

Fast For Justice
Close Guantanamo • End Torture
Washington, D.C. • January 11-22, 2010
www.witnesstorture.org

On January 11, 2010 — the eight year mark of the opening of detention facilities at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba — people will come from across the country to Washington D.C. to begin an twelve-day, liquid-only **Fast for Justice** demanding that Guantanamo close and torture end. **There over 130 people around the country who will be fasting between January 11th and January 22nd.**

Fasting is an important part of many religious and spiritual traditions. It has been used, notably by Mahatma Gandhi, as an expression of political principle, with the power to move hearts and minds and change policies. And it has a particular connection to Guantanamo, where dozens of inmates engaged in hunger strikes to protest their abuse. Honoring all these traditions and meanings, the Fast for Justice is:

- an act of **moral witness** — against the crime and sin of torture, indefinite detention, rendition, and the denial of legal and human rights
- a **political demand** — that Guantanamo close, tortured be definitively banned, and that all U.S. detainees receive true justice and equality before the law
- an act of **solidarity** — with the suffering of the men, boys, and women, whether in Guantanamo or other U.S. detention facilities around the world
- an act of **atonement** — for our nations' violation of domestic and international law, human rights, and its own principals,
- an expression of **hope** — that President-Elect Obama will honor his words by closing Guantanamo and banning torture in his first days of office
- an act of **renewal** — that calls America back to its senses and to its core values; that seeks to make those values stronger, inviolable; and which helps to reconnect America to the peoples of the world
- Participants in the **Fast for Justice** will be participating in vigils, lobbying, and public events in and around Washington, DC over the course of the fast.

Faster Profiles

Razia Ahmed from Illinois

I came to the United States in 1970 as a graduate student. After graduating from the University of Missouri I decided to stay here and became a citizen in 1990. My friends know me as Razia, but I am seen as ‘Muslim Terrorist’ from Pakistan, the most dangerous country in the world, thanks in no small measure to the United States of America.

I have thought about hunger strike many times but never managed to do it on my own. When I heard about Fast for Justice from Kathy Kelly, I decided to join in conscious people. Besides fasting for justice in general, I’d like to mention a few of the many people who have been denied justice: Dr Aafia Siddiqui, the neuroscientist from Pakistan, Dr. Sami Al-Arian a Palestinian professor at University of South Florida, Ali Al-Marri , a Bradley University student from Qatar and Fahad Hashmi, a fellow Pakistani American.

John Bambrick from Chicago, IL

John lives in the newly formed White Rose Catholic Worker on the northside of Chicago. He works as a Youth Minister and is also a part of Kairos Chicago, a community of faith, resistance and nonviolence. “This past fall I heard a talk about Cesar Chavez and how he would fast, not to bring the power holders to the negotiating table, but to connect with the suffering of the people with whom he was working. So, I participate in the fast because I want to connect in a deeper way to those held in Guantánamo and Bagram and to all people held in prison. At the same time, I hope to confront power holders and the American people to help stop torture forever and bring healing and a sense of peace and justice to this whole big mess. My faith and trust in God impels and calls me to walk with the most marginalized and to put my body on the line for and with others. I fast for Sayf Bin Abdallah, a Tunisian-born Italian resident, who was 28 years old at the time of his capture. He was cleared for release by both the Bush and Obama Administration. Yet he still remains in Guantánamo.”

Mike Benedetti from Worcester, MA

Mike is an independent journalist and Catholic Worker, who lived and worked in community as a part of Witness Against Torture’s 100 Days Campaign.

Frida Berrigan from Brooklyn, NY

Frida is a National Committee member of the War Resisters League, and has been organizing with Witness Against Torture since its inception.

I do not relish the idea of fasting. I like food, a lot. But, the President Obama’s promises of change have atrophied into empty rhetoric. And, now, I watch in horror as my country rises up in fear and vengeance once again. I watch in horror as the debased torture policies of the Bush administration are defended, described once more as necessary. Mahatma Gandhi said: “under certain circumstances, fasting is the one weapon God has given us for use in times of utter helplessness.” Binyam Mohamed, who participated in the hunger strikes at Guantánamo and was released in February of 2009, explained why he was refusing food: “We ask only for justice: treat us as promised under the rules of the Geneva

Conventions for civilians prisoners while we are held and either treat us fairly for valid criminal charges or set us free.” And so, I fight against the feelings of “utter helplessness” with Gandhi’s peaceful weapon, with Binyam’s peaceful weapon-- by fasting. This act is my act, my attempt, to answer the ultimate question Guantánamo poses: how do we conquer fear and remain human.

Beth Brockman from Durham, NC

Beth is married to Larry, the mother of Catie (13) and Matt (9), and an educator and an activist.

Why fast? Well, it’s a spiritual discipline that is part of my own practice. There are many reasons to fast, but my intention in taking part in the fast is two-fold: to foster personal awareness, both physically and spiritually; and to help increase public awareness of the issues that surround the United States’ use of torture. Along with many people, I have discovered that fasting increases my awareness of body sensations and emotions. It also heightens my experience of the divine.

In addition to the personal gain, I hope that by participating in this group fast we will help increase public knowledge of the systemic use of torture by the U.S., including the lesser known practice of extraordinary rendition. This is an issue of particular interest for me as a resident of North Carolina because a group of us who are part of North Carolina Stop Torture Now have been working for over four years to expose and end North Carolina’s involvement in torture. Specifically, we have been focusing our efforts on Aero Contractors, a local, private company that provides aircraft as part of the CIA’s extraordinary rendition program. According to NC Stop Torture Now’s website, “Extraordinary rendition is a phrase that disguises the kidnap, detention and torture of individuals alleged to be enemies of the United States, including those guilty of nothing other than being misidentified.” The group continues to call on the Obama administration to renounce the practice of outsourcing torture; account for, apologize and make restitution to all those who have been kidnapped, detained and tortured; and ask for accountability for those who ordered and carried out the renditions.

Beginning on January 11th, I choose to participate in a 12-day fast so that I might stand in solidarity with these neighbors who have indeed been persecuted, humiliated and abused at the hands of the U.S. government at Guantánamo and elsewhere.

Anna J. Brown from Jersey City, New Jersey

Anna J. Brown teaches in the political science department and directs the social justice program at Saint Peter's College in Jersey City, New Jersey. In 2006, she opened the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Kairos Social Justice House at the College. She is a member of the Kairos Community of New York City and the Witness Against Torture (WAT) community, joining those in both communities who walked to Guantánamo in 2005. Along with other WAT folk, she has been arrested for acts of nonviolent civil disobedience at the United Nations, the Federal Court in D.C. and the Supreme Court building. She served as a co-editor of WAT's book, *A Campaign to Close Guantánamo* (2008). In addition to efforts with WAT and Kairos, she has worked with nonviolent activists in Mexico, El Salvador, Palestine and Israel. Currently, she is co-editing a book on Father Dan Berrigan's contributions to Catholic social thought.

The political point of our fast is to bring public attention to and to resist our nation's use of torture and detention without charge or trial, particularly at the U.S. Naval Base prison in Guantánamo, Cuba but also in all prisons and detention centers administered by the United States. Political policies that sanction and normalize indefinite detention without charge, abuse of human beings, torture and death do not speak to a “world view of abundance”□. In fact, these kinds of policies are those that make every effort to crush and destroy the nobility and dignity of human life, if not life itself.

Given the monstrosity of torture (to take just one example of suffering) the act of not averting one's gaze and of taking responsibility for what has been done to other human beings, demands a courage that I find possible to summon only within community. I am deeply grateful for opportunity to engage in this fast within the WAT community. Through them and with them, I am better able to simply hold feelings of hunger and not turn away from the reality of suffering in our world. I am mindful of those men in Guantánamo who engaged in fasting for months at a time without the benefit of a communal base. I will hold these men especially in my heart. I pray that my gaze will not be averted. I pray that torture will not ever be used and that Guantánamo and all such prisons will be closed. I pray that I will learn how to love, always and without end.

Charles Burgess from Mankato, MN

My name is Charles Burgess. I am an RN at a hospital in Mankato, MN. I consider myself a progressive and have been deeply disappointed with the current administration and just don't want to be quiet about it. I am active in my union (Minnesota Nurses Association) and was a delegate that helped form the National Nurses United, which is the national RN union started in December. My interests span all areas. I strive to work to be part of the local movement (food and otherwise) growing my own garden and buying local at the farmers market. I'm on the government affairs commission for my union so I try to work at the state and federal level also. In the last year I have worked very hard to lessen my impact on this planet, cutting my electrical usage 20% and water usage 37% and that's something I will work on this year also. In all things I try to think of others and push to do what is best for the planet. Nothing can happen if we cant work together, and imprisoning people without reason or trial is not justice. We need justice.

Jean Chapman from North Carolina

Jean has been a pediatrician for 40 years and a longtime peace and social justice activist with School of the Americas Watch and other groups. She has participated in two 40 day fasts in the past...one with SOA Watch in the early years. “I find fasting a very powerful centering action for peace and justice, and I feel privileged to join in a small way with the 100 days campaign and have the deepest respect and gratitude for you who have made it possible for others to join and support.”

Bob Cooke from Gaithersburg, MD

Bob is with Pax Christi Metro DC and has been active with Witness Against Torture for over three years. “I am fasting in order to help remind myself that while my fasting is not normal for me and will bring some physical and emotional discomfort, life is not, and will never be, normal for those in Guantánamo, for those in Bagram or elsewhere being indefinitely detained without having a fair trial, for those who have been tortured anywhere in the world and are trying to live with these far greater abnormalities or are trying to live with life altering effects of experiencing these things, resulting in nothing ever being normal for them again. I hope that in my struggle to do without my usual over-eating for these 12 days, I will be able to remember what these people suffer day in and day out and that any relatively small sacrifices I will make by trying to fast are for a very limited duration and will soon be over (and mostly forgotten). What still awaits those who have been detained for many years, and those who have been tortured, are experiences that have not ended and will not end but will shape their lives significantly. Fasting is a small way of being in solidarity with their suffering as we do things that we hope will end the worse of their current suffering a little quicker than it would end if we do not act. Fasting will hopefully be a spiritual exercise also in that it will also put me in solidarity with 125 or more other people from Witness Against Torture who will be fasting for similar reasons as we ask God for mercy on us, and the perpetrators of the evil we are condemning, as well as the victims of all evil associated with this situation and what brought it about. As U.S. citizens, we must acknowledge our complicity in allowing our government to be involved in these actions on our behalf. As a Catholic, fasting will also act as a sign of contrition and penance for my complicity in these acts a U.S. citizen.

Bud Courtney from New York City

Bud is a member of the New York Catholic Worker who recently spent 12 days in Palestine with a delegation from Christian Peacemaker Teams. “Recalling the words of Liz McAllister, that if you look deep enough everything is connected, I am taking part in the Witness Against Torture fast to bring a little bit of suffering to myself to keep me a little more mindful of the suffering and torture that goes on everyday, not only in Guantánamo, but throughout the world.”

Kate Cowley from New York City

Kate originally hails from the Twin Cities and has lived at Saint Joseph House Catholic Worker for the last year and a half. She is honored to be participating in this year’s fast with Witness Against Torture and others who have been speaking out on behalf of the prisoners at Guantánamo. She is fasting as a statement of her solidarity with all human beings who have been victims of illegal detention and torture.

Angela Davis from New Orleans

Angela co-founded and currently coordinates Hagar’s House, a transgender inclusive home for women and children in New Orleans. She lives in an intentional community associated with the First Grace United Methodist Church and worked with Christian Peacemaker Teams in Palestine and Iraq.

Matt Daloisio from New York City

Matt is a husband and father from NYC, who has led anti-Guantánamo activities since 2002 with Witness Against Torture. “My fast, as an act of cleansing, represents the need for the United States to rid itself and atone for the crimes of torture and indefinite detention. It is an expression of hope that Obama will heed his own words, close Guantánamo, and restore the rule of law. It is also a small attempt to take some amount of personal responsibility for my own complicity in the crimes of my government, and join in solidarity with those who are the victims of our policies.”

Marie Dennis from Washington D.C.

Marie Dennis is president of Pax Christi International, a position she shares with Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo from the DR Congo. She is a Pax Christi USA Ambassador of Peace, has served on the Pax Christi International Executive Committee since 1999 and is a former national council chairperson for Pax Christi USA. Marie is director of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns. She holds a Masters degree in moral theology from Washington Theological Union and is co-author or author of seven books. For Maryknoll and Pax Christi International, Marie has visited many parts of the world – most recently Sudan, Iraq, Honduras and Haiti. She serves on the national board of JustFaith, the coordinating committee of the Jubilee USA Network; the steering committee of the Catholic Peacebuilding Network; the advisory committee of Orbis Books; and as a contributing editor to Sojourners magazine.

Marie is a lay woman, a mother of six and a grandmother. A commitment to simple living and social justice led Marie and her family to live on and work a 65 acre organic farm for nine years and to live in an inner city intentional community, Assisi Community in Washington D.C.

Robby Diesu from Washington, DC

Robby is a senior politics major at the Catholic University of America who co-founded Our Spring Break, a youth-driven direct action training camp. He also works with and supports GI resisters. Robby is fasting for Yassar Talal ‘Abdullah Yahia al-Zahrani from Saudi Arabia, a 17 year old whom apparently committed suicide in 2006 rather than spend more time in Guantánamo. “I fast for his life, a life that was ruined by the crimes of the US government. Crimes that continue you now under the Obama Administration. The 12 days of suffering that i will endure by fasting do not compare to the suffering Yassar Talal ‘Abdullah Yahia al-Zahrani from Saudi Arabia endured while in Gitmo.”

Leigh Estabrook from Champaign, IL

Leigh is a long-time activist with the St. Jude Catholic Worker House and home-schooler to her grandson. “I hope my fasting will bring to the attention of those in this community the horrors of our government's actions, in particular the denial of basic human rights to so-called enemies and the brutality practiced in the name of U.S. citizens. I see the fast as another form of prayer.”

Tom Feagley from Malden, Massachusetts

Tom Feagley has worked 24 years with Bread of Life outreach ministries in Malden, Mass., providing free meals & emergency food orders to hungry, homeless, isolated and poor. He participated in the 2005 Witness Against Torture march to Guantánamo, and has participated in witnesses at the White House and at both the Federal and Supreme Courts in Washington, DC.

Tom says, “It seems like such a small sacrifice, when compared to the hardships the ‘detainees’ have been made to endure, and are enduring, without any visible signs of relief. They are starved for the support of others, and we, like they and all caring people around the planet, hunger for justice and respect for the humanity of all. In many ways, fasting is about the simplest way to protest; all we gotta do is not eat. At the same time, I almost always have experienced real internal benefits whenever I've taken on a long fast. It's a powerful way to ground oneself, and an amazing way to reach greater spiritual depth.”

Chris Gaunt from Grinnell, Iowa

Chris is a third generation farmer, and a library assistant, mother and grandmother. “This is my 4th annual trip to DC to fast, vigil, and act together until Guantánamo is CLOSED. I am horrified and ashamed that this illegal prison continues to exist. I demand that my government STOP the insanity of torture and illegal detention. I will act in solidarity with all those still being illegally held and tortured at Guantánamo.”

Nancy Gowen from Richmond, Virginia

Life experiences such as being a mother of seven and a grandmother to four; arriving at the hospital in response to a phone call that your Mother has been beaten, robbed, raped and shot in the head; working for thirteen years as a mental health counselor with Richmond's homeless population and independently with a partner outreaching the male solicitation population to support safe sex by offering condoms, bleach and education; learning forgiveness; standing outside the state penitentiary while two of the men held responsibility for the death of my Mother as well as others were executed; outreach to a man on death row for 4+ years, having our last visit in the death house, two days later we stayed on the phone until shortly before it was time to stand in a field outside the penitentiary while he was executed. I joined Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation, Virginians Against the Death Penalty and Pax Christi. I have been fortunate to be a volunteer in Mother Teresa's homes in Calcutta as well as with outreach missionaries in South Africa.

A time came when it was no longer satisfying to use words and support activism; it was time to step out and be more than words and to be the action. This has led to arrests and a 90-day vacation in a federal prison for peacefully, non-violently protesting the School of the America's and crossing the arbitrary line of trespass.

Currently I am serving a one-year probation and have a stay away order from the Supreme Court Building for attempting to petition the Supreme Court to close Guantánamo Prison and to bring an end to torture. Again in a peaceful, non-violent manner.

Through many years of witnessing one lesson is consistent: IF YOU WANT PEACE YOU MUST WORK FOR JUSTICE; NO EXCEPTIONS.

I am participating in this liquid only fast to have some sense of solidarity with the prisoners at Guantánamo and with all prisoners who have been tortured. To help bring attention and raise the level of awareness of the injustices in our country and in the world. To remind president-elect Barack Obama of his promise to close Guantánamo and to stop torture, and to nurture the peace within me.

Lindsay Hagerman from New York City

Lindsay is a native Texan who now lives at Maryhouse Catholic Worker in Manhattan. “I fast in solidarity with the prisoners at Guantánamo and as a spiritual practice of ‘starving the ego.’ I also fast in repentance for the torture suffered by prisoners from Guantánamo to Bagram, from Rikers to Huntsville.”

Luke Hansen, SJ, from Chicago, IL

Luke is a Jesuit scholastic studying philosophy and theology at Loyola University and a member of Kairos Chicago, a faith and resistance community. In Chicago, Luke has helped lead spring break service trips, and he serves as a volunteer chaplain at the Juvenile Detention Center. “I am entering into this Fast for Justice as an act of repentance, an act of solidarity, and an act of spiritual and political force. This fast is an act of repentance for our sins and my sins. We have destroyed lives through indefinite detention and torture. We have failed to love our neighbors and ‘enemies’ by failing to defend their dignity and protect their basic rights. And I have been complicit in this injustice through my silence and inaction. I enter into this fast to repent of these sins against God and our neighbors. This fast is also **an act of solidarity** – to *feel with* all those who hunger for food and for justice, especially all prisoners currently engaged in hunger strikes. Finally, this fast will be **an act of spiritual and political force** in my life, and hopefully, the lives of others. When I experience hunger, I remember my dependence on God, and I am better disposed to hear God’s voice and receive God’s grace. I trust that God will hear and respond to the cry of this fast. I also hope and pray that this fast will awaken consciences and move people to action (others and ourselves). For the prophet Isaiah reminds us that an authentic fast is always accompanied by the works of mercy, including “releasing those bound unjustly” and “setting free the oppressed” (Isaiah 58:6). So I will continue to advocate for justice at Guantánamo and Bagram, especially the *immediate* release of those 116 men who have been cleared of any wrongdoing yet remain unjustly detained at Guantánamo.”

Chuck Harris from Blacksburg, VA

Chuck works with the Open Door Community in Atlanta, Georgia. “This will be the 4th time I’ve taken part in this January protest and vigil. I’ve never done fasting before. I think the longest I’ve gone without food was 30 hours after an action two years ago at the Supreme Court. A year ago I was hopeful there would be changes with a new administration. Unfortunately, that has not happened and I feel the need to be more active in opposition to the injustice at Guantánamo, Bagram, and in US prisons.

Martha Hennessey, Weathersfield, Vermont

Martha Hennessey lives in Weathersfield, Vermont and works as an occupational therapist. She is also the 7th grandchild to Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker. Martha says, "I am participating in the fast as an act of solidarity with our brothers and sisters who are tortured as prisoners in Guantánamo and throughout the world. This small sacrifice on our part is nothing compared to the suffering the prisoners have endured. When we pray we are asking God for forgiveness, mercy, justice. When we fast we are begging. In our giving, may we receive. May courage and hope be multiplied by our willingness to share in the suffering in some small way."

Sherrill Hogen from Conway, MA

Sherrill is a long-time activist in the anti-war, welfare rights and community health movements who is currently active in the movement to bring peace and justice to Palestine. "My life of privilege has led me to seek justice for people pushed down by poverty. Some years of living in South America taught me about U.S. imperialism and how we are lied to by our government. Going to Palestine gave me an understanding of what war and occupation does to people and the experience of practicing nonviolent resistance. All my life I have had an aversion to cruelty and have thought that torture of one human by another human is not human. It is the antithesis of being human. I have joined this effort in order to do something to bring an end to the practice of torture and to bring justice to a place of utter despair."

Diane Lopez Hughes from Springfield, IL

Diane is a peace and justice activist and Pax Christi USA Council member. "It's been a year since the commitment was made to close Guantánamo, and *deja vu!* What happened with the School of the Americas/WHINSEC seems close to what's happening here: in this case the location and name are changing, but those who are wrongfully detained will experience the same lack of human dignity, same ultra-restrictive confinement, same lack of justice. It's time to close the place AND its wrong-minded philosophy."

Brian Hynes from the Bronx, NY

Brian is a husband and father who joined the Catholic Worker in 1990. He uses vigils, civil resistance, civil disobedience and political participation to end war and undemocratic government policy. This is the second year he is participating in the Witness Against Torture Campaign in Washington, D.C

Kate Kelly from Washington, DC

Kate is currently in law school at American University; she was a 2009 Ella Baker Legal Fellow at the Center for Constitutional Rights and is a recent graduate of Brigham Young University. She has also served a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Barcelona, Spain. "I believe torture of any living creature is wrong."

Kathy Kelly from Chicago, IL

Kathy co-coordinates Voices for Creative Nonviolence, (www.vcnv.org) a campaign to end U.S. military and economic warfare. As a co-founder of Voices in the Wilderness, she helped form 70 delegations, from 1996 - 2003, that openly defied economic sanctions by bringing medicines to children and families in Iraq. Kathy lived in Baghdad throughout the 2003 "Shock and Awe" bombing. More recently, she has visited Gaza, (during Operation Cast Lead, Jan 2009) and Pakistan, (May-June, 2009), writing eyewitness accounts of war's impact on civilians. "It's a privilege to join with a community that believes in the further invention of nonviolence and is prepared to focus on the particular violence inflicted through torture. Fasting helps us develop our focus. By altering our every day schedules, displacing ourselves from normal routines, we gain a chance to build a community yearning for a different world. "The only way we can begin to break the vicious circle of blindness, hatred, and inequality," wrote David Dellinger, "is to combine an uncompromising war upon evil institutions with an unending kindness and love of every individual-including the individuals who defend existing institutions." (Revolutionary Nonviolence by David Dellinger)

Malachy Kilbride from Virginia

Malachy is a peace and social justice activist who has participated and worked with Witness Against Torture the last several years. He is on the coordinating committee of National Campaign for Nonviolent Resistance and also the Quaker Initiative to End Torture (QUIT).

Ed Kinane from Syracuse, NY

Ed is a long-time peace and justice activist committed to nonviolence. For the past four January's Ed has taken part in fasts and direct actions in DC against Guantánamo. In 2003 Ed joined Voices in the Wilderness in Baghdad before, during and after "shock and awe." Currently Ed is focused on opposing the Reaper drones, robots 'piloted' from Hancock Airbase near Syracuse now perpetrate extra-judicial executions in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. His work has also included Peace Brigade International teams to provide protective accompaniment to activists targeted by death squads; he has served two federal prison terms for civil disobedience committed against the U.S. government's notorious School of the Americas.

Art Laffin from Washington, DC

Art is active with the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker House and Witness Against Torture. "As I have tried to imagine what it would be like if I was a Guantánamo or Bagram prisoner and experienced the following treatment: being held indefinitely for years without charges and denied legal representation; being tortured and abused; being held incommunicado and denied contact with family and friends; I know that I would certainly want people to demand an end to my mistreatment, and to advocate for my immediate release. I join with other sisters and brothers in the Fast for Justice as an act of repentance for the crimes committed against our Arab and Muslim brothers. I also fast to let the Guantánamo and Bagram prisoners know they are not forgotten, and that there are people in the U.S. who deeply care about their plight. I fast, too, in the hope that our witness can help, in some small way, hasten these prisoners long-awaited freedom."

Scott Langley from Ghent, New York

Scott is a 32-year-old photojournalist. He has been involved with Witness Against Torture since its founding, having traveled to Guantánamo in 2005 to protest conditions there. “In this fast for the closure of Guantánamo, the release of the captives, and an end to torture, we have a common goal. I fast to remember those held at Guantánamo and similar prisons, those who have been deprived of food by their captors, and those who have voluntarily deprived themselves of food in protest. I stand in solidarity with them.”

Margo Liebers from Lincoln, NE

Margo is a nurse who attends the Lincoln Friends Meeting, and grew up in England and the Bahamas. Traveling with a career in the travel business, Margo remembers the devastating poverty she witnessed in Egypt that persuaded her that she needed to do something more than just lead tourists through it. Eventually she spent five years as a missionary in Haiti and became a nurse in order to be a more useful missionary. “I have been protesting the ‘war on terror’ since October of 2001 before the U.S. attacked Afghanistan. Our descent into darkness since then, with ongoing indefinite detention, rendition, torture, indiscriminate killing and bombing is personally and politically devastating to me. It feels banal to even try to put one's feeling into words.”

Jack McHale from Virginia

Jack McHale is a longtime peace and social justice activist in the Washington, D.C. metro area who lives in Northern Virginia. He recently was chairperson of Pax Christi Metro D.C./Baltimore region. Jack has been a member of Pax Christi for 22 years; he is also treasurer of the Guatemalan Human Rights Commission-USA, and spends much of his time championing justice and human rights issues in Guatemala.

Joe Morton from Baltimore, MD

Joe is a retired teacher of philosophy and peace studies at Goucher College, Towson, Maryland. “Fasting is a simple but meaningful way to join in solidarity both with other witnesses and, more important, with the prisoners at Guantánamo and elsewhere. For any of us to deprive ourselves of some comforts voluntarily for a brief time is, obviously, a very minor inconvenience in comparison to the deprivation of fundamental necessities and fundamental rights which the prisoners have experienced involuntarily for up to eight years. This fast is a declaration to the prisoners and also to my activist colleagues that I intend to continue in the struggle until Guantánamo and the other illegal, immoral interrogation centers are closed and the prisoners released.”

Amy Nee from Florida

Amy currently lives in Chicago, IL, where she will join the fast/vigil with the White Rose Catholic Worker of Rogers Park Chicago. “I do not have a history of protest or intentional political involvement of any kind. However, the more I learn the more I feel the need to do something even when I don't

know exactly what the best thing to do might be. That said, the more I learn about the treatment of Gitmo prisoners and other prisoner's of war, as well as civilians and soldiers effected by war, the more I want to speak my 'no' to injustice so that there is a space for the 'yes' of a more compassionate way."

Matthew Ochalek from Erie, PA

Matthew is a husband, father and founding member of Erie's Mary the Apostle Catholic Worker House. "I am fasting as an act of repentance for the torture and indefinite detention of the men at Guantánamo and to be a nonviolent witness for justice and peace."

Jake Olzen from Chicago, IL

Jake is a campus minister and graduate student at Loyola University Chicago who lives at the White Rose Catholic Worker and is part of the Kairos Chicago faith and resistance community. Jake fasts as repentance for eight years of torture, indefinite detention, humiliation and injustice that are sold and justified to us in the name of peace, freedom, and security. It is with a heavy, but hope-filled heart, that Jake joins with Witness Against Torture to remember the real, human persons held at Guantánamo and Bagram, who protest their own unjust imprisonment through hunger strikes. "I hope, that in this small act of solidarity and sacrifice, that my fast may be a prayer and witness to the end of torture and the restoration of human rights, dignity and common good to their rightful place. The groaning hunger pains and a tired body is a small price to pay when communities of faith and conscience come together to resist the evils of imperial torture. May our fast give hope to our own meager hopelessness and bear witness to the covenant of God that calls us to love our enemies and "to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness" (Is 42:7).

Sister Dianna Ortiz from Washington, DC

Sister Dianna is a U.S. born survivor of torture in Guatemala. The founder of the Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International (TASSC), she was its executive director for ten years. Sr. Dianna now works with a number of organizations in a collective effort to abolish torture worldwide.

Beverly Rice from New York City

Beverly is a retired registered nurse, mother of six and grandmother of sixteen, who has been arrested many times for peace and justice issues in several states. "I believe expressing the need for the United States to make significant changes in our foreign and domestic policies calls upon its citizens to follow nonviolent direct actions to urge our government to address these issues."

I was eight years old in 1945 and believed there always was a war and surprised to hear it ended. When told *we* dropped those atomic bombs on Japanese cities, I thought there was a mistake. It could not be because we were the good guys. The Nazi's were the bad guys, I remember screaming when seeing a newsreel of emaciated people liberated from a concentration camp.

Over the years, those early impressions remained with me. I developed a firm commitment to peaceful nonviolent actions, especially civil disobedience. I hope always to join with people of goodwill to promote peace and justice issues.

I am privileged to join the fast as a continued commitment to the principles of nonviolent protest. I am fasting for those imprisoned and tortured in Guantánamo. I hope these men will be given a safe harbor and restoration of their human rights. In particular, I offer up this fast for Al Mishad Sharif Fati Ali, age 29, Guantánamo prisoner whom I represented by proxy at the Witness Against Torture arrest in January 2008.

Jack Ryan from Peoria, IL

Jake is a former FBI agent, fired in 1987 for refusing to investigate Veterans Fast for Life and Plowshares as terrorists. He is with the Peoria Area Peace Network and Peoria's former Catholic Worker house, and was involved in a 1992 fast commemorating the 50th anniversary of Columbus' invasion.

Helen Schietinger from Washington, DC

Helen has been a nurse for decades. "I have been politically active since adolescence, but not until the Bush administration have I felt so morally obligated to protest the actions of my government. Unfortunately, the Obama Administration has continued to defend and execute the same unconstitutional policies as President Bush. I am fasting to express my solidarity with the men imprisoned at Guantánamo. Years of their lives have been stolen from them already. Most have never been charged with any wrongdoing and none have had an opportunity to defend themselves in a valid US court of law. Even their immediate release cannot erase the damage caused by their treatment."

Anna Shockley from Charleston, SC

Anna is a founding member and co-chair of SCADP (South Carolinians Abolishing the Death Penalty).

Fr. River Damien Sims from San Francisco, CA

Fr. River is a priest in the Society of Franciscan Workers, Inc., who works with people who are on the fringes of society, and whose services are cut because of funding of war. "I see people suffer each day of my life because of lack of funding and caring. I am fasting to join in solidarity with others and to lodge my protest against the acts of our government and against the President who came into office with what appeared a more compassionate agenda but who now seems to be a reincarnation of George Bush. I believe that we are called by Jesus of Nazareth to walk the way of non-violence. There is no such thing as 'just war.' Nothing justifies the killing of another human being."

Adam Stone from Bucyrus, OH

Adam is a practicing attorney and a 2009 graduate of the University of Dayton School of Law. "Because I believe that the immorality of war is corrupting the rule of law in this country, I cannot in good faith sit idly by while people in the custody of the American government are tortured and denied their 'inalienable rights' to which we are so inextricably linked and to which the tides of history and God

above have deemed just and humane. They tell me that freedom is worth dying for but I will not be free so that others may suffer under my government's tyranny. I do not want that freedom."

Ananda Strazzini from Brooklyn, NY

Ananda is a professional cook who feels lucky to be able to stand up for something so vitally important. "I am going to D.C. because I don't believe in human torture. As a citizen of the United States I have an obligation to speak out when the government breaks the law. Guantánamo is a shameful place that must be closed. The longer it stays open is only a longer time to breed hatred and violence toward the United States. While I am fasting in solidarity with the detainees in Guantánamo, I pray that there is an awakening in the American people to call for justice and peace around the world."

Eve Tetaz from Washington, DC

Eve Tetaz is a resident of Washington, DC, and has spent over thirty years teaching in Ghana, Iran, Thailand, and finally, in inner city secondary schools in DC. Since her retirement in 1995, she has been involved with Life Pathways, a non-profit organization that she founded over 15 years ago. She helps low-income single parents acquire basic life skills necessary for obtaining and maintaining employment.

Eve says, "I remember discussing Henry Thoreau's essay on 'Civil Disobedience' with my 11th grade class during the Viet Nam War. Thoreau believed that when our leaders cease to reflect the core principles upon which our nation was founded we, the people, have the right and the obligation to voice our opposition and demand that our leaders admit their failures and advocate for policies that truly reflect democratic principles."

"I belong to a faith community that is committed to the peaceful, non-violent opposition to all forms of injustice. This translates into the belief that I must share in the cost of doing justice by accepting the responsibility of making sure that my elected leaders, who speak in my name, do not misrepresent me by supporting policies that violate moral law, which takes precedent over laws made by governments. As a morally responsible individual, I believe that I must be held accountable for crimes committed by our democratically elected leaders who have been given the authority to act in my name. When my country engages in a preemptive, illegal, and immoral war – a war that has been condemned by international law and the highest religious authorities, I must say NO, NOT IN MY NAME. When, it sets up a detention facility in Guantánamo, I am obliged to say NO, NOT IN MY NAME. When it kidnaps people off the streets in countries around the world, and transports them to torture facilities in secret locations, I am compelled to say NO, NOT IN MY NAME."

"I will continue to maintain my right to speak out against these crimes against justice regardless of the cost in the hope that one day nations will turn their swords into plowshares, and study war no more."

Paul Thorson from New York City

Paul is a third year seminarian at Union Theological Seminary. "I am fasting as a way to interrupt the ease with which his wants and needs can be met. The ease with which wants and needs can be met is a privilege that has been forcefully denied to prisoners at Guantánamo."

Silke Tudor from New York City

Silke is an author and former newspaper columnist turned full-time, live-in volunteer at the New York Catholic Worker. “I fast in solidarity with those prisoners in Guantánamo who have suffered hunger strikes over the years to protest the inhumane conditions there. I hope our action is a forceful reminder to the president of every American's shared humanity with every detainee.”

Sister Julia Walsh, FSPA, from Chicago

Sister Julia teaches high school morality at Hales Franciscan High School on Chicago's South Side. “I will be engaging in a partial fast to pray in solidarity of the men who have been cleared for release but still are detained. May justice come to them soon, and may humanity begin to treat one another with dignity!”