in recognition of a person or group that embodies the ideals of the Pax Christi movement, and that has worked in an exemplary manner for a more peaceful world. The decision was taken by the Executive Committee of Pax Christi International and the Cardinal Bernardus Alfrink Peace Fund, a Foundation established in honour of one of Pax Christi's first International Presidents, which also sponsors the Peace Award.

The award ceremony will take place during a weekend of events entitled "*Waters for Peace*" from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2008 in Sobradinho, in the state of Bahia, Brazil. The weekend is being organised by the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT), a Member Organisation of Pax Christi International in Brazil.

Events for the 17<sup>th</sup> of October include a seminar on the issue of water and environment, a Eucharistic liturgy and a press conference. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of October, an inter-religious event will take place followed by a prayer pilgrimage to the São Francisco River. An international day of fasting in solidarity will be launched that day. Pax Christi International and the Pastoral Land Commission invite all the Member Organisations across the world to join in this International Day of Fasting and Praying for Justice. The Pax Christi Peace Award ceremony will be held on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October. **Laura Vargas Valcarcel**, Vice President of Pax Christi International, will deliver the award speech.

**Dom Luiz** is being felicitated for his nonviolent action in protest against the São Francisco river transposition project. Brazil's third-largest river, the Rio São Francisco in the north-eastern state of Bahia, was relocated to build more hydropower stations and supply water for industrial farming, shrimps production and steel plants in an area inhabited by rich people. The project would effectively destroy many villages of fisher folk and river inhabitants and cause vast environmental damage.

The award will also honour the actions of the members of the community, who worked actively against the project themselves. The struggle behind this Award also echoes the many struggles around the world related to land and water resources and rights.

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