

No limits for No Boundaries, recognized by Pax Christi International, CCHD

“Everything I do, I do because of what I learned here.”

Ray Kelly dropped that assessment into the reminder he made at St. Peter Claver in West Baltimore on the 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time, the good news that Pax Christi International, the global Catholic peace movement, had named the No Boundaries Coalition the recipient of its 2018 Peace Award.

Kelly serves on the executive committee of St. Peter Claver/St. Pius V Parish, and is chief executive officer of No Boundaries, an 8-year-old nonprofit that has grown from an organizer of block parties into an advocate for education, health, recovery and safety, as well as accountability among police and public officials.

Pax Christi International will recognize Kelly, chief operating officer Ashiah Parker and the entire No Boundaries Coalition at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Baltimore Sept. 15, at 7 p.m. A reception will follow at St. Peter Claver, 8:30-10 p.m.

Kelly sported his Batman cufflinks to the aforementioned Sunday Mass Aug. 19. Like the caped crusader, he maintains very long hours.

The 48-year-old estimates that he averaged 25 hours of sleep over the winter and spring, as the Community Oversight Task Force completed a 74-page report. Its work was required by a 2017 federal consent decree involving law enforcement in the city.

Kelly was one of nine members appointed to the committee by Mayor Catherine Pugh. He eventually became its chairman, and traveled to Denver, Oakland and New Orleans to study best practices.

Last year was the deadliest per capita in the history of Baltimore City. By May, it

was on to its third police commissioner of 2018. In August, the murder rate hovered near one per day.

“The dynamics of Baltimore City, with all the turmoil that comes internally, it’s been a full-time job,” Kelly said of his work with the COTF, which called for more independent civilian review of law enforcement. “It’s a historic moment, where we’ve got to make sure we get it right.”

His visibility includes appearing in the middle of the image the Archdiocese of Baltimore is using to promote the “Embracing Our Mission” capital campaign, just behind Archbishop William Lori and Bishop Denis Madden, and in between Josephite Father Ray Bomberger, his pastor, and Monsignor Richard J. Bozzelli, pastor of St. Bernardine.

The photo was taken in September 2016, as Kelly led a prayer walk from St. Peter Claver that paused at the sites of several recent homicides.

Kelly kept No Boundaries going during a recent move from a room at St. Peter Claver’s parish hall to a more spacious storefront a few blocks south on Pennsylvania Avenue.

On a sweltering day in June, the visitors stopping in to cool off included two uniformed city police officers. The irony was not lost on Kelly. Once an addict who was imprisoned for his role in a murder conspiracy, he began to turn his life around thanks to a scholarship to a recovery facility founded by a Jesuit priest.

“When people see who I was, formerly out on the street, to change and then have influence ... ” Kelly said.

“Doing all this in a collaborative, non-violent, peaceful manner that’s had proven results, if we (the COTF) can submit recommendations, and do it with people and police officers engaging each other, if we clean up the department and the city, that will inspire more everyday people to get involved.”

No Boundaries made an impression on Pax Christi USA two years ago, when it held its national conference in Linthicum. With the August heat index soaring above 100, activists cleaned a vacant, overgrown lot in Sandtown-Winchester, not

far from where Freddie Gray Jr. died from injuries sustained while in police custody in April 2015.

“We created a little park that’s still being maintained today,” Kelly said.

One of No Boundaries most reliable benefactors has been the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, which awarded it a \$75,000 national grant Aug. 23, during a luncheon at St. Francis of Assisi in Mayfield.

Monsignor William F. Burke, pastor of St. Francis, is the archdiocesan director of CCHD. He announced the awards, which totaled \$425,000.

Other national grants went to: United Workers Association, \$75,000; People Working Together in Howard (PATH), \$55,000; Bridge of Maryland, \$50,000; Bridge of Maryland, \$50,000; North East Housing Initiative, \$50,000; Immigration Outreach Service Center, \$40,000; and Drink at the Well, \$40,000.

Local CCHD grants went to: Youth as Resources, \$20,000; and Youth Empowerment Society (YES), \$20,000.