Tomás Ramírez, M.S., is the Executive Director of Semillas y Raíces (Seeds and Roots), a not for profit organization focused on cultural preservation, community healing, and youth development. He is also the President of Infinite Conversations, a privately owned provider of consulting and training services that engages in gang outreach and intervention, as well as in the training of high schools administrators and staff, police officers and Juvenile Court Judges. He is a Youth Counselor, Conflict Transformation and Reconciliation facilitator, as well as a cultural sensitivity training expert. He’s currently a PhD student at DePaul University College of Education, holds a Master’s of Science degree from the DePaul University School of Public Service and a Bachelor’s Degree in Latin American Studies and Community Building from DePaul University.

For PAX 214, I want students to come to class wearing their peacemaker selves. We will be exposed to some of the coolest initiatives on conflict transformation, intervention and advocacy in the city and the nation. This course will support the development of your practice as a peacemaker, and will give you tangible tools to engage in the field of peace studies and life. Come ready to participate and grow! — Tomas Ramírez, M.S., DePaul University

Racism and Fear of the Other: A Franciscan Perspective

At this free event, Father Dan Horan, OFM, will discuss racism and xenophobia, and what we can do about it. Fr. Dan is a visiting assistant professor at Catholic Theological Union and is a columnist for America magazine. He is the author of several books, including The Franciscan Heart of Thomas Merton: A New Look at the Spiritual Influence in His Life, Thought and Writing.

Saturday, March 4th | 10am-2pm
Registration begins at 9:30
DePaul University, Lincoln Park Campus
Schmitt Academic Center (SAC), Rm 154

Breakfast with Sister Helen Prejean

Organized by DePaul University’s Office of Mission and Values & sponsored by PJC - join us for a conversation with Sister Helen Prejean, renowned anti-death penalty activist and author of Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the United States. It was number one on the New York Times Best Seller List for 31 weeks. It also was an international best seller and has been translated into ten different languages.

Thursday, April 20th | 8am-9:30am
DePaul University, Lincoln Park Campus
Student Center, Rm 380
On day three of the week-long Great Lakes Initiative Leadership Institute in Kampala, Uganda this past January, I joined the 120 participants on a short but powerful pilgrimage to Lake Victoria.

Dramatizing the spirit of this annual assembly—which gathers Catholic and Protestant ministers and agents of change from throughout East Africa to renew the work for reconciliation in their local contexts—we walked the two-kilometers to the lakeshore to remember the violence and injustice that has taken place in the nations connected, directly or indirectly, to this vast body of water, the largest lake in Africa. When we arrived, the participants—from Rwanda and Burundi, from the Democratic Republic of Congo to Kenya, from South Sudan to Uganda—prayerfully lamented the blood that has been spilled in this region, but also recommitted themselves to continuing their work to transform structural violence and to build cultures of peace. Being with these peace-builders was a transformative experience, something that was made possible by an invitation to co-teach one of the institute's six seminars entitled “Christian Nonviolent Response to Conflict.” It was the first time a seminar on active nonviolence was offered at the Great Lakes Institute (GLI).

Not only was it deeply moving to work with people from throughout the region who had experienced first-hand the unspeakable horrors of genocide, military dictatorship, interreligious conflict and ethnic violence—and, at the same time, to learn about the powerful ways they have sought to transform conflict and create the possibilities for reconciliation—it was thrilling to co-lead this class with Flora Bringi Kumayo. Flora is a gifted nonviolence trainer with the Organization for Nonviolence and Development in Juba, South Sudan. Her wealth of knowledge is rooted in her own personal journey from violence to wholeness. “I used to be a violence promoter,” she says, referring to her involvement in past political movements in her home country, which netted her four stints in prison. “Now I am a nonviolence promoter.” After undergoing rigorous education in the power of active nonviolent change, she now trains people throughout East Africa in these strategies and techniques, including at the Kampala gathering. Flora and I crafted a process that wove together role-plays, exercises, small group discussions, videos, and presentations. Throughout the week, we opened space for participants to grapple with the vision, principles, strategies and methods of active nonviolence. Most importantly, participants were encouraged to learn from one another the breathtaking stories of nonviolent change from their own lives, communities, countries and continent. In keeping with the theme, we also unpacked the biblical roots of Christian nonviolence, which—as these long-time people of faith reported in the final evaluation—helped illuminate for them in a new way the spirituality and practice of the Nonviolent Jesus.

The Great Lakes Institute was founded in 2006 to promote the practice of reconciliation throughout East Africa. In 2011, it launched the annual leadership conference. GLI is now a network of organizations and what it terms “restless Christians” yearning for what the Bible calls the “new creation,” where all are reconciled. The week-long institute fosters leadership through plenary sessions, worship times, formal seminars, and interaction at meals. In this atmosphere, as GLI puts it, “the institute provides rich theological content and discourse, and enables leaders to engage in lively imagination and reflection on practices which can build peace and transform leaders using a theological, contextual and practical curriculum.” But it is more than this. GLI is a safe zone where participants coming from situations of acute violence can share and learn—but also catch their breath, get rejuvenated, and hear from others who are also up against it, before heading back into the fray. It reminds me of Tennessee’s Highlander Center, which offered nonviolent activists waist deep in the US Civil Rights movement in the 1950s a space for going deeper and re-charging before slipping back into the terror and hope of that struggle. Or the two-week retreats that Liberation Theology founder Gustavo Gutierrez held in Peru for change agents from across Latin America who were founding what they called base communities in the 1970s, with the express purpose of building a more just world.

There is something powerful about such spaces. In Kampala GLI fills its space with questions, each with its own day: Day One: Toward What? (Vision), Day Two: What is going on? (Lament), Day Three: What does hope look like? (Pilgrimage), Day Four: What kind of leadership? (Leadership), and Day Five: Why me and why bother? (The Long Haul). This is a powerful and transformative pedagogy for our time, and I am grateful to have been invited along.
Ken Butigan is Senior Professional Lecturer in the Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies Program at DePaul. He is grateful for the support DePaul and PJC provided to make this journey possible.
Many years ago, I was stopped in my tracks by the clarity and power of Fr. Daniel Berrigan — and nothing has been the same since.

Berrigan died last April. His death brought the memory of our encounter with all its vivid force. At the time, I was researching the impacts of nuclear arms for a book project, and as part of this work I visited many East Coast think tanks purportedly envisioning alternatives to the then-spiraling arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union. Each discussion I had with the researchers at these institutes left me more and more depressed. No one I spoke with could envision a world free of nuclear weapons. At best, they thought we might be able to stabilize the nuclear regime, or perhaps reduce it a bit if we increased conventional weapons. It was after four or five discussions like this that I contacted Berrigan and asked if I could see him. I knew his long-time history as an antiwar activist and

I instinctively felt he might provide some way to balance out what I’d been hearing. He didn’t know me, but he graciously welcomed me to his place in Manhattan.

For a couple of hours, he shared with me his vision, which essentially boiled down to this: “We live in a culture of death --- and it is up to us to resist it.” There was a lifetime of experience behind these words and I felt both the simplicity and weight of them. Here was the prophet I’d heard and read about. And like other prophets, he didn’t let me off the hook. “Find some people you can pray with and march with,” he told me before I left. That mantra floated through my head for the next few months and kept boring its way into my soul. Eventually, following orders, I did just that — and my life took an unexpected detour onto a road of nonviolent transformation that I am still, in fits and starts, traveling.

Continued on Page 5
A recently published book reminds us that, even as peacemakers age, their visions and guidance remain as necessary and as urgent as ever. In this volume, the author, Charles R. Strain—who teaches in the PAX program and the Religious Studies Department here at DePaul—pairs Berrigan with the iconic Vietnamese Buddhist monk and teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh, to see what their wisdom might bring to a social ethics geared to transforming our contemporary world and its growing crises of war, poverty and climate change. In The Prophet and the Bodhisattva: Daniel Berrigan, Thich Nhat Hanh, and the Ethics of Peace and Justice, Strain sets out to illuminate the heart of the matter for both of these spiritually-grounded practitioners of nonviolent change — and then explores how what they have bet their lives on can help us move from a world in chaos to a world where everyone matters, including by creating what he frames as a “Global Civil Society.”

It is clear that Strain has been deeply influenced by both of these figures, and he gives them their due in a lavish presentation of their fundamental orientations, illuminating in profuse detail how Berrigan’s life of nonviolent resistance embodies the prophetic vision that undergirds much of the Judeo-Christian tradition, while Thich Nhat Hanh, now in his mid-80s, has lived a life of engaged practice rooted in compassion that, like the traditional bodhisattva of the Buddhist tradition, resolves to save all others.

But Strain is not content simply to present detailed portraits of these agents of change, or even only to compare them — which he does, for example, by contrasting in a sustained and illuminating analysis the “no” of the fiery Christian prophet with the “yes” of Buddhist mindfulness that, seeing the interconnectedness of all things, can dampens one’s proclivity to moral superiority. Rather, his larger project is to see how what Berrigan and Nhat Hanh have learned can complement or even reframe other approaches to building a just world.

This question is personal for Strain who, though an activist himself, has spent 40 years teaching. While his own experience tells him that academia and other sectors — religious, political and non-governmental organizations — can easily and uncritically affirm and be co-opted by society’s unjust structures and policies, he holds out hope that they may become what he terms “countervailing institutions.” They can be part of a mobilized network of agencies creating a more just and sustainable reality and, by implication, can even integrate something of the prophetic and the mindful into its approaches.

In scholarly detail, Strain lays out new strategic frameworks for building this new world that are emerging from the academic discipline of peace studies and from growing transnational networks, including “just peace-making” and “strategic peacebuilding.” There is much to recommend in these models, as Strain shows, but in the end, he holds that if both the vision and mindfulness of the prophet and the bodhisattva are missing from these rationalized systems, they will be severely hampered.

Why? Because what we are dealing with, as we plunge on into the 21st century, is not simply retooling a world a bit out of kilter but a planet facing, on the one hand, the oppressive consequences of empire and, on the other, climate chaos. Not only are these feeding one another, they are grounded in what Strain calls an overarching matrix. Anything short of a movement that is both prophetic and deeply mindful will not foster the thoroughgoing transformation and healing that is needed.

While this book’s academic precision and detail are perhaps mostly geared to fellow social ethicists, there is much in this book which all of us can benefit from.

First, Strain provides a comprehensive up-to-date overview of critical and explanatory work being done on Imperial America. This goes, as well, for its treatment of the climate crisis. In fact, if nothing else, this book is worth reading for these sections alone.

But there is much more to this book than these important chapters. Charles Strain’s text helps us grasp in engaging detail two paths toward the well-being of all still being trod by Daniel Berrigan and Thich Nhat Hanh. Even more, it helps us see how all of us are called to deepen this journey of inner and outer change.

Where to Find the Book:
Orders: Contact your favorite bookseller or order directly from the publisher via phone (541) 344-1528, fax (541) 344-1506 or e-mail us at orders@wipfandstock.com
www.wipfandstock.com
Also found on Amazon.com
The Peace, Justice & Conflict Studies program offers students an undergraduate major and minor curriculum that helps them reflect on the origins and causes of conflict, violence and social injustice as well as the wide spectrum of conflict intervention - from armed conflict, through governmental and organizational peace-building, to local and interpersonal conflict resolution. The program also introduces students to strategies for resolving interpersonal, communal and international conflicts peacefully, as well as tactics that promote the common good in a way that addresses the structural origins of violence.

Website: las.depaul.edu/academics/peace-justice-and-conflict-studies
Facebook: www.facebook.com/DePaulPJC
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helpful resources

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The Career Center is a resource to find internships, jobs, and network with professionals and get career development assistance.
W: careercenter.depaul.edu
@depaulcareerctr

DePaul Central
DePaul Central provides services to help students manage registration, academic planning, financial aid and payment processes at DePaul.
W: offices.depaul.edu/depaul-central
@DePaulCentral

Steans Center
The Steans Center develops relationships with community organizations to engage DePaul students in educational opportunities grounded in respect for human dignity and the quest for social justice.
W: steans.depaul.edu
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DePaul Study Abroad gives students the opportunity to engage and expand their studies in foreign countries through academic settings.
W: studyabroad.depaul.edu
@DPUStudyAbroad

Center for Identity, Inclusion and Social Change
The Center promotes artistic expression and intellectual inquiry that challenges students to explore all aspects of their identity.
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