

the ●
sign of peace
Journal of the Catholic Peace Fellowship

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The Moral Compass of Benedict XVI

Where will he lead Church teaching on war?

Saint Ignatius and ROTC at Jesuit Schools

Joshua Casteel: A Soldier's Magnificat

The Editors on the 3rd Anniversary of Iraq Invasion

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letters

Hello, I am a priest of the Diocese of Madison, WI. At the conclusion of Pope Benedict's message for the World Day of Peace, he encouraged each community to have an educational effort for the truth of peace.

What do you offer in your workshop? I'd like to include this as an option for our Bishop to fulfill the Pope's wishes. -Jim Murphy

I am an Air Force veteran, honorably discharged for conscientious objection. I have a B.A. in Philosophy from the University of Arkansas and an M.T.S. from Emory University. I will be received into the Catholic Church this Easter... I am interested in sharing my story publicly, giving talks where I can and helping bring about the removal of just-war theory from the teaching of the Church.

Thank you. -Jonathan D. Lace

Response to our "Conscientious Objection and Abortion" e-mail

I wanted to thank you for addressing conscientious objection and abortion. As I look ahead to my ob/gyn clinicals at an ultra-secular medical school, this is very significant for me. -Lauren O'Connell

Response to a CPF retreat ad on site run by editor of Catholic World Report

I'm writing about a Blog ad that someone from your organization purchased for display on my web site. It's a little embarrassing to say this, but you don't want your ad on my site because I don't want it there either... I will refund your money.

My site is extremely conservative and pro-US military and you're not going to get any takers for your conference from advertising there. Your money would be better spent elsewhere... -Domenico Bettinelli

Excerpt of CPF's response:

Thanks, though I'm sorry that there's no room for the ad, which promotes a Catholic event held by Catholic people who happen to think that the Catholic faith has a thing or two to say to our culture of death. Honestly, I think your decision to remove the ad is wrong-headed, theologically flimsy and, ultimately, based in cowardice.

-Mike Griffin

Please send letters to our P.O. Box or to staff@catholicpeacefellowship.org

The Feast of Saint Joseph . . . Three Years Later



March 19, 2003 will be remembered as the night that “shock and awe” began. In the U.S., people sat glued to their televisions, wondering, “when will it begin?” In Iraq, people were quite unglued, scurrying to protect their young, also wondering, “when will it begin?” So we all waited. It was the Feast of Saint Joseph.

Saint Joseph, protector of the Christ Child, was likely invoked by hundreds of thousands of Iraqi Catholics—perhaps as patron of families, perhaps as patron of a good death.

We have remarked before on the strange juxtaposition of the Church’s Feasts of life and the world’s liturgies of death. Sometimes the coincidence is felicitous: Armistice Day, putting an end to the massive killing of World War I, occurred on November 11—the Feast of Saint Martin of Tours, a conscientious objector who laid down his sword and became a soldier of Christ. Sometimes the coincidence is ominous: The Feast of the Transfiguration, August 6, was profaned in 1945 by what Pope Paul VI would later call “a butchery of untold magnitude.”

We cannot help but reflect on the meaning of March 19. The point is not that some other day would have been better. Indeed, “the war” began long before March 19, 2003; the invasion was merely one more escalation of a twelve-year system of sanctions and violence imposed on ordinary Iraqis. Still, liturgical reflection has a way of making the realities of sin and grace a bit clearer.

This year, with March 19 falling on a Sunday (and the Feast of St. Joseph thus moved to the next day), the readings for the Third Sunday of Lent come into focus. The first, from Exodus, reminds us of the commands of God, including “You shall not kill” (Ex 20:13). Paul reminds those at Corinth, and us here, that the world will not understand what we preach, but that “the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom” (1 Cor 1:25). And in a providential bit of irony, the Gospel is the text most often used by warmakers to justify their belligerence. “He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and oxen, and spilled the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables, and to those who sold doves he said, “Take these out of here, and stop making my Father’s house a marketplace” (Jn 2:15-16).

Some see here a Rambo-like Jesus, and with each table that falls another hundred thousand deaths can be justified. An inane reading of Scripture—it was, after all, tables that fell and coins that spilled, not a village destroyed, not a spray of bullets or bombs. There is a difference.

Constantinian figures in the Church have always obfuscated the first and self-evident meaning of this text, that the mix of religion, money and power is diabolical, contrary to the Father’s will. Such a mix brings compromise. We still see it in the U.S. Church. We failed three years ago and we are failing now, becoming desensitized to perpetual war and countenancing those leaders—like military Archbishop O’Brien—who somehow square this violence with the way of Jesus Christ.

Christ taught us better. His nonviolent love of friends and enemies was no quaint sentiment, but a mandate for living in accord with the creator of the universe. Violence will sooner or later fail. Three years ago, this truth was proclaimed by John Paul II. Three years later, we can reflect on the present quagmire and remember his constant insistence on an active love that is above both “the cowardice which gives in to evil and the violence which, under the illusion of fighting evil, only makes it worse” (*Centesimus annus*, n. 25).

Today the debate rages. Should we pull out of Iraq? Don’t we need a presence there? Our response, as one CPF member put it, is this: We, the Church, do have a presence there. We should help in doing what Christians do in troubled lands—build hospitals, serve the poor, teach the children. We might also, in a spirit of communion with them, use the traditional titles in the Litany of Saint Joseph to adapt a prayer for these difficult days:

Saint Joseph, pray for us.

Diligent protector of Christ . . . help us to revere His teachings.

Head of the Holy Family . . . make us see all as our kin.

Joseph most Just . . . teach us to name evil as evil.

Joseph most faithful . . . show us how to trust in God.

Patron of the dying . . . be with all victims of violence.

Terror of demons . . . guard us from the demons of Terror.

Protector of the Holy Church . . . help us to be a sign of peace in the world. Amen.

—The Editors

Peace Briefs

News Compiled by the CPF Staff

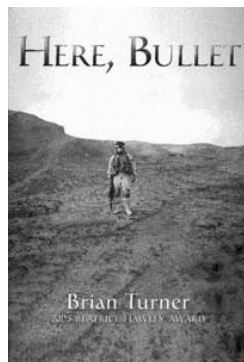
Here, Bullet

No matter/ what god shines down on you, no matter/ what crackling pain and anger/ you carry in your fists, my friend,/ it should break your heart to kill.

Thirty-eight-year-old Brian Turner, who served with the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team in Iraq, recently published a collection of poems entitled, *Here, Bullet*. The line above is from his poem "Sadiq," meaning *friend* in Arabic, written for his fellow soldiers in response to the hollowness he felt after repeating the line they normally used to motivate themselves: "I'm going to go over there and shoot someone in the face."

Turner wrote another poem, "Eulogy," to memorialize a friend who committed suicide while in Iraq.

Brian Turner's book is now available at bookstores.



PTSD Cases Still Get Review

In November 2005, we reported on e-mail that after sharp protests, the Veterans Affairs Department announced that it would cancel its review of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) claims by service members. The purpose of the review had been to inquire into cases that had initially "lacked required medical evidence," and to cut off benefits from those veterans who may have been making fraudulent claims of PTSD, therefore "costing the taxpayer billions of dollars in unjustified payments." (We can't help but note the irony that anybody would be worried about the cost of helping suffering veterans, but could ignore the billions being spent on war.)

On January 30, we received the following email from "Terrence," who refutes the VA's claim that they had cancelled the review: "The VA lied, they are going on with this 'review' which my wife went through yesterday. She is a total wreck today. It was more like the 'Inquisition.'" On further inquiry, he gave more information: "My wife received 'the letter' about a day after the DAV magazine came in the mail announcing that the 'review' was cancelled. This was around December 29. The letter said 'someone' would be contacting us for the CP exam and failure not to show up would result in loss of all benefits. Then she was scheduled. I felt it important enough to let people know that somehow the VA is sliding these 'reviews' in. Thank you for your support and bless you. Terrance."

Christian Peacemakers Still Missing

As of this writing, the four members of the Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) who were kidnapped on November 26, 2005, have not yet been released. Tom Fox of Virginia, U.S., Harmeet Singh-Sooden and Jim Loney of Canada, and Norman Kember of England have been held hostage by a group calling itself the "Swords of Righteousness Brigade." The group has demanded the release of the Iraqi detainees held in United States and Iraqi prisons.

The Catholic Peace Fellowship joins CPT in its concern for its teammates and its concern for the well-being of all Iraqis who are suffering under occupation. CPF shares the vision of CPT—that Christians are not meant to kill, but to serve one another in love, even if this means risking harm, imprisonment, or death. We greatly respect the work of all members of CPT, who are willing to put their own lives in danger in order to save the lives of others—while still refusing to kill.

We pray that these four men be returned to their families and loved ones unharmed. We pray that their captors allow the love of God into their hearts, and turn from the ways of violence. We pray that this unjust war will come to an end. We pray that Christians everywhere refuse to take up arms and be, for each other and for the world, a sign of peace.

Dr. King, Youth, and War

The campaign to curb military recruitment in local high schools is picking up speed in South Bend. Youth from seven different high schools in the South Bend, IN area attended a recent coffeehouse centered around Martin Luther King, Jr.'s message for peace and against violence. The speakers included a former Army recruiter, a Marine who recently returned from three tours in Iraq, and a Vietnam veteran who has recently begun to get treatment for his PTSD. Debra Stanley, a military family member who introduced herself as "a daughter, a sister, a wife, and a mother of soldiers" was most outspoken against what she dubbed "military recruiters *preying* on our children."

The coffeehouse provided a dynamic setting in which high school and college students, parents, activists, and veterans discussed the message of Dr. King (after hearing excerpts from his speeches against war and advocat-



ing conscientious objection), and what it meant for youth today.

Since the campaign began, at least four area high schools have changed their policies regarding military recruiters' access to high school students.

GI Rights Hotline

Since we began answering calls on the GI Rights Hotline, we have grown accustomed to hearing complaints about military recruiters. Almost daily, we hear from scared high school students telling us the many false threats that recruiters make to them, outraged parents of recruits who cannot believe that a uniformed recruiter lied to their faces about their child's future in the military, or disillusioned young men and women in the military who say that nothing the recruiter promised them was true.

Recently, though, we received a call from a military recruiter who was looking for help to get out. Talking about the pressure and stress of his job, a job much more stressful than anything else he had ever done in the military, the recruiter explained that he could no longer take it. He could no longer recruit young people into this military. He had to leave.

This recruiter provided us with yet another insight into the difficulties facing folks in the military, and strengthened our resolve to support these troops.

Cardinal Martino affirms personalist approach to peacemaking

Cardinal Renato Martino, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace at the Vatican, has devoted a chapter of his new book *Peace and War* to affirming the idea that peace comes from the work of "peacemakers and peaceful people," rather than from structures alone.

Martino argues that peace comes first and foremost from the "man who sows peace around himself," who is "peaceful always and in every circumstance, because peace is part of his being." This quality, he points out, is not inherent in ideals or in structures, but rather in human beings, who are created by God.

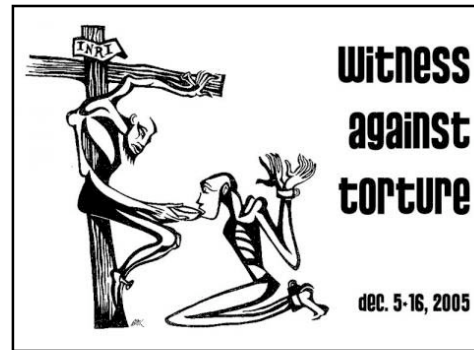
While the Cardinal commends organizations and agreements as important resources for peace, he concludes that they are secondary to peacemakers: "Too often in the past we have been under the illusion that structural mechanisms and processes would ensure a world of peace with no need for peacemakers."

The Cardinal also addressed the issue of pacifism by warning pacifists against a militancy that tries "to possess peace and to impose it." He defines peace as a gift from God—not something that humans alone can attain by rallying for peace, or by making peace a social and political object: "Pacifism without peaceful protagonists. . . risks betraying the purpose of peace. It may become an ideology, Manichean in its judgments and

even intolerant. . . insensitive to the complexity of situations."

'Visiting the Prisoners' Illegal

Seven members of *Witness Against Torture: a March to Visit the Prisoners of Guantanamo* are being investigated by the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC.) They were served papers in early February for violating the U.S travel ban to Cuba.



Witness Against Torture describes itself as "a group of twenty-five U.S. Christians following the nonviolent tradition of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker. As a 'work of mercy' in keeping with our faith, we seek to visit the hundreds of detainees who have been held for more than three years under horrific conditions by the U.S. government."

In December 2005, members of *Witness* marched over 60 miles to the Naval Base in Guantanamo, and camped outside the gate of the militarized zone. They fasted for the four days they were there, waiting and hoping to be let on the base. They were unsuccessful in this attempt.

According to their press release,

"Upon return to the U.S. all members of the group openly shared that they had been to Cuba and gave their names and addresses to Customs officials. Despite this high level of openness, the U.S. Treasury Department sent letters of inquiry to individuals that were not even on the the trip....

"In our name, and in the name of the war on terrorism, the U.S. government is committing immoral and illegal acts, mocking and ignoring international law—all at a place it is illegal for us even to visit. This secrecy, this silence, cannot go on." ❖

Read more and add your comments at our

CPF NEWSBLOG

Find it at catholicpeacefellowship.org

...and he laid his sword at the feet of the Black Madonna

Saint Ignatius Loyola and ROTC

A Report from Jesuit Campuses

Saint Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, began his adult life in battle, as a soldier in the service of the king. He began his Christian life in months of prayer, laying down the sword, in the service of God. Today, there exist twenty-eight Jesuit institutions of higher education in the United States. At twenty-six of them, students earn scholarships by training to participate in war.

Robert Graf, currently in graduate school at Marquette University and formerly a member of the Milwaukee Fourteen (arrested for burning Vietnam War draft cards), wrote a piece in *The Marquette Tribune* about the many contradictions of Jesuit Universities hosting ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps), the U.S. military program used in colleges to recruit and train commissioned officers. He wrote, "One of the first acts of Saint Ignatius, after his conversion, was to take a pilgrimage to Montserrat [near Barcelona] and lay his sword, the symbol of his former way of life, at the feet of the statue of the Black Madonna. Let us now put aside military training at Marquette and start the journey of renewing the soul of it. . . . Saint Ignatius says that love should show itself in 'deeds over and above words.' However, since I know that some of you reading this support ROTC at Marquette by your word, deeds or silence, I am suggesting that we start with words or a dialogue. . . . After we see where we are, we can judge the situation and take the necessary actions to keep Marquette a place of sacred values on life and death issues."

Graf recalls past trips to the annual protest to shut

down the School of the Americas: ". . . speaker after speaker from Jesuit institutions all over the United States spoke out against military training of soldiers from Latin America on this military base. No one spoke about this same type of military training going on at Jesuit campuses."

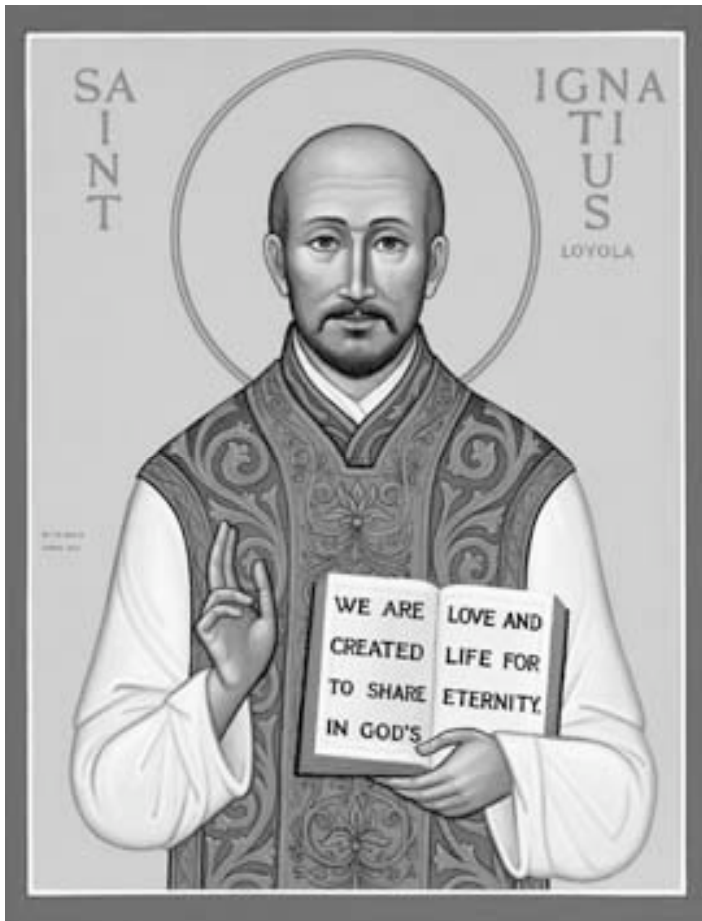


Image by Monastery Icons

But more and more are saying that ROTC, a program that trains young people for war (even was denounced by the Church), has no place on the campus of Catholic institutions, let alone institutions that model themselves after Ignatius of Loyola. While some believe that military officers graduating from Jesuit schools get a better Catholic formation, the truth is that ROTC's curriculum is designed by the military, its instructors are paid by the military, and cadets are generally not required to take any courses in Catholic teaching on war.

Students often participate in ROTC as a way to fund college. But cannot Fordham, cannot Georgetown, find a better way for students to be educated than by having them commit eight years of their lives to training for, and participating in, war? Especially distressing is the fact that the Vatican has made clear its position that the current war is "illegal, immoral, and unjust." Yet the followers of Saint Ignatius continue to welcome the Pentagon to prepare their students to be at odds with their Church, and perhaps with their consciences.

To generate dialogue on this most important issue, *The Sign of Peace* asked several anti-ROTC activists to report from various Jesuit schools. We welcome feedback, both positive and negative, for our next issue.

The College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA
Scott Schaeffer-Duffy, 1980

ROTC became controversial here in the early 1970s, rather late in the Vietnam War. After many demonstrations, some very contentious, the student/faculty senate approved the retention of ROTC by a one-vote majority. The roof of the ROTC building was marked with a peace sign, a student dropped out of Holy Cross (HC) in protest, and Fr. Joe Labran, S.J. had to intervene to dissuade an angry mob of students from vandalizing the building.

By the time I arrived on campus in 1976, all the commotion was long gone. The student newspaper ran an article, "Roll Out the Carpet for ROTC." This was a very light piece about the good works cadets did. I wrote a letter to the editor objecting to the tone of the article and a Marine Corps major wrote another praising the article as a sign that the college had gotten over "the Vietnam syndrome." A debate began in the college newspaper. College administrators insisted that ROTC at Holy Cross liberalized the military. Our group countered that without Peace Studies, this could not be so.

In the mid 1980s, Peace Studies were introduced, though ROTC cadets were not required to take courses. Also, pacifism was nearly deleted from the curriculum by faculty who argued that it wasn't intellectually sound.

In the late 1980s Chris Doucot, now at the Hartford Catholic Worker, attended a formal ROTC blessing event called "The President's Review." In front of parents, cadets, and the college's Jesuit president, Chris held a sign quoting New Testament passages against killing. The following year, alumni and students joined Chris for an entire day of protest at the same event. Fr. George Zabelka, the Chaplain to the crew of the *Enola Gay* who later underwent a conversion to pacifism, preached at Mass. We held a procession and vigil.

For the past six years, a group called "The Holy Cross Alumni for Social Responsibility" has held a prayer vigil on September 14 (the feast of the Triumph of the Cross) for the removal of ROTC. The group has collected more than 150 signatures of Holy Cross alumni from more than 40 years of graduation who all agree that ROTC is inappropriate at Holy Cross. Most recently, on the morning of the 2005 commencement, four seniors staged a protest at an ROTC commissioning.

Increasingly, we have challenged the Jesuit administration to produce empirical evidence that HC cadets act in a more moral manner during their military careers than officers from schools like West Point. We know of no HC cadet who has refused service on first strike weapon carriers, or who has refused deployment to wars condemned by the Vatican, or who has been a whistleblower on torture.

I believe the program is contrary to the Jesuit mission of providing education for the poor, and contrary to the Gospel message of nonviolence. Its continuation is sinful.

Saint Peter's College, Jersey City, NJ
Anna J. Brown, Director of the Social Justice Program at SPC, and Edward S. Majian, 2007

The Notable Events chronology of Saint Peter's College (SPC) lists, among other highlights, the 1951 US Army approval of the ROTC Chemical Corps unit for the College and the 1965 awarding of the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws and Letters to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. SPC holds the distinction of being the only Catholic college to offer King such a degree while he was still living. One might have hoped that the College would have been so inspired by King's call to nonviolence that it would have disbanded its ROTC program. Like most of its Jesuit college counterparts, however, the College remains aligned with the US military.

While ROTC is not present on our campus, our students are able to receive ROTC scholarships through a cross-enrollment agreement with Seton Hall University, another Catholic university in New Jersey. SPC students, diverse and relatively poor, are in great need of financial aid. For the 2003-2004 Academic Year, our 53% minority population contrasts sharply with the 22% for all other North American Jesuit universities. The vast majority of our students receive financial aid, with 55% coming from families who earn less than \$30,000 per year. A significant number of our students work either full or part-time while earning their degree.

It is evident that the 2006 student population of Saint Peter's resembles to a strong degree the 1960s political population for and with whom Dr. King worked. And it is this same population who heeded and lived his call to eradicate the evils of racism, consumerism and militarism by means of nonviolent direct action. With this awareness burning within our hearts, two faculty members, two students, and two local Pax Christi members engaged in a nonviolent act of resistance when the military was invited to campus in March of 2003 to participate in our Department of Criminal Justice's job recruitment fair. Given that all four branches of the US Armed Forces came to recruit our students into an organization that was actively engaged in an unjust and illegal war, we believed that we had no choice but to act in opposition to the College's implicit sanctioning of these acts of death and destruction.

Our nonviolent dramatization of the cycle of violence disrupted the job fair, and brought forth a firestorm of anger from students, faculty, and administrators. That the College faculty handbook "urges" faculty members to speak out against matters of injustice in the world did not temper the condemnation of those who disagreed with the action that we took.

We believe that their act of recruiting required that we act on behalf of peace, justice, and nonviolence. We could not sanction, to use the words of Dr. King, a "praise the Lord and pass the ammunition" mentality. In two successive Criminal Justice job recruitment fairs at the College, the military has not been present.

Saint Louis University, St. Louis, MO
R.J. Sak, 2005

At the September 2004 J.U.S.T.I.C.E. (Jesuit University Students Together In Concerned Empowerment) Conference, John Dear, S.J., confronted Jesuit universities' sponsorship of ROTC programs. The following month, Frank Cordaro of the Des Moines Catholic Worker visited Saint Louis University (SLU), where he detailed the removal of ROTC from the campus of St. John's University in the 1980s.

After mutual discernment, three of us set out to learn the history of ROTC at SLU through dialogue with faculty, staff, and alumni. From November 2004 to May 2005, we staged weekly "Yes to Students, No to ROTC" vigils outside our University's clock tower bearing signs that read, "ROTC is not AMDG" (*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*, for the greater glory of God).

Our efforts became a hot topic in the student newspaper. The campaign made it to the front page; I wrote and published a commentary; pro-ROTC commentaries, editorials, and letters to the editor appeared throughout the semester. The topic also became a subject for classroom discussion. While campus organizations neither endorsed nor criticized our message, and ROTC students were forbidden to make public statements, students, faculty, and Jesuits engaged us in constructive conversation.

In May 2005 we delivered a letter to the President of SLU, petitioning the university to answer the following question: "Does Saint Louis University's sponsorship of the United States Air Force ROTC program constitute an endorsement of values that are contrary to our Christian, Catholic, and Jesuit mission?"

The University Provost and the University Vice President of Academic Services (and supervisor of the ROTC Program) responded to our letter by asking to meet with us. In our conversation, the University officials were open to holding a symposium the following academic year to examine the topic of ROTC and Jesuit Mission, and requested a second meeting with us.

Unfortunately, our graduation came the following week, and the driving force to remove ROTC from SLU's campus has waned. ROTC and Jesuit identity will remain on the back burner for this University unless and until new students commit themselves to action.

Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA
Tom Beaudoin, Assistant Professor of Theology

As someone trying to live a theological life in service of Jesuit education, I for one am ready for the next stage of conversation and reexamining of what exactly a Jesuit education means today, which requires dealing with difficult issues like global capitalism as it relates to what we teach about economics, and militarism as it relates to the status of ROTC on our campuses.

One of the most surprising things to me is that there is virtually no debate about the presence of ROTC at Santa Clara. This is a campus that prides itself on social justice, forming students of "competence, conscience, and compassion." We have a strong presence in El Salvador, sending many students, faculty and staff to experience firsthand the special Jesuit Catholic relation to the poor there. We have crosses in front of our Mission Church honoring the Jesuits killed in 1989. It is especially striking, therefore, that until the recent redesign of its website, ROTC at Santa Clara boasted of making students into "warriors." That has since been changed to a focus on making "leaders," albeit leaders who study chemical, biological, nuclear and electronic warfare. (The redesign does still allude to warriors, featuring a picture of a student firing an M-16.)

It seems that discussion of ROTC's status on campus is almost nonexistent. Why? Perhaps it is ROTC's physical location: it is almost hidden on our campus. Perhaps it is the structuring of "tolerance" and "spirituality" amidst younger generations. Perhaps it is the initiation into free-market doctrine that is not sufficiently interrupted by a college education. Perhaps it is the inability of progressive professors to raise the question in a helpful, non-moralizing way that students can hear. Perhaps it is the abundant workload at Santa Clara.

When the subject of ROTC's status does surface here, two rationales are inevitably given: that it helps "humanize" or "Jesuitize" the military, and that it provides a college education to students who could not otherwise afford it. I presently consider the first rationale to be specious. I know of no evidence whatsoever that Santa Clara ROTC graduates have had any substantive influence on the preparation for or conduct of the Iraq War, or any military conflict in memory. I would be interested to learn of such examples. The second rationale, concerning the tuition benefits, must be met by serious and creative thinking. Elsewhere, I have proposed that Santa Clara University, and all Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States, should become 100% free schools. Working toward becoming free institutions of higher education would more or less remove one of the most compelling reasons for keeping ROTC on Jesuit campuses. I would like to find an institutional dialogue partner for this proposal.

The inability of faculty and staff in Jesuit higher education to force the issue publicly indicates that we share with our students a constricted imagination about what a Jesuit education might be about.

**"Tell the Jesuits of
Georgetown University
that they are living in
mortal sin for support-
ing the forces of war
and death that are
killing the people of
Central America."
- Ignacio Ellacuria, S.J.,
former President of the
University of Central
America, martyr.**

Seattle University, Seattle, WA

Daniel J. Moriarty, Social Justice Minister

At Seattle University (SU), the approach to the issue of ROTC's presence on campus has generally been one of respectful engagement, conversation, and questioning. There has been no overt, organized effort to terminate the ROTC program in recent years, but the issue sparks vigorous debate and emotional responses when it is raised. The Peace Fellowship at SU—an ecumenical student organization focused on conscientious objection and military recruitment issues, with links to CPF, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and Pax Christi—has been the most directly involved with engaging ROTC on issue of warmaking. We have organized a number of talks and workshops on conscientious objection over the past three years, some of which have been well attended by ROTC cadets. We've established a cordial relationship with ROTC instructors and students. This has allowed us to engage cadets, and teach future officers—even those who are not considering applying for CO status—about the rationale for, and laws and processes surrounding, objection to military service. Yet our appreciation for the opportunities we've created to dialogue with members of the military and model a Christian attitude that is firm in our condemnation of violence while respecting the person with whom we disagree is in constant tension with the desire of many to take a stronger, clearer, more prophetic and effective stand against our university's collaboration with the war machine. Meanwhile, there are several not-yet-public conversations on campus about (if and) how more directly to challenge the ROTC and the issue of military (non-ROTC) recruitment on campus.

Loyola Marymount University, L.A., CA

Boston College, Boston, MA

Paul Pryor Lorentz, (BA, L.M.U., current MA student, B.C.)

The support for any group that fosters skills for killing humans stands in opposition to Jesus' teachings of nonviolence. If we allow for Christian support of ROTC, we must necessarily cede the fact that we now are living under what scholars call Constantinian Christianity—religion stripped of its ability to be prophetic and to fight the corruption of empire. This is happening concretely through Jesuit support of ROTC.

It bears keeping in mind that the debate over the legitimacy of the Jesuit-ROTC relationship does not stem from a concern for the safety of Jesuit students. For example, the Jesuit Volunteer Corps places students into potentially unstable situations in pursuit of the opportunity to be "ruined for life." But there is a clear distinction between JVC offering its students the opportunity to be moved and to be prophets, and a military group that offers students the opportunity to kill and be killed in the name of profits. Jesuit universities ought to be a unified voice for denouncing war. Our integrity is weakened through acting in favor of it.

As student activists on campus graduate and movements fall victim to a perpetual four-year turnaround that doesn't lend itself to cumulative knowledge, I've started a weblog to maintain this conversation. You can find it at: myspace.com/jesuitintegrity

As long as Jesuit universities lay claim to Ignatius' ideal of educating women and men for others, as long as they profess Jesus' preferential option for the poor, they will have students who keep them in check on all issues of social justice. ❖

Jesuit Colleges with ROTC

Twenty-six Jesuit institutions enable students to participate in ROTC. Seventeen actually host ROTC on campus. Only two (University of Detroit Mercy and Wheeling Jesuit University) do not have a relationship with the ROTC program.

Jesuit Colleges and Universities that Host ROTC

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Canisius College, NY | Marquette University, WI |
| College of the Holy Cross, MA | St. Joseph's University, PA |
| Creighton University, NE | Saint Louis University, MO |
| Fordham University, NJ | Santa Clara University, CA |
| Georgetown University, D.C. | Seattle University, WA |
| Gonzaga University, WA | University of San Francisco, CA |
| John Carroll University, OH | University of Scranton, PA |
| Loyola College in Maryland | Xavier University, OH |
| Loyola Marymount U., CA | |

Jesuit Colleges and Universities that contract with ROTC programs

| |
|-----------------------------------|
| Boston College, MA |
| Fairfield University, CT |
| Loyola University New Orleans, LA |
| Regis University, CO |
| Le Moyne College, NY |
| Loyola University Chicago, IL |
| Rockhurst University, MO |
| Saint Peter's College, NJ |
| Spring Hill College, AL |

***Join the debate about ROTC on Jesuit Campuses on our blog
Access the CPF Newsblog through catholicpeacefellowship.org***

A Conscientious Objector tells his story

A Soldier's Magnificat

BY JOSHUA CASTEEL



I collapsed again upon my knees, kneeling before an altar of cardboard, cutout icons and rosaries made of ranger beads, praying for the strength to get through another day.

This talk was originally delivered in 2005 at Sacred Heart Church in South Bend, Indiana.

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be always acceptable in thy sight, oh Lord, my strength and my redeemer. Amen.

These have been heavy days, speaking on these subjects. An immense burden of inadequacy weighs upon your chest when words come off your lips you know you can't possibly, of your own capacity, command. I just recently visited a dear friend, whom I had not been able to see since I left for Iraq. My friend, in a letter, wrote these words to me: "There is such a sadness behind your eyes, less quickness to your smile, less life to your life; perhaps it is sorrow that weighs down so heavily. The deep grief, which is the only response to the horrible beauty in this life." Difficult words, but received in love.

I am a writer, a playwright. When posed with interesting psychological or political issues, I can create fictional characters to live out those dynamics. When I relate to conflicting views, I can even create two separate persons to battle out my own inner disagreements, and it is fascinating and cathartic. That is the great beauty and safety of fiction. When dealing with reality, however, the characters are much more tenuous. When

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talking about one's life to real people, and without the aid of fictional characters, you can experience a similar catharsis, but it's terrifying as well - you want the words to be exact, the sentiments precise. But, I'm still a man in process—a 25-year-old kid, actually. A kid who's been around the block, perhaps, but I'm just the guy you sat behind in homeroom. These words tonight are a snapshot of how I've dealt with the profound questions of warfare and violence. But they're just that, a snapshot. I'm still coming to terms, myself, with what I experienced in Iraq. I'm certainly not a finished product, but I'm okay with that. I'm not trying anything new or fancy. I'm simply asking what every other Christian who's passed through history has also had to ask: as a follower of Christ, what does it mean to be authentic?

A few days ago, one of my closest friends was asked to co-officiate the funeral of his grandfather. Unordained, he extended layman's hands toward a cold shell of a man, anointed his forehead, and prayed for the Lord's favor. Joseph's grandfather had not been a very religious man. Already somewhat dazed to the tragedy of that moment, I actually chuckled and told Joseph of a not too different time when I had been asked to be a priest - to hear a confession. A fellow soldier, then taking six separate medications for post traumatic stress disorder, knelt in a male toilet stall while I heard his confession in a Fort Gordon latrine.

"Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. I have never confessed," he said to me.

Reacting on the fly to a most peculiar request, I did not wish to turn away this hurting friend from his

moment of penitence, not knowing how many more similar opportunities would arise. I told him I would do my best, and pray as God might lead me. When John emerged from the stall, I too extended layman's hands toward a cold shell of a man. Perhaps, however, that had been the most alive John had been in months. I gave him a hug and promised that I would walk him through the penance I had suggested for him. Weeks later, though, I found myself wrestling John over a bottle of gin amidst shouts and clutching and paranoid hands.

This is the fragmentary world we live in. Laymen praying the prayers of priests, and dead men walking as if alive. But I understand John's anguish and I understand Joseph's faith, to pray in the hopes that a timeless God might have mercy upon words we might also need for ourselves.

So, look upon me with favor, Lord. Absolve the sins I am still learning how to confess.

John and I both served in the 202nd Military Intelligence Battalion. We were both trained as interrogators and as Arabic linguists. We had both studied philosophy. We had both studied Greek and literature. John did his Honors Thesis project on the book of Job—I did mine on Ecclesiastes. I was assigned to the Joint Interrogation and Debriefing Center, Abu Ghraib, Iraq. John was a member of a Mobile Interrogation Team, and had spent time in Baghdad, Fallujah, Ramadi and Tikrit. For days on end, John waded through corpses and rubble. His mission once: "fingerprint" the bodies of dead Iraqis in the aftermath of the assault upon Fallujah. John translated for Marines and Special Forces units who interrogated with tools like hammers and clenched fists. Once John tried to turn himself in as one who had committed atrocities, but he was ignored. He was unconfessed, and he knew no prayers.

"Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. I have never confessed."

For months in Iraq, I prayed the daily offices. This was an outlet John did not entirely comprehend, but I fled continually to prayer for my strength: The Rosary, the Magnificat, the Prayers for the People, and of course my own self-scripted dialogues with God. Morning and Evening and Noontime alike, I knelt alone, lit candles, sang. Often Chaplains could not make it to the prison due to convoy difficulties and security concerns. Sometimes I would pray the Mass liturgy in their absence, and linger for an hour or more with my head upon my book of prayer, the silence pounding upon me. Not for long, however - as silence often transformed itself into the daily mortar attacks and explosions on neighboring roads. But these times were my own. It was an entire world unto itself. I lived in a church of self-creation and improvisation. My unit began calling me "priest" and "holy father" because I was always found either in the prison's makeshift chapel, or alone saying the daily liturgy. But that was a world altogether different from the one that existed *between* my

moments of seclusion and prayer. I was, after all, a soldier at war. I was an interrogator.

The first three weeks of any incoming interrogator are pretty much the same. You want to believe in what you're doing. It doesn't matter who you are or where you come from, you look for a way to get through what you're doing. So, you look across the interrogation table in order to right a wrong. You look with the eyes of justice for an evil to be rectified. Sometimes you make decisions of conscience, sometimes decisions of necessity. Each morning I rose. I prayed my prayers. I donned my M-16 and body armor. I walked to my interrogation booth. I met my enemy. I searched his mind like a thirsty man in a desert, and like a runner at a race's finish line, each day I collapsed again upon my knees, kneeling before an altar of cardboard, cutout icons, and rosaries made of ranger beads, praying for the strength to get through another day - to find justice, to be the servant of justice.

And day after day I prayed a prayer which, little by little, began to dominate all of my moments of solitude.

"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath magnified me; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations. He hath shown strength with his arm; and hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; as he spake to our forefather Abraham, and to his seed for ever."

Raised as an Evangelical, the transformation to a Marian prayer life came by almost complete surprise. But, these were the prayers that I fled to, that helped fashion my experiences when my own words seemed almost untrustworthy. I didn't know how to pray exactly in such circumstances. I'd never been to war, I'd never had to comprehend the feeling of talking face to face with him whom one refers to in mere generalities as "the enemy."

"Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death."

That was a prayer I could comprehend. I had hoped to be molded by the prayers of the Church, rather than simply to pray for my own needs, as I myself saw those needs. Iraq was a place where I did not trust myself properly to gauge what those needs actually were. One does not think clearly when bombed on a regular basis. One does not think clearly under threat. You think for survival, you think for safety. But as C.S. Lewis has told us, Aslan isn't safe, he's good. I knew I needed to pray for something greater than my own safety. I needed to find some way of praying for truth, and to seek a way for that truth to shape me—even in the midst of threat.

During my first three weeks of what I call “mandatory naivete”—that is, the time before a soldier starts learning how things really work in combat—I read an article distributed by my interrogation center about comparative psychology and the challenges of Westerners in interrogating Arab males. It talked about the differences between a shame-based society and a guilt-based society. This article loosely described Western society as guilt based—that is, we’re a society where wrong is determined by a broad and systematic legal code and the guilt incurred by breaking that code. The article described Arab society as shame based, which is more social in the understanding of whether a given act brings shame upon oneself and one’s family. In a shame-based society, so said this article, the *interpretation* of a code of ethics by a community plays a larger role in determining “wrong” than the actual code of ethics itself. The real wrongs committed in a shame based society are the ones done to your loved ones—acts that shame them.

Many Western interrogators reveled in frustration over a feeling that goes like, “Don’t these people understand laws? Don’t they understand logic?” I, on the other hand, read this article and instinctively related to the description of the shame-based society. When I was 11, I got caught shoplifting with two of my little hoodlum friends. Of course breaking the law was a grave mistake, but it was walking through the front door of my home and staring into the disappointed eyes of my mother that instructed me in what matters. When I walked into the interrogation booth, I saw men whose families knew they had been imprisoned. More than a few had done plenty to earn their stay. Other times, however—and I have to say this was the preponderance of my experience interrogating—I’d stare across the table at taxi drivers, at local laborers, at school boys, at young fathers, at Imams, and at veterans of previous Iraqi wars. I was the main interrogator once of five breadwinners who had been taken from one home. In a patriarchal, war-time economy, that could have spelled death for the family members of these five men.

And these were the faces and stories of enemies I took with me into my moments of solitude and prayer.

“He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.”

A few months into my time in Iraq and I could barely open my prayer book or state the words aloud. Who were the mighty? Who were the humble and meek? One day at mass, the priest gave a homily on the parable of Lazarus and the rich man who ate sumptuously while Lazarus lay starving outside his door. That day, like all others at Abu Ghraib, I ate my meals at the dining facility. I looked around the hall, at the food which was available to me, thinking to myself what the family of these five men were doing while I ate buffet style. Or, I’d return to my barracks room and see the rows of

boxes of goodies sent from the States—entire boxes of snacks that would usually just get thrown away, because soldiers couldn’t possibly eat them all.

The next day I interrogated a man accused of attacking coalition forces. He laughed at me, and asked, “Who can do this? Let’s say I take one soldier, or even one tank. You bring back five jets and ten tanks.” Revelation 13 crossed my mind and the awe and terror of those asking, “Who can wage war against the beast who brings fire to fall from the sky?” Fighter jets raged across the Fallujah sky that week. The earth shook for miles as payload after payload came down upon that

“He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.” A few months into my time in Iraq and I could barely open my prayer book or state words. Who were the mighty? Who were the humble and meek?

city... and my friend John collected finger prints of the nameless amidst the rubble.

After about four months there were nights sometimes where I’d lie in bed for over an hour, waiting for the motivation to pray. Book and Bible upon my chest, I’d pray for the ability to pray the prayers which had shaped my first few months. But a time came when I could no longer withstand the con-

tradiction between the prayers of my solitude and the duties of my hours spent with the enemy. What am I truly praying, when I repeat the Marian declaration of the coming of the Just One - the One who will elevate the poor and the downtrodden. Am I saying these things so that I, myself, might remain all the more secure?

When I traveled outside the prison walls on convoys, terror surged through my heart. I was not afraid of being killed. I had accepted that fate already, and found peace with God over the possibility of my death. If you live by the sword, by the sword shall you die. If I died with a loaded rifle, I could not be angry with God. The terror that filled me when leaving the prison walls was the possibility of becoming one who kills. Once, while driving slowly just outside the perimeter of the Baghdad International Airport, I pointed my rifle, as I always did, out the window of our armored humvee. Through the sight of my rifle I saw the faces of three young shepherd boys - each probably eight years old. I realized in that moment that I had just pointed a loaded weapon at three eight-year-old boys, all with whom I’d made eye contact. I can still see them passing by me, as if in slow motion.

How would they remember that encounter? Were

they used to weapons? Had they, too, grown accustomed to living in threat? And how was I, an ambassador of the love of Jesus Christ, supposed to recall that day?

“Be prepared always to proclaim the hope that is within you,” says St. Peter. I must say though that it was my sin mostly that came to mind when leaving the prison walls. What was yet unconfessed? With whom had I not reconciled?

“Lord, please do not let this trigger pull.”

Every time we safely concluded convoys, I’d thank God for keeping my rounds chambered in my rifle. Before I even thanked God for my own safety, I thanked him for keeping me from taking life. There has to be something beyond this, I’d say to myself. Christ came to set the captives free. How can I talk of the freedom of Christ, while playing the role of captor and inquisitor? How can I talk of faith when I only move from place to place by means of guns pointed in all directions—even at eight-year-old shepherd boys?

I acquired deep admiration for this exasperated people. Waiting in line for gasoline for four entire days. Fathers and brothers being incarcerated without cause. Individuals who had previously lived nondescript lives being seduced by violent causes because it provided meaning to their suffering. I think of this emasculated generation of Iraqi men whose oppressors were crushed by a foreign army, but then whose daily lives were secured and managed by that same foreign presence. “When do I get to take care of my own?” they would say to me. “When do I get to be a man and provide for what is my own?”

“Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death,” is what I would say, but I could not possibly say that to them.

The issues escalate. The prayers become more incomprehensible. Is this the result of Calvary? I want to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the Living. The Psalmist says he would have lost all hope had this not been his yearning. Where are those who will pray for those who persecute them? Where are those whom Paul commends when the goods of their homes are ravaged by violent men, and they do no violence in turn? When comes the day when I can look a Muslim extremist in the eyes and say, “There is an answer to the cycle of vengeance you are found within! I will show you a more perfect way. Lay down your violence.”

In a play I have been writing about my experiences of war, and the battle of returning to life afterward, a character named James talks about the question everyone asks of war vets, ‘what was it like?’ James responds:

“You can’t really ask things like, ‘What was it like?’ Doesn’t matter. From the moment you hear ‘em say, ‘lock and load,’ you’re in a totally different world. You start experiencing things in hand-me-down phrases. People and places come at you, and it’s almost like on TV. Your heart goes numb because you’re trying to feel with things like your

hands, your lungs and your eyes. So you bring a lot of those hand-me-downs with you: those times when, those people who. Guess it’s how you try to make sense of it all. When things get crazy, it helps to have something to hold onto. But you can’t really ask things like, ‘What was it like?’ It still is. You don’t really come back. It comes back with you. Who you seen. Who seen you. It’s the things you can’t quite see, though, that return worst. Because you can’t return to who you were. (Pause) They say that salvation is living in eternity. I heard that eternity might also be like living fully present. Fighting for that present is the battle of the return. Sometimes you go forward, and sometimes behind. So, I don’t mean to dodge the question.”

In a way, James is more honest about the issues than I have been. We all dodge the question a bit. That question, “What was it like?” can only really be seen in how it changes the people we have been and will become. My friend John didn’t have prayers. In a way this gave him peace for a time. He was not haunted by the perfection that came off my lips. And yet, as my conscience became wounded by my words, I experienced a liberty that eluded John as I began to submit to what I was praying. I too went numb when they first told me, “lock and load”. But the wound I suffered in prayer gave a certain kind of life through the sufficiency of God’s grace. When circumstance turned me numb, God used pain to tell me I was still alive. I began to believe, in a way I had not previously comprehended, that the Just One had indeed already come. That there was indeed a way for me to look the extremist in the eyes and say, “Follow me, let us take this path together, you and I.”

I think of the others like John, reeling in anxiety, suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, fingers clutched around a bottle. The vacuum of meaning is severe. “What was it all for?” we all asked. They pinned medals upon us, which my friends and I wanted to lock away from sight. We were told we were the best, that we were heroes, but no one could tell us why. And we all have our memories—the rubble, the fingerprints, the shepherd boys. And like my friend Joseph, we speak now with an authority we know is not quite our own, but we search for the words, and we search for meaning, praying that a timeless God might grant us grace and look upon us with favor, even though we too feel cold, like shells of men and women.

“Cast down your burdens, and I will give you rest. I give you peace, my peace I give you.”

And now we pray that God look not upon our sin, but on the faith of His Church. I have to believe there is a more perfect way. And every day I meditate upon the same thought with which I opened this evening: “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be always acceptable in thy site, oh Lord, my strength and my redeemer. Amen.” ❖

Catholic high school teacher fired for not displaying the flag

Pledging Allegiance

A Theological Reflection on the Kobasa Case

BY WILLIAM T. CAVANAUGH

EDITORS' NOTE: In October 2005, Stephen Kobasa, a Catholic high school teacher of twenty-five years, was fired from Kolbe Cathedral High School in Bridgeport, CT, for refusing to permanently display the flag of the United States of America in his assigned classroom. In its January-February 2006 issue, The Catholic Worker printed Kobasa's statement, in which he explained that his teaching could "never take its legitimacy from any symbol except the Cross of Christ. To elevate any national emblem to that level would be for me to ignore the fundamental call of Jesus to compassion without boundaries."

Kobasa, who taught at Kolbe for six years, never once asked that his students imitate his actions; he merely explained to them that he was doing what he believed his faith required of him. Kobasa wanted to show his students what it meant to live a life of integrity, a life consistent with one's beliefs. Remarking on the decision of school authorities and the Bishop of Bridgeport, Kobasa wrote that this "unique and arbitrary standard. . . creates the unmistakable impression that national loyalty is being valued over faithful obedience to the Gospel."

Kobasa has filed an appeal for recourse with the Cardinal Prefect of the Office of Education in Rome.

Anyone wishing to protest the firing of Stephen Kobasa can address their concerns to: The Most Reverend William E. Lori, S.T.D., Bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport, Catholic Center, 238 Jewett Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06606.

I am certain that the people who fired Stephen Kobasa thought that they were doing the right thing. Although I—like Kobasa himself—never got a response to my letter to Bishop William Lori, I can imagine that the Bishop acted to preserve some foundational values that he thought Kobasa jeopardized. What exactly those values are may be hard to express precisely; perhaps that is why Bishop Lori made no attempt to give reasons for his action. Indeed, one of the most remarkable aspects of the entire episode is that no one responsible for firing Stephen Kobasa seems to have put forth an argument—either to Kobasa or to the public—for displaying the American flag in a Catholic school classroom. Kobasa was given an edict, not an argument. All inquiries after the fact are directed to the statement on the Diocese website, which says, "The Diocese of Bridgeport has long believed that the American flag is an important fixture in its Catholic School classrooms," without giving any indication as to why. The flag is not to be questioned; one simply owes it allegiance. There is a strong sense among many Catholics that to be Catholic is to be obedient, respectful of order and tradition, which is precisely what patriotism represents. Catholicism and Americanism are seen as a seamless garment that clothes the respectful and respectable Catholic person.

The irony here is that the Diocese's response confirms Stephen Kobasa's point: there is an aura of untouchability, obedience, allegiance and transcen-

dence surrounding the American flag that threatens to rival our loyalty to God. The Diocese treats the flag like something sacred, while firing Kobasa for saying so. Not having the American flag on permanent display in the classroom was so great a menace to sacred values that the Diocese fired a faithful Catholic man with a family to support in the middle of the semester, but the Diocese was unable or unwilling to articulate a reason why. The flag is revered as sacred: one must honor it, pledge allegiance to it, never let it touch the ground, ritually fold it, cremate or bury rather than discard it, and, above all, be willing to kill and die for it. And yet, as with a totem surrounded by taboos, one must never acknowledge that it is really sacred.

Christians have a word for putting earthly things in the place of God: idolatry. Furthermore, the Church has not hesitated to identify the danger of idolatry attendant to the modern state. Pope Pius XI said that nationalism is "an ideology which clearly resolves itself into a true, real pagan worship of the state—a Statolatry which is not less in contrast with the natural rights of the family than it is in contradiction to the supernatural rights of the Church." In its section on idolatry (2113), the *Catechism* makes clear that "idolatry not only refers to false pagan worship. It remains a constant temptation to faith." The *Catechism* continues, "Man commits idolatry whenever he honors and reveres a creature in place of God," and includes "the state" in a list of examples. Elsewhere, the *Catechism* warns against the "idolatry of the nation" (57).

The neat fit between Christianity and Americanism that many take for granted should be especially strange

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for Catholics, given the manifestly international nature of the Church. We have popes who are Italian, Polish, German, etc. to remind us that our fundamental loyalty is to the Body of Christ, not to any particular nation. As Stephen Kobasa says, the flag represents boundaries, the creation of distinctions between friends and enemies. The crucifix, on the other hand, represents the gathering of all people into God's love. Thus Jesus' words in reference to his death on the cross: "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (Jn: 12:32).

One final irony of Stephen Kobasa's firing is that it took place at a Catholic school named after St. Maximilian Kolbe. Kolbe was a Franciscan priest who gave himself up to be starved to death at Auschwitz in place of a man who begged to be spared for the sake of his children. Saints like Kolbe keep us alert to the imperative to put loyalty to God over loyalty to the state. This is especially important when the state takes on ever-increasing power, as it did in Kolbe's time and

"For me, an essential element of the mission of Catholic education is to offer evidence of the practice of nonviolent peacemaking and principled resistance to nationalism that have been nourished and expressed within our tradition."

-Stephen Kobasa

does in ours. Now Stephen Kobasa joins that cloud of witnesses to the love of God that transcends earthly power and earthly boundaries. I hope there are other Catholic schools that value his witness and his talents, and want him on their faculty. In the meantime, we can be grateful for the sacrifices he has made to help keep the truth before us. ❖

Devices of Occupation

BY DAVID DEVINE

Yes, the soldiers, the rifles, the
pistol-whipping,
Yes the check points, the helicopters,
the bodies missing.
Also your generals, your agents, your
politicians,
Your empty promises and war crime
commissions.

Yes, the insults, the curfews, the
left-over rations,
Yes the search dogs, the search lights,
the covert actions.
Also your Land Rovers, your bureau-
crats, your interrogations,
Your undetonated weapons and
selective interpretations.

All of these were expectations.

But the strip malls, the cell phones,
the anorexic models,
The videos, the Marlboros, the Coca-
Cola bottles.
Your handguns, your sex trade, your
triple-action starches,
Your sit-coms, your game shows, your
Golden Arches.

Your Wal*Marts, your Fubu, your
porn sites, your Gap,
Your American Idols, your rockstars,
your rap,
Also your footwear, your Swooshes,
your Prozac Nation,
Your DVDs, your MTVs, your Sony
Playstation.

These too are your colonization.

These too are your slow, deliberate
devices of occupation.

The Moral Compass of Benedict XVI

Where Will His Commitment to Peace Lead Us?

BY THE STAFF OF THE CATHOLIC PEACE FELLOWSHIP

In that strange interval after the death of Pope John Paul II and before the election of a successor, when for a brief time the Church continued her earthly pilgrimage without the benefit of a visible, universal shepherd, many Catholics learned the names, biographies, reputations, and probable agendas of the two dozen or so *papabili*. This was thanks to extensive coverage of the upcoming consistory on the radio and television, in newspapers and periodicals, plus the ever expanding company of Catholic bloggers, all keeping us informed of what is happening while it is happening, sometimes, so it seemed, even before it was happening.

But along with the advantages of instantaneous reporting comes the disadvantage of instantaneous spin, whereby we are informed not just about what is happening but how to see, hear, read, and interpret what is happening, so that we get shaped by the speculations, biases, and in some cases outright lobbying efforts that accompany reporting. In the ever thinning discourse of the information age, the effect is to reduce complex people and events to simplistic terms. So when the awaited moment came and Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger stepped out onto the papal balcony overlooking St. Peter's Square to greet the city and the world as Benedict XVI, the impression created by many reports was that the conclave had elected, not just a pope but a "conservative pope."

Such an impression was probably regarded as bad news to Catholics in the United States committed to

peace and peacemaking. After all, the word "conservative" has come to be equated with "neo-conservative" and that word has come to be associated with the policy makers and political architects behind what the Bush Administration has been doing in (or to) the Middle East. But when it comes to peace and peacemaking (or anything else for that matter), Pope Benedict XVI, like the Church he shepherds, cannot aptly be described in a single word, unless the word is "Catholic"—not "conservative Catholic" or "orthodox Catholic" or "traditional Catholic," but, quite simply, Catholic.

In the pages that follow, we lay out what we see as the key features of Benedict's Catholic vision of peacemaking. We want to show both the continuity of Benedict's thought with that of his predecessor, John Paul II, as well as the direction his thought is likely to take in the years to come. Our thoughts are gathered into four parts: (1) early signs of Benedict XVI's commitment to peace, (2) a summary of his statements on peace during the first year of his papacy, (3) a brief exposition of key parts of his recent encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, and (4) how Benedict XVI's teaching on peace can be embodied by Catholics in the United States, who bear a unique moral responsibility as citizens of a nation-state whose power, to a degree rivaling the Church herself, extends throughout all the earth.

Signs of Peace and Peacemaking

Among the many possible signs associated with his choice of names,

one was that Benedict XVI wanted his papacy to be shaped by the commitment to peace that shaped that of Benedict XV (1914-1922). Beginning his service as pope only a month after the start of the First World War, Benedict XV saw the nations of Europe, and members of his own flock, rush headlong into four years of massive, horrifying, senseless slaughter. He promoted peace by every available means, lobbying for a limitation of the destructiveness of the war, insisting on the protection of the rights of prisoners of war, and setting forth a seven-point peace plan in 1917 that was rejected by both sides, all the while maintaining neutrality and refusing to be aligned with any nation's political view or cause. These wartime efforts, along with his plea for international reconciliation in the encyclical *Pacem Dei Munus* (1920), earned Benedict XV the popular title of "the peace pope" (see sidebar, p. 17).

Thus, it was not farfetched to foresee at the beginning of Benedict's papacy, coming as it did amid the threat of another worldwide conflagration, a priority on peace reminiscent of his predecessor's eighty years before. In fact, Justin Cardinal Rigali, the archbishop of Philadelphia, said as much when he reported shortly after the conclave that the recently elected pope told the consistory of cardinals that he "is desirous to continue the efforts of Benedict XV on behalf of peace."

There were other early signs that Benedict XVI would place a primacy on peace and peacemaking as well. For one thing, there was his experi-

ence under the Nazi regime, which brought home to him the danger that arises when the law becomes detached from genuine moral reasoning and the light of faith and falls under the sway of godless ideology and state-sponsored tyranny (see sidebar, p. 20).

There also was his criticism of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Asked in the fall of 2002 if the upcoming war in Iraq would be a just war, he responded, “certainly not,” and went on to explain that “the damage would be greater than the values one hopes to save,” a reference to the just-war principle of proportionality. When questioned on the Bush Administration’s doctrine of “preventive war,” he answered in the studious tone of a prefect of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) that “the concept of ‘preventive war’ does not appear in

the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.” Moreover, shortly after the invasion, at a press conference on May 2, 2003, around the time that President Bush declared victory, he stated that “there were not sufficient reasons to unleash a war against Iraq,” a judgment he has never rescinded.

There was his publicly expressed doubt about the just-war tradition in the modern context. He aired this doubt at the same press conference (on May 2, 2003) by suggesting “that, given the new weapons that make possible destructions that go beyond the combatant groups, today we should be asking ourselves if it is still licit to admit the very existence of a ‘just war.’”

This was not the first time such a suggestion was heard in the Vatican. In the summer of 1991, shortly after the first Gulf War, an editorial

in *La Civiltà Cattolica* stated that just-war theory is outmoded in the face of modern weaponry and the onset of total war (see sidebar, p. 18). As a periodical published by the Jesuits in Rome that holds quasi-official status, it was widely thought that *La Civiltà Cattolica* would not publish such an editorial without approval by the Holy See and officials in the CDF. Perhaps, so the speculation went, the just-war tradition will go the way of capital punishment; it can be affirmed in principle, in keeping with longstanding Church teaching, but opposed in practice because modern conditions impede it from being carried out justly. Perhaps a development in Church teaching on just-war is in the offing. Perhaps the *Catechism* will be revised accordingly.

All of these signs combined to create a sense of anticipation that

Benedict XV, World War I, and U.S. Catholics

All sides in the war had their theories about Benedict XV. To the Allies he was “*le pape boche*,” the Kraut pope, and to the Central Powers he was “*der franzoesiche Papst*,” the French pope. But the truth was that he opposed the war in principle and consistently named it a “scourge” to be rejected. He also never made the traditional distinction between just and unjust wars.

He sent a representative to each country to press for peace. He asked Catholics—in some cases despite national bans—to recite a prayer he composed for peace. On August 1, 1917, he delivered his famous Plea for Peace, which included demands for a cessation of hostilities, a reduction of armaments, freedom of the seas, and international arbitration.

Interestingly, on August 15, 1917, the Vatican sent a note to James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore and leader of the Church in the U.S. The request was that Gibbons help “exert influence” with President Wilson to endorse the papal peace plan to end the war. Cardinal Gibbons never contacted Wilson. Nor did he endorse Benedict XV’s call for a boycott on any nation that had obligatory military conscription. On August 27, President Wilson formally rejected Benedict’s plan.

Cardinal Gibbons’ snub of the pope’s peace efforts should not be surprising. He and the other U.S. Catholic archbishops already had cast their lot. In a letter to President Wilson on April 18, 1917, they promised him “the holy sentiments of truest patriotic fervor and zeal.” Proclaiming “we are all true Americans,” they also promised manpower for the war effort: “our people, as ever, will rise as one man to serve the nation.” Gibbons had even written when war was declared that “the duty of a citizen” is “absolute and unreserved obedience to his country’s call.” Later that year, with the establishment of the National Catholic War Council, Gibbons’ task was met: “the mental and moral preparation of our people for the war.”

Gibbons would not completely ignore Benedict XV. In an article in *America* (Feb. 23, 1918), Gibbons expressed fidelity. “Like his Master he rules not by the sword, but by love. . . . Though at war in order that all the peoples of the earth may really be free, we wish with him that a just peace may soon be regained.” Gibbons never could see that Benedict XV, in condemning the war, was not merely feeling bad about it. He wanted it to end. Gibbons’ sentimentalized peace was matched only by his exagerrated Americanism.

—based on the essay “Snubbed: Benedict XV and Cardinal Gibbons” by Mike Griffin, available at www.catholicpeacefellowship.org

Benedict XVI might make peace-making a priority of his papacy. Now, a year or so into his papacy, we know that this confidence was well placed. True, there has been no outright condemnation of the Bush Administration for the invasion of Iraq. Nor has there been a statement from the Holy Father declaring just war theory outdated. But this pope is not the kind of pope to lead by means of doctrinal innovation. Rather, both by temperament and theological conviction, Benedict seems to prefer shepherding his flock by teaching, in a straightforward manner, the truth of the Catholic faith. And one truth of the Catholic faith is that peace is a gift from Christ himself. Another is that unnecessarily taking the life of a someone is against the will of God, in keeping with the ancient adage, *Ecclesia abhorret a sanguine*, “the Church abhors bloodshed.” These

are the truths on which Benedict XVI’s approach to peace are based, and they are truths that challenge the way war is waged by the United States of America.

Benedict’s First Year

This has become apparent over the past year in the statements and teachings of Benedict XVI on peace and peacemaking. Take, for example, his first address to the Vatican diplomatic corps on May 12, 2005. After referring to his personal experience of living through war, he confesses that he is “particularly sensitive to dialogue among all men, to overcome all forms of conflict and tension, and to make our world a world of peace and fraternity. Uniting efforts, all together, the Christian communities, leaders of nations, diplomats, and all men of good will, are called to realize a peaceful society to overcome the

temptation of the clash between cultures, ethnic groups, and different worlds.”

Or take his message sent to the Conference on Peace and Tolerance in Istanbul organized by Orthodox and Jewish leaders. “The themes of peace and tolerance,” he wrote, “are of vital importance in a world where rigid attitudes so often give rise to misunderstanding and suffering and can even lead to deadly violence. Dialogue is clearly indispensable if solutions are to be found to the harmful conflicts and tensions that cause so much damage to society. Only through dialogue can there be hope that the world will become a place of peace and fraternity.”

To a group of new ambassadors to the Holy See, he declared, “News of war is arriving from every part of the world. This morning I would like to make a new appeal to the leaders of nations and to all people of good will to cooperate in order to put an end to the violence that disfigures humanity and jeopardizes the growth of peoples and the hopes of numerous populations. Without the commitment to peace by one and all creating an atmosphere of pacification and a spirit of reconciliation in all social milieus beginning with the family, it will not be possible to advance on the path of a peaceful society.”

Under Benedict’s direction, the Holy See’s permanent observer to the United Nations has issued two stinging criticisms of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference for not reaching “a single substantive decision” on curbing nuclear and small arms weaponry, calling this failure “deplorable” in terms of security, destruction of the environment, and exorbitant cost.

Certainly the most vivid articulation of Benedict’s commitment to peace came in his message for World Peace Day this past January 1. Entitled “In Truth, Peace,” he notes that peace is more than an absence of war; it is (quoting from Benedict XV) “the fruit of an order which has been planted in human society by its Divine Founder.” With this theolog-

Quotations from “Christian Conscience and Modern Warfare,” *La Civiltà Cattolica*, (Rome, Italy, July 6, 1991)

“The proclamation and promotion of peace among people is part of the Church’s religious mission. Therefore when the Church speaks of the necessity of involving herself in the cause of peace and declares herself against war, She is not invading the field of politics, but is staying within the sphere of her own proper religious and moral mission. . . . Through Jesus, men and women are brothers and sisters of one another, because they are children of God. This means that they must rid themselves of the categories of “stranger” and “enemy,” categories so basic to the ideology of war. The Church has only one intent, which is to strengthen the Gospel call to brotherhood and sisterhood among God’s people.”

. . .

“War almost never ends with a true peace; it always leaves behind a remnant of hatred and a thirst for revenge, which will explode as soon as the opportunity offers itself. That is why the human story has been a series of unending wars. War initiates a spiral of hatred and violence, which is extremely difficult to stop. War is therefore useless, since it solves no problems, and damaging because it aggravates problems and makes them insoluble.”

. . .

“Being against war and for peace also means opposing the idea that war is “necessary” or “inevitable” and that peace is not possible. . . . It means to show that it is always the poor and the weak who pay for war, whether they wear a military uniform or belong to the civilian population.”

ical grounding, he argues that the obstacles to peace originate in lying. Citing the story of the Fall, which recounts “the lie told at the very beginning of history by the animal with a forked tongue,” Benedict points out that “lying is linked to the tragedy of sin and its perverse consequences, which have had, and continue to have, devastating effects on the lives of individuals and nations.

“We need but think of the events of the past century,” he continues, “when aberrant ideological and political systems willfully twisted the truth and brought about the

The pope argues that the obstacles to peace originate in lying. Citing the story of the Fall, which recounts “the lie told at the very beginning of history by the animal with a forked tongue,” Benedict points out that “lying is linked to the tragedy of sin and its perverse consequences, which have had, and continue to have, devastating effects on the lives of individuals and nations.

exploitation and murder of an appalling number of men and women, wiping out entire families and communities. After experiences like these, how can we fail to be seriously concerned about lies in our own time, lies which are the scenarios of death in many parts of the world? Any authentic search for peace must begin with the realization that the problem of truth and untruth is the concern of every man and woman; it is decisive for the peaceful future of our planet.”

From there, he calls for truth and transparency to be the mark of all interpersonal and communal relationships, including relationships among nations. Only a commitment to truth can provide a sound basis for international law, humanitarian endeavors, reducing nuclear weapons, curbing arms trafficking, and terrorism. Moreover, only a commitment to truth can resist

nihilism and religious fanaticism, both of which, the pope contends, “share an erroneous relationship to truth: the nihilist denies the very existence of truth, while the fundamentalist claims to be able to impose it by force.”

In view of the risks of this day and age, the message calls on Catholics “to proclaim and embody ever more fully the ‘Gospel of Peace,’ and to show that acknowledgment of the full truth of God is the first, indispensable condition for consolidating the truth of peace.” After noting recent “signs of hope in the work of building peace” and areas where much more work is needed, the pope affirms that “the Church, in fidelity to the mission she has received from her Founder, is committed to proclaiming everywhere the ‘Gospel of Peace.’ In the firm conviction that she offers an indispensable service to all those who strive to promote peace, she reminds everyone

that, if peace is to be authentic and lasting, it must be built on the bedrock of the truth about God and the truth about man.”

During the first year of his papacy, then, Benedict XVI has consistently called on Catholics to preach and embody Christ’s gift of peace and on world leaders to redouble their efforts in making peace among nations. But surely his most important statement thus far is his encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*. It warrants a brief look, if only to clarify its treatment of love, justice, and the role of the state.

Deus Caritas Est

Peace and peacemaking are not the prime focus of *Deus Caritas Est* (*DCE*). The prime focus is love. Nevertheless, as Benedict himself suggested in his general audience on January 18, 2006 announcing its promulgation, God and love “are the

condition for peace in the world.” Moreover, in reference to the theme “God is love,” Benedict writes in the first paragraph of the encyclical that “in a world where the name of God is sometimes associated with vengeance or even a duty of hatred and violence, this message is both timely and significant” (*DCE*, 1).

The first half of the encyclical (*DCE* 2-18) is an exposition on the relationship between *eros* and *agape*, erotic love and the love of God. The pope affirms *eros*, but he points out that, left to its own devices, it turns in on itself rather than spilling out into love of others. *Agape* thus purifies *eros*, providing a necessary corrective that re-orientates us and helps us to grow into the kind of disciplined love that regards the good of the other as primary. The paradigm of the proper relation between *eros* and *agape* is the love of a husband and wife. But for the pope, marital love is a participation in the love of God for Israel and, of course, the love shown to all humanity in and through Jesus Christ. It is in the nature of the divine love that Christians receive by faith, therefore, to extend itself in service to others, in accord with commandments to love God and neighbor. Love is thus by nature social, preeminently in the Church.

In the second half of the encyclical, Benedict explains how love of neighbor, or charity, has from the beginning been structured into the life and work of the Church. It is an official responsibility of bishops. It is written into the office of deacon. It is at the center of the lives of saints. It is the charism of numerous religious orders, especially those devoted to serving the poor. And it is the energy behind charitable organizations operated under the auspices of the Church. In carrying out its charitable work, Benedict warns, it is crucial that the Church not get directly involved in politics. It is in issuing this caveat that he takes up the relationship of charity, justice, and the state.

The two paragraphs in which Benedict addresses these matters

(DCE 28-29) are designed to clarify terms and roles. Justice, according to Benedict, is both the aim and intrinsic criterion of politics, and as such is the domain of the state. This means that the state's rules for public life, its laws and decisions, must conform to the dictates of justice. Determining what laws or decisions are just in particular cases is the activity of politics, which proceeds on the basis of practical reasoning, in accord with the natural law. Thus the Church's role in politics is indirect. It does not take up this responsibility directly, as if it were to replace the state. And yet, the Church does contribute to politics indirectly, by setting forth the principles of the natural law in its social teaching, and by providing the faith and love that can purify reason, liberate it from its blind spots.

So, while the Church does not attempt to achieve justice itself, it provides the spiritual energy that makes justice possible, empowering people to order society for the common good of all, to see any errors in their reasoning, and to sacrifice for those who are not receiving their due. This, Benedict notes, is the role of the laity whose mission is to configure social life in accord with right reasoning and the natural law. At the same time, there will always be a need for charitable service. From there, Benedict goes on to describe the importance of charity in the present context. For our purposes, it is important to apply what Benedict says about charity, justice, faith, politics, the Church and the state, to questions about peace and the waging of war.

On this score, we can make four points. First, Benedict, in writing about "the state," is writing about the state in the abstract, in its ideal form, not about any particular state. Second, he is setting forth a criterion of judgment for particular states, a criterion grounded in right reason and the natural law. Third, he is arguing that this judgment is to be made by the laity, whose political reasoning is purified by faith and love. Fourth, by way of clarification,

it is important to note that while he does not call on the state to live out the gospel, and while he warns against the Church getting involved directly in politics, this does not mean that the Church is not to be critical of injustice sponsored by any particular state. Rather a given state is to be judged on the basis of the natural law, and Christians are called to make those judgments. Thus, when it comes to the particular state called the United States, he is calling on its Catholic citizens, and all others, to judge its laws and policies according to the natural law, including its laws and policies regarding the waging of war.

Judging U.S. laws and policies regarding war according to the natural law—this is what Benedict XVI himself was doing when (as Cardinal Ratzinger) he noted in 2002 that the doctrine of preventive war is nowhere to be found in the

Catechism and in 2003, when he said that the U.S. invasion of Iraq was not justified. And this is what Catholics themselves should be doing, constantly, as part of our vocation as citizens who are also baptized into Christ and who therefore have the spiritual resources to call the government to judgment on the basis of the natural law.

Applying Benedict's Teaching in the United States

This last point is crucial. Too many Catholics refuse to acknowledge that U.S. law and policy regarding war run contrary to the natural law and conflict with Catholic teaching. On this score, it is important to judge the way the U.S. is waging war today in light of Benedict's statements on peace. Take his World Day of Peace message on truth and lying—how does that apply to the fabricated conclusion that there

Remembering Life in Nazi Germany

As a Cardinal, Ratzinger wrote *Milestones*, a memoir. In reflections on his youth, he described the internal resistance he learned to Nazi ideas. For example, he recalled finding an old Nazi songbook: "I saw how our music teacher, a convinced Catholic, had us cross out the phrase "Juda den Tod" [to Judah's death] and write instead "Wende die Not" [dispel our plight].

He noted that his father saw Hitler as the antichrist. Also significant was the classical education the young Ratzinger received; it "created a mental attitude that resisted seduction by a totalitarian ideology." He also knew well the example of a local pastor, Father Josef Stelzle, who was arrested for calling Nazism "a sham Christianity."

Ratzinger remembered his time in the military as full of difficulty, "particularly for so nonmilitary a person as myself," and even referred to his training as a "pseudo-liturgy." His 1945 decision to desert did bring danger: "the city was surrounded by soldiers who had orders to shoot deserters on the spot." He encountered two: "Thank God that they, too, had had their fill of war and did not want to become murderers."

He has been criticized for not giving enough attention to the compromised Catholicism of that era. But for Ratzinger, the Church was a kind of theological refuge. John Allen posits that the experience of that era led him to an ecclesiology based on "inner strength and discipline, because only a unified Church clear on its core convictions can stand up to the pressure of a totalitarian state."

In *Milestones*, Ratzinger himself said as much: "No one ever doubted that the Church was the locus of all our hopes. Despite many human failings, the Church was the alternative to the destructive ideology of the brown rulers."

were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq during the run-up to the war? Or take his criticism of those who invoke God for violent purposes—it surely applies to Islamist terrorists, but does it not apply as well to those who claim the United States is at war to defend “the Christian West?” Or take the repeated insistence of the Holy See on the importance of nuclear disarmament—how does this square with U.S. policy?

In his World Day of Peace message, Benedict XVI reiterated that his name was chosen in honor of Pope Benedict XV, “who condemned the First World War as a ‘useless slaughter’ and worked for a universal acknowledgment of the lofty demands of peace.” But in the United States, Benedict XV’s teaching on war and his efforts for peace in the 1920s went unheeded (see sidebar, p. 17). Will the same be true of the teaching and efforts of Benedict XVI?

We don’t know the answer to that question. But if Benedict’s teachings on war and efforts for peace are heeded by Catholics in the United States, it will entail a deep and disciplined detachment from the nationalism that overruns this country, especially when it is at war. On this score, it is important to note again a crucial part of *Deus Caritas Est*. When Benedict insists that the Church not be directly involved in politics, it is not because he thinks politics is irrelevant to Christians. Given his repeated call for Catholics to weigh-in politically on various hot-button issues, one thing we know for sure is that Benedict is not wary of Christians being political. But what he is wary of is the Church becoming absorbed into the political life of the state. This, in his view, was a danger with liberation theology. And this is a danger in the United States today as well. The Church can become absorbed into the politics of any state, even states claiming to be beacons of democracy throughout the world.

This was the point made by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical

Veritatis Splendor (composed while Cardinal Ratzinger was prefect of the CDF). He warned of “the risk of an alliance between democracy and ethical relativism, which would remove any sure moral reference point from political and social life, and on a deeper level make the acknowledgment of truth impossible. . . . As history demonstrates, a democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism” (*Veritatis Splendor*, n. 101). Pope John Paul II made a similar point in *Evangelium Vitae* (also composed while Ratzinger ran the CDF), when he noted that democracy can be turned into majoritarian rule, and from there into a kind of totalitarianism that neglects the rights of the weak, with the state thus becoming “a tyrant state” (*Evangelium Vitae*, n. 20).

The pope had the United States in mind here. His primary moral concern was with abortion, euthanasia, and capital punishment, but the structure of the criticism applies to the waging of war as well. Democracy is not a good in itself. It is only as good as the moral discernment of its citizens. If Catholics in the United States are incapable of the serious moral discernment which these teachings require, then the Church is losing its capacity to mount a serious, natural-law-based critique of this nation’s laws and policies; the Church is becoming absorbed into the state; the Church is becoming a “state church” rather than a Catholic Church.

Unfortunately, there are several indications that this has already become the case: the widespread endorsement by Catholic politicians of the doctrine of “preventive war,” the justification of this Hobbesian-like doctrine by Catholic theologians and philosophers, the readiness of Catholic legal experts to justify the

Bush Administration’s use of torture, and the tendency of Catholics—in the military, clergy and laity alike—not to question the way they are being ordered to wage war.

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For Benedict XVI, the natural law is a kind of moral compass, and in this time and place, a time of war in the United States, Catholics are very much in need of the guidance and direction that this moral compass provides. On this score, it is important to emphasize that along with the signs of moral complacency and compromise that often mark the response of Catholics in the United States to their nation’s wars, there are also signs of moral consistency and courage: politicians voicing criticism of the war, priests preaching against the war, protesters bringing their message to the streets, peacemakers traveling to the Middle East to make contact with the “enemy,” and people in the military refusing to participate in this war. This last group especially, conscientious objectors in the military, are like a moral compass for us all.

So let us hold high one such compass, one who shows a reality that is becoming increasingly clear in the Church: the terms “Catholic” and “peace” belong in the same sentence. In fact, this young man used Catholic tradition not only to become a conscientious objector; he used it to become Catholic.

Clint Hardesty was in the Army for six years and served in Iraq. While in Iraq last summer, he submitted an application for status as a Conscientious Objector. He was discharged honorably after his six

years of military service.

In his application, Clint wrote:

"I enlisted in September of 1999, but it wasn't until December of 2001 that I really began to question the justness of war. It was at that time that I began meeting with a Roman Catholic Priest and seriously studying the teachings of the Church. I also immersed myself in the writings of many saints, church fathers, and men and women like Thomas Merton, Pope John Paul II, and Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Although I had been a Protestant Christian for about seven years, this was my first real exposure to a spirituality that completely embraced the value and dignity of all human life and elevated Jesus' teachings on love and justice above everything else."

"Prior to this I was pro-war, pro-death penalty, pro-birth control. Since my conversion and up until the present I have experienced a complete reversal in my beliefs on these topics.... As I have served here in Iraq, day by day, the evils of war continuously confirm my beliefs about God and the incompatibility of my beliefs with military service..."

Though his application was approved, he is now facing reprisals from commanders trying to retroactively reduce his rank and strip him of GI benefits for education. Clint, though, remains steadfast in faith. No punishment can take away what he has: the witness of conscience. And he learned this lesson from the solid catechesis of the Catholic tradition. It was a lesson quite close to the heart of John Paul II, and

already seems equally important to Benedict XVI.

Conscience, after all, is an interior witness to the law of God, urging us to shun evil, to refuse to participate in it, whatever the cost, like the martyrs, who refused to do evil, even at the cost of death, and who thus followed in the steps of Christ. This connection between adhering to moral principle and the example of the martyrs is explicated in *Veritatis Splendor*, in a section that was conceived by Cardinal Ratzinger (nn. 90-94). It shows that peace and peacemaking lie at the center of the Catholic faith, that every pope is called to be a "peace pope," and that the Catholic Church is a "peace church," having received the gift of peace and the call to peacemaking from Her Divine Founder. ❖

SoP Interviews John Allen

John Allen is the Vatican correspondent for the National Catholic Reporter.

SoP: Pope Benedict said at his installation at Saint John Lateran, "The freedom to kill is not true freedom, but a tyranny that reduces man into slavery." Then Cardinal Martino, meeting with the parents of Terri Schiavo, referred explicitly to this statement and said, "This does not only mean abortion and euthanasia, but also the death penalty, war, terrorism, the destruction or manipulation of human embryos, mass starvation or destruction of the natural environment." A correct assessment?

Allen: Yes, I think so. The "big idea" at the core of Benedict's pontificate, it seems to me, is the relationship between truth and freedom, the idea that truth is not a limitation upon our freedom but a purification of it, allowing us to become the persons God calls us to be. This is the essence of then-Cardinal Ratzinger's critique of the "dictatorship of relativism," that in the name of liberating the human person from moral absolutes, relativism actually enslaves us to a moral mediocrity. Among the absolute truths that Benedict has identified over and over is the absolute dignity of each human being, which has consequences not just on the plane of sexual morality or end-of-life issues, but also for social and economic structures, war and peace, criminal justice—the entire gamut of human experience. In that sense, I expect Benedict XVI to continue John Paul II's strong witness on social questions.

SoP: Neoconservative Catholics (George Weigel, Fr. Neuhaus *et al*) were disappointed with the Vatican's opposition to the Iraq War and are now trying to influence the new pope. Are they likely to receive a sympathetic hearing?

Allen: Vatican diplomats always tell me that the U.S. is the Holy See's most important bilateral relationship, for the obvious reason that it is the world's most powerful nation. Moreover, for the issues in which the Holy See is most invested—religious freedom, the rule of law, global justice—there is no alternative to working with the Americans. I also believe that Pope Benedict XVI admires the way that religious is still a powerful culture-shaping force in the United States, which contrasts with the strong privatization of religion in Europe and its weak influence on public life. Yet despite all that, Benedict XVI clearly has reservations about some aspects of America's current global predominance, especially the concern that a country whose roots are, as Samuel Huntington has recently observed, irreducibly Anglo-Protestant, may not be fully compatible with Catholic social ethics. In the end, therefore, I would expect the same basic love/hate relationship with the United States that has characterized the foreign policy of the Holy See since World War II to continue under Benedict XVI. In general, I think the influence of American neoconservatives on Vatican thinking has been a bit exaggerated, perhaps in part by the neoconservatives themselves.

For more comments from John Allen, visit www.catholicpeacefellowship.org

Christians must ask themselves to what Body they belong

The Mass and Peace

BY JOEL SCHORN

When we talk about the Mass and peace, we tend to think first of the moments in the liturgy when the ritual literally refers to *peace*. At the Sign of Peace: “Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles, ‘I leave you peace, my peace I give to you.’ Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom, where you live for ever and ever.” In the Eucharistic Prayer II: “For our sake [Jesus] opened his arms on the cross; he put an end to death and revealed the resurrection.” In the Eucharistic Prayer III: “Lord, may this sacrifice, which has made our peace with you, advance the peace and salvation of all the world.” And at the end of Mass, where the various forms of the words of dismissal all include, “Go in peace.”

Note how none of these moments give us detailed instructions for bringing about peace. They *do* show how God has made peace with humanity, and humanity with itself, through Christ. As Saint Paul wrote, Christ “is our peace” (Ephesians 2:14) because he brings humanity together and gives us “peace with God” (Romans 5:1) “by making peace through the blood of his cross” (Colossians 1:20).

At the 2005 Notre Dame Center for Liturgy conference, political theologian William Cavanaugh of the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul gave a talk on “The Social Meaning of Eucharist.” He argued that the Mass cannot be boiled down to a single message, like justice or, I would add, peace; its “meaning” cannot be exhausted by a single concept. Nor should we try to see it or celebrate it in terms of one thing. In fact, Cavanaugh continued, to look at the Mass in terms of extracting a “meaning” from it is a bit misguided.

What is important about the Eucharistic liturgy is

not what it *means*, but what it *does*. And what it does, Cavanaugh said, is create—recreate, really—the world. When it comes to justice, for example, the Mass does not *primarily* teach us about justice or inspire us to do justice, though in a way it does do these things; rather, it shows us what God’s justice looks like in the world. Christian liturgy reveals how human life and the world are really supposed to be.

Especially in the Eucharist, Christians join themselves to Christ’s body. We shift our allegiance, as Cavanaugh said, from other “bodies” to which we can and do become members, like the state, the market, the corporation, to the Body of Christ, the primary body to which we belong.

I would like to suggest Cavanaugh’s insights about the Eucharist and justice apply as well to thinking about the Eucharist and *peace*.

We cannot reduce the Mass to one thing. In itself the Mass is many things at the same time: sacrifice, commemoration, thanksgiving, communion, sacred meal, real presence, transformation, and anticipation of the end of time. It has never been only one of these dimensions. In a similar way, we cannot say the Mass is *only* a celebration of peace, or justice. We distort the Eucharistic celebration if we make it an anti-war

protest, just as we distort it if we use it to bless nationalism. Such misuses border on self-worship, which is idolatry. The Mass celebrates reconciliation and communion. In our participation in the Mass we become people through whom justice and peace flow.

But that is not to say peace does not hover over the Mass like the dove of God’s Spirit. *The Mass does as much or more than* it means. Cavanaugh’s point about the liturgy recreating and revealing more than only instructing and inspiring strongly recalls a statement that Virgil Michel, the Benedictine pioneer of the American liturgical movement, made decades before.



*The Savior of Zvenigorod
(also known as Christ the Peacemaker)*

Joel Schorn produces and edits liturgical and prayer aids at TrueQuest Communications. He is the co-author of A Faith Interrupted: An Honest Conversation with Alienated Catholics, (Loyola Press.)

Speaking of the liturgy and social and economic reconstruction, Michel wrote, "The liturgy does not offer a detailed scheme of economic reconstruction. But it does give us a proper concept and understanding of what society is like, through its model, the mystical Body of Christ."

The liturgy does not tell us how to recreate the world; it shows us what the recreated world looks like. The Mass does not give us a program for peace; it reveals a world remade in the ways of peace.

The Eucharist forms us, in William Cavanaugh's words, to absorb violence, not perpetuate it. To be vessels of reconciliation, not of violent aggression or retaliation. In a 2005 Lenten meditation, Capuchin Father Raniero Cantalamessa, the preacher to the papal household, said that because of the Eucharist, "God's absolute 'no' to violence, pronounced on the cross, is kept alive through the centuries." The Eucharist also "appears, positively, as God's 'yes' to innocent victims, the place where every day blood spilt on the earth is united to that of Christ..." Citing the work of René Girard, Cantalamessa pointed out how Christ broke the connection between the sacred and violence. "Christ defeated violence," Cantalamessa said, "not by opposing it with greater violence, but by suffering it and laying bare its injustice and uselessness."

The Mass perpetuates Christ's sacrifice on the cross, in which by becoming a victim of violence, Jesus destroyed forever the ultimate power of fear, violence, and death and gave absolute value to the blood of victims. By joining ourselves to Christ's self-sacrifice in the Mass, we are called to continue that sacrifice into daily life. We conform ourselves to Christ when, struck on one cheek, we offer the other - when we put away our sword rather than muster armies of retaliation.

Whether we are dealing with conflicts in our homes, families, workplaces, communities, or on the global level of terrorism and the "war on terrorism," Christians must ask themselves to what body they belong: to the body that exploits others, that blindly supports the state and its wars, that kills in the name of God, that sheds blood to achieve political goals? Or do we belong to another body, the Body of Christ, the Church, made really present in the Eucharist, a body that gathers the world into a community of reconciliation, that refuses

to initiate or continue the cycle of violence, that names violence but insists that its ways are wrong and a lie - that has a resurrection faith in God's peaceable kingdom, the way the world really is to be?

Into this Body the Eucharist gathers us and forms us to be its members. In putting on Christ, we become instruments of peace in the world. Go in peace. ❖

Below are excerpts from John Allen, Jr.'s May 2005 report on "Peace and Liturgy," a seminar co-sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the Pontifical Liturgical Institute at San Anselm. Forty-five invited Vatican officials and academics from a variety of disciplines gathered at the seminar to "promote research interest in the connection between the liturgical life of the Catholic Church and its action on behalf of peace and justice." Find the article at www.catholicpeacefellowship.org.

"Cardinal Renato Martino, the president of the Council for Justice and Peace, opened the seminar by invoking the words of Pope John Paul II in his last apostolic letter, *Mane Nobiscum Domine*, devoted to the Eucharist: "The lacerated image of our world, which began the new millennium with the specter of terrorism and the tragedy of war, calls Christians more than ever to live the Eucharist as a great school of peace."

"Martino insisted that liturgy, especially the Eucharist, should propel Catholics towards engagement on issues such as 'conflicts, war and peace, and all the subordinate causes of poverty, exploitation, oppression, and ethnic and racial hatreds.' Martino announced that the Council for Justice and Peace intends to prepare a pastoral note on the liturgy as a 'grand school of peace.'"

"Jesuit Fr. Keith Pecklers... warned against 'liturgical isolationism,' in which the exchange of peace, for example, is understood simply with reference to members of the parish community or one's neighbors. The result... is an anemic celebration that leaves the Body of Christ divided."

"Pecklers went on to offer some hard-hitting examples. He noted that some officers of the Nazi SS attended Mass each morning during the Second World War, and then went about implementing the Holocaust. Similarly, he noted that some military officials in Chile during the Pinochet regime were faithful Mass-going Catholics and yet were involved in the torture of dissidents. How, Pecklers asked, could the two things go together?"

Second in a Two-Part Series

War and Conscience After Vatican II

BY TOM CORNELL



Protesters burn draft cards during the Vietnam War

Jim Forest had organized the CPF in 1964, but it wasn't until the next year that the pace picked up so that Jim had to quit his job as a journalist. In '65 the load proved too much for him and he invited me in. That year the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council overwhelmingly and loudly approved their final document, *Gaudium et spes*, the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, which called upon governments to recognize the right of conscientious objection (CO). Our theoretical battle was over, but the number of young men approaching us was still small. We had no funds to advertise; liberal Catholic journals of opinion ignored us. Potential conscientious objectors would be very lucky to know of our existence.

If they did find us, they would be luckier still to get to

Tom Cornell is the co-founder, with Jim Forest, of the Catholic Peace Fellowship. He now lives at Peter Maurin farm in Marlboro, NY. This reflection expands on an essay in the September, 1996 issue of Salt of the Earth magazine.

us one story above the last elevator stop of a New York City office building where we sub-let two small rooms from the War Resisters League. We had access to the gabled roof so that Jim and I could eat our lunch *al fresco*, looking out over City Hall and its park, with Barbara Webster and Abraham Maslow's daughter, who was A.J. Muste's secretary. Peter and Paul, but never Mary, sometimes joined us. The Student Peace Union and the Committee for Nonviolent Action sub-let other space, and the New York City Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) paid the rent for an office for A.J. Muste. We were surrounded by comrades.

Jim and I prepared educational materials for the CPF, a Bulletin, pamphlets, the first by Thomas Merton. Ed Rice and Merton's other New York City buddies from his days at Columbia University, Betty Barthelme of Doubleday and Alice Mayhew of Random House, and Joe and Sally Cunneen of *Cross Currents* magazine collated their Christmas card lists and we constructed a mailing list from them. Dan Berrigan managed to plant

a story about us in *The New Yorker* "Talk of the Town" section, and that helped. It was slow-going, to be sure, but a trickle began to form at the door, men seeking a way out of the draft.

Jim and I had to train ourselves in CO counseling, learning the law and regulations of the Selective Service System. We used materials from the American Friends Service Committee, the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, and the National Service Board for Conscientious Objectors, much of it very helpful. I read a sociological study of WWII COs by Julian Cornell, which portrayed the COs of that time as superior to their peers in all indices of intelligence and mental and physical health.

We had to have grounding in the theology of conscientious objection—that we had, having read just about everything available in English on the subject—and I read Abraham Maslow on counseling the high achiever and Carl Rogers on non-directive counseling. Jim and I agreed that counseling serves the person counseled, not any organization or any ideology. One of our sayings, which now hangs in the South Bend office, is: "We don't counsel conscientious objection, non-cooperation, resistance, interference with the Selective Service System or anything else. We counsel young men." So we learned all we could, said a prayer, and went to work.

Meeting the Needs

At first they were all, universally, outstanding individuals, well-educated Catholics with a grounding in the

"We don't counsel conscientious objection, non-cooperation, resistance, interference with the Selective Service System or anything else. We counsel young men."

Church's social thought and a high level of motivation to seek conscientious objector status. Most had no difficulty in meeting the legal requirement as an individual who "by reason of religious training and belief is conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form." A few were not sure that they were "pacifists" in the sense that they believed that war is always and in all circumstances morally wrong. We stressed that we would never counsel lies or facilitate a claim we believed was not truthful. Still, most came to see that they could make a perfectly honest claim while still entertaining doubts about the morality of say, the Battle of Zama in 202 BC, or defending a loved one being mugged in Central Park.

The relevant issue, we'd point out, is war - as it exists, not in hypothesis, but in fact. For example, during World War II and even after, many Jehovah's Witnesses had been successfully prosecuted and imprisoned because they said that they were prepared to fight in the Battle of Armageddon. So, it was deduced, they were "selective COs," not protected by the law. Then a federal appeals court decided that the Battle of Armageddon

Excerpts from "We Have Got to Lead Them in the Ways of Peace: The Catholic Peace Fellowship in the Vietnam Era," a dissertation by Penelope Adams Moon.

...Generally pleased with the Council, anti-war Catholics considered *Gaudium et spes*, the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* "a considerable step forward from *Pacem in terris*." Glen Smiley wrote to Jim Forest that *Gaudium et spes* "may be the best thing any Church has had to offer since the New Testament."

As a result, *Gaudium et spes* became the axis around which the early CPF constructed much of its organizational activities. Thomas Merton felt so strongly that *Gaudium et spes* would be the foundation on which Catholic peacemaking would stand or fall, that he encouraged the CPF to use it as a sort of organizational Magna Carta:

"The Church has spoken as clearly and as authoritatively as one would want, and it is an obvious apostolic duty of everyone to get down to work and interpret and apply *Gaudium et spes*... This is the big job of the CPF in the Church of America: it is what you are called to do now....

You want to get to the colleges, the seminaries and the clergy... I am personally convinced that this is the big chance for CPF to really do something important for the Church... I share your immense respect for CW [the Catholic Worker] and its prophetic quality, but precisely because it is prophetic it remains more or less a symbol that everyone admires and stays away from. Your more colorless and less dramatic job is apostolic: simply reaching a

lot of people and helping them to change their minds. You will at this present juncture be much more likely to have a deep transforming effect on the American Catholic Church than CW ever will... I think that what we need is massive and undramatic apostolic work to clarify the Church's teaching and get it thoroughly known."

Heeding Merton's advice, CPFers took to the road to publicize the peacemaking message of *Gaudium et spes* and to get Catholics thinking about the Vietnam War in the context of recent promulgated Council documents. Like the apostles, CPFers fanned out across the country to talk about Vatican II, sure that if Catholics simply had more information about their faith, they would object to the government's activities in Vietnam.

In February 1966, CPFers partic-

didn't count, because it is "outside history."

Jewish men came to the CPF door, passing by other agencies. That was a source of particular satisfaction to me. Jews respected us for the quality of our service. We were delighted. I remember one young fellow in particular. We talked at length. "I'm not religious," he said. "I'm not Bar Mitzvah and I never go to synagogue." "Tell me," I asked, "how have you come by your sense of 'compassion' that you referred to as we spoke a few minutes ago?" "*Rahmones*—compassion! My grandmother was religious, Orthodox. She sat me down and told me the most important thing to understand is that God is compassionate and that God wants us to be compassionate. *Rahmones* is the basis of our Jewish way of life."

"Do you believe that?" "Yes, I guess I do." "That's your religious training and belief, guy! Just tell the draft board that and buy your grandma a bunch of roses." He made it.

Our only failure was one claim based on just war principles, a perfectly honorable claim backed by the US bishops' call for recognition of selective CO. Stephen Spiro wanted to make his claim on the basis that the war in Vietnam was unjust and that he would not participate in the military while that was in progress. If he had won, that would have been a signal victory and would have expanded the definition of CO substantially. We advised that he would lose in court and lose he did. But his judge was lenient, recognizing his sincerity no doubt, and sentenced him to what amounted to alternative service. "Shorty" Spiro now heads the New

Jersey chapter of CPF.

Father Dick McSorley dropped in one afternoon when I was counseling a sensitive young man who seemed to me very fragile. We were well into it when Dick startled me with a question for this poor guy. "Would you die for your beliefs?" I gulped. The boy said yes. It was a piece of cake from that point on.

As the Vietnam war progressed and the draft intensified, the stream of counselees swelled to a torrent. There was a young hippy (they were new on the scene) who wore a Superman cape, smoked oak leaves in a corncob pipe and called press conferences on the wildest of pretexts—reporters actually came to them! And one who claimed to be a sun-worshipper. He got out of the draft because of the damage he did to his retina gazing into the object of his devotion.

People in the military started arriving. The first was an Air Force officer based in Seattle. When military personnel start resisting, you know that things are changing, and that's the way it is today, when CPF helps to staff the GI Rights Hotline. For questions we could not answer, we called NISBCO, now the Center on Conscience and War in D.C., for expert legal advice. They never steered us wrong. We also had a battery of physicians and psychiatrists ready and willing to examine and even treat our clients free of charge.

For Catholics, Vatican II had a lot to do with the larger numbers we saw. The Council's praise for COs and plea for their legal protection (*Gaudium et spes* #79-80), and a real change of attitude on the part of leading

ipated in "A Week for Peace" at Saint Vincent's College in Latrobe, PA. The week included campus-wide discussions on peace, Church teaching, and the war in Vietnam. Activities also included sermons and prayer sessions all aimed at "elucidating a perspective premised on biblical thought, papal encyclicals and the recent Vatican Council schema of *Gaudium et spes*." Remarkably, invited speakers from across the political spectrum shared the dais. Committed pacifists like the CPF's Tom Cornell and Catholic members of the American Legion who supported the American military presence in Vietnam came together to discuss how Vatican II might impact Catholic attitudes toward government policy. CPFers found the open atmosphere of discussion and prayer they encountered at St. Vincent's particularly effective and worked to recreate the event at

other colleges. Cornell also took the message of *Pacem in terris* and *Gaudium et spes* to Catholic youth by addressing Newman clubs and by lecturing at Catholic colleges throughout the Northeast. Following Merton's advice, CPFers used Council documents as a foundation on which they built their own opposition to the Vietnam War and hoped to broaden it among other Catholics...

The CPF broadened its educational mission in 1965 and 1966 to include public protest of the Vietnam War. Well before the term "resistance" came into popular usage in 1967, the CPF set for itself a goal of introducing Catholics "to the principles and techniques of nonviolent resistance," not simply nonviolence as theory.

1965 proved to be the pivotal year in the development of the CPF. Although they continued

their traditional educational projects, CPFers began taking bolder steps to challenge their government's growing involvement in Vietnam and the American Catholic Church's continued silence on the war...

Draft card burning was prophetic action - symbolic and dramatic, a fact that impressed the editors of *Commonweal*, who described it as a type of "liturgical ceremony." Their reference to liturgy is telling. It implied that draft card burning included a degree of sacrifice since the Catholic liturgy basically reenacted the Last Supper and commemorated Christ's offering up of Himself for humanity's sake. Dorothy Day praised the draft resisters who went to prison, calling them "hostages" who had "offered the most precious gift apart from life itself, their freedom" for those "enslaved in our immoral wars."

American bishops, helped raise awareness. A small minority among COs in previous wars, Catholics were now disproportionately represented and draft counseling spread far beyond the CPF office to rectories and sacristies across the land.

As the war lost popular support, and it became easier for anyone to claim CO successfully, I had to ask myself: "Is it getting too easy? When does self-interest overtake principle? Are there any grounds so trivial that they are not sufficient reason for wanting to stay out of an unjust war?"

Still, we continued to work with everyone who came to us, with a very high degree of success. We kept minimal records, for the reason that they could never be secure and we did not want to have any client compromised if our files were confiscated by the FBI.

Our telephone line was tapped, we were sure. Linda Forest picked up the phone one afternoon to make a call and heard a recording of a conversation that she had had the previous day. Someone at the FBI had thrown the wrong switch! Every now and then the FBI would visit to ask about a client. We would say the same thing over and over again: yes, we know this fellow; yes, he has been in counseling with us; and yes, we believe that this is a sincere and valid claim. They seemed to trust us because we operated in "openness and truth." We had a good reputation. If ever we needed to, we could call the Pentagon and, at our request, induction orders would be cancelled or suspended if we said the client had a valid claim that needed more time for appeal. It never failed!

Far From A Romantic Time

The most difficult counselees to deal with were those who proclaimed that they had such contempt for the system that they would refuse any cooperation with Selective Service and, despite the consequences, they wouldn't apply for CO. They would simply refuse induction and any alternative service requirement on principle. The problem was, I agreed with them. Total non-cooperation is the best route.

But are you sure it's principle or is it distaste for "the system?" And how do you know that you can take the consequences? Two years in prison, and you can count on that at least, can change a man drastically. Experience had taught us to be leery of absolutist claims. Too many victims of their own enthusiasm ended up permanently scarred or even maimed. Some of them looked like poor bets to begin with, and they were the ones who most adamantly refused to see a psychotherapist.

On the other hand, there were legendary non-cooperators, like Ammon Hennacy, Wally Nelson, and Dave Dellinger, whose lives gave witness to their integrity and soundness of judgment, and who made significant contributions to the common good. So, in the face of a potential non-cooperator, we decided to drop the non-directive approach and give him a fight. He would have to battle everybody else, so let him start with us. If a fel-

low persisted, then of course we gave him all the moral and practical support possible.

There was another set of problems by the late Sixties: things were going crazy. It is impossible to describe the atmosphere, the paranoia, the despair, the hysteria in the air to people who did not experience it. From a distance, this epoch may look romantic. But I saw squalor, mental illness, and death, not romance. Martin King was murdered and rage spread across American ghettos. Then Robert Kennedy was killed and hope seemed to die with him. "Bye-bye Miss American pie, drove my Chevy to the levy and the levy was dry...."

Indeed, the price of those days was high, not only on the battlefields of Southeast Asia. Four of my counselees killed themselves.

Eventually, there was such massive opposition to the war that courts were less and less likely to convict anybody and the Justice Department less willing to prosecute. The movement had, in effect, nullified the draft law. The CO rate doubled that of World War II, that is, it went from .0002 percent of the draft age male population to .0004 percent.

Sorry to say, the vast majority of Vietnam era resisters were not COs, or if they were, they did not know it. That is, they didn't know that there was legal provision for them. Many fled to Canada. This number even included the son of an FOR National Council member; his claim would almost certainly have been sustained. He never had adequate counseling! Others evaded the draft by going underground in this country or by starving themselves or drugging and drinking or in other ways compromising their physical and mental health to qualify for 4-F.

Counseling has been the specialty of CPF from the beginning. Thomas Merton urged us to maintain our charism of pastoral and educational work, even if we made occasional forays into direct nonviolent action, demonstrations and the like. Others wanted CPF to transform itself into the coordinating agency for raids on draft boards. Some on the Left criticized conscientious objection as a "bourgeois phenomenon," something for the educated. But all can be educated, if there are those who will teach them. Perhaps what some really resented was the personalist focus: CO is about accepting personal responsibility for one's own moral actions. It is to present oneself before one's fellow citizens, subject to the law, the Higher Law included, to take a stand. The more the norm of personal responsibility takes hold, the more unlikely it will be that unwilling masses will be cajoled, threatened or lied into war.

Now with the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, the need is pressing, and once again, CPF is taking the lead, with new people, I am so grateful to say. We should find ways of making CO more accessible in impoverished communities. But if any sun-worshippers or oak-leaf smoking hippies in Superman outfits show up in South Bend, they'll probably send them to me in New York. ❖

A look back at Tim O'Brien's classic book

The Things They Carried

REVIEWED BY MARY MARGARET C. NUSSBAUM

We tell stories in crosses: a girl meets a boy; a stranger rides into town; and we tell stories in lines: a knight goes on a quest. Living after the year zero, most Westerners speak of human history as some variation of a line: it began and it will end. We might elaborate on that form, giving it arc, and tangent and the tangle of complication; the end might be a nuclear apocalypse, or the Second Coming, or both.

Our lives move similarly, with birth and death serving as points, but few of us would map them so. Our memory moves in circles. We return to those lit, unspeakable moments when we are dissolved in a love. Or we return to lost mornings and evenings so ordinary—red dirt beneath our running feet, smell of dinner, look of sky, sweet face turning—that we didn't know their radiance as they passed. We return to car wrecks, house fires, fights, and what we call, to borrow a term from psychology, trauma. All these moments of saturated time inch and hurl us nearer to this beating thing, Life: this thing which keeps us fascinated and aching for some further home.

"I'm forty-three years old," Tim O'Brien writes in a refrain of the now-classic *The Things They Carried*. "I'm a writer now, and a long time ago I walked through Quang Ngai Province as a foot soldier."

In this book, O'Brien returns to that walk, mimicking circles of memory in his form. Vietnam seduces and consumes, seduces and consumes. Ideas repeat. Motifs loop: photographs of would-be girlfriends and the liability that accompanies them, pebbles, movies, letters, blood clots on dead necks, jungle music; shitfields slurping, a man named Curt who gets blown up into a tree.

In the world of *The Things They Carried*, to be stuck in a circle is to die. In "Speaking of Courage," the war is over and Norman Bowker, who'd "almost won the Silver Star for valor," drives seven-mile laps around the lake in his Iowa hometown. It's the Fourth of July. He longs to tell his stories—about that night, that paddy, the bubbles in the mud where his friend's head should've been—to a pretty girl he knew once, to an ironic classmate, to an endlessly listening father. But they're gone and he's alone. He stops at the A & W where the carhops confirm his burger order in military lingo,

"Affirmative, copy clear. No rootie-tootie?" He tries to reply into the box about courage and Vietnam and something else, but is unable. Back to the lake then, and the circles, and the fireworks in a sky "crazy with color."

In the following chapter, "Notes," we're back in first-person narration and Tim O'Brien, the fictional alter ego of the author, reports that three years later Bowker "hanged himself in the locker room of a YMCA." The death of those circles around the lake was seeping paralysis; the death of the circled noose, a quick release. O'Brien implicates himself in Bowker's suicide—in an earlier, published draft of "Speaking of Courage," he'd told the story wrong.

Ghosts haunt this book and O'Brien's mind. He greets them again and again, using stories to mark graves and to resurrect the dead. There is the man he killed, whom, he writes, he could honestly say he did or did not literally kill. Communal guilt, communal mercy.

"I want you to know why story-truth is truer sometimes than happening-truth," O'Brien writes. Happening-truth leaves us with "faceless responsibility and faceless grief." The story-truth of myths and ongoing everness demands recollection of the particular light in the particular eyes of one dead man.

"His jaw was in his throat, his upper lip and teeth were gone, his one eye was shut, his other eye was a star-shaped hole," O'Brien writes, stating facts. Then he looks again, and the second look is slower, and is one of love. He was a coward when he killed him; now he is brave. He circles back to the flesh that should've lived and dreams himself inside to find the story-truth. The stranger's wrists are "the wrists of a child." He was "a scholar, maybe," O'Brien writes. "He was not a Communist. He was a citizen and a soldier." He wooed a bride. "He was not a fighter. . . he loved books." A fellow soldier tells O'Brien to "cut out that staring." But in his gaze, O'Brien gives the man he killed some life. He gives him some of his life, for O'Brien liked books, and was thin-limbed. Receiving his draft notice he could only think of how this war wasn't his. He was a liberal. He'd rung doorbells for Gene McCarthy. "It couldn't happen. I was above it. I had the world dicked—Phi Beta Kappa and *summa cum laude* and president of the student body. . . a mistake, maybe. . . I was no soldier." He was like the man with the star-shaped hole.

In the practice of looking long and well at another,

Mia Nussbaum's writing is in the current issue of Third Coast and is forthcoming in the Mid-American Review. She teaches Writing at the University of Iowa.

“A true war story is never moral. It does not instruct, nor encourage virtue, nor suggest models of proper human behavior, nor restrain men from doing the things men have always done. If a story seems moral, do not believe it. If at the end of a war story you feel uplifted, or if you feel that some small bit of rectitude has been salvaged from the larger waste, then you have been made the victim of a very old and terrible lie. There is no rectitude whatsoever. There is no virtue. As a first rule of thumb, therefore, you can tell a true war story by its absolute and uncompromising allegiance to obscenity and evil. Listen to Rat Kiley. Cooze, he says. He does not say bitch. He certainly does not say woman, or girl. He says cooze. Then he spits and stares. He’s nineteen years old — it’s too much for him — so he looks at you with those big sad gentle killer eyes and says cooze, because his friend is dead, and because it’s so incredibly sad and true: she never wrote back.

You can tell a true war story if it embarrasses you. If you don’t care for obscenity, you don’t care for the truth; if you don’t care for the truth, watch how you vote. Send guys to war, they come home talking dirty.

Listen to Rat: “Jesus Christ, man, I write this beautiful fuckin’ letter, I slave over it, and what happens? The dumb cooze never writes back.”

—Tim O’Brien, excerpt from “How To Tell A True War Story,” *The Things They Carried*

O’Brien learns empathy. With each circle back, the man in the road with his jaw in his throat is given more breath, and history and feature, until he is up and walking. O’Brien sees him from his typewriter, alive. These circles break, then, and the dead come back. Curt Lemon, blown up shin by sinew into a tree, is imagined as having been gathered by sunlight, lifted into “moss and vines and white blossoms,” ascending. A girl named Linda that O’Brien took to the movies when he was nine, a girl he loved, goes cancerous, bald, and dies. Even as a boy, O’Brien “wanted to live inside her body,” he “wanted to melt into her bones.” But in a story, O’Brien knows, he “can revive, at least briefly, that which is absolute and unchanging.” His craft can bring back the dead.

The hardest to revive are the living dead, like O’Brien. So he dreams the reader into his fictional counterpart, asking us what we would do when faced with Canada or a whole town cheering for a war in a country they can’t find on a map. And he breaks his own long circles. He sees himself, skating on a pond with Linda under yellow floodlights. He’s circling in “loops and spins,” but when he takes a “high leap into the dark” to “come down thirty years later,” it is to save his own life.

Throughout *The Things They Carried*, O’Brien makes a perfect fit of form and function. His publisher calls it “a work of fiction.” Some chapters are short stories; others are prose poems. Much reads like memoir, and the whole work may be called a novel. O’Brien takes his epigraph from a Civil War diary, and dedicates the book to the “men of Alpha Company.” Fact and fiction meet here, as in life.

To confess, he writes a confession. To teach, he inserts essay and proof. To send shrapnel flying, he splinters scenes. To show how the enlisted used a “hard vocabulary to contain the terrible softness,” he writes of shitfields and men who are “greased. . . offed, lit up,”

who were laid out “like Shredded fuckin’ Wheat,” who just “flat-fuck fell.”

To let us feel the weight of what each soldier carried he lists, “P-38 can openers, pocket knives, heat tabs, wristwatches, dog tags, mosquito repellent, chewing gum, candy, cigarettes, salt tablets.” He weighs a girlfriend’s lucky pantihose, a New Testament, a Claymore, a ghost. His litany continues until the men carry “the whole atmosphere. . . the humidity, the monsoons, the stink of fungus and decay, all of it, they carried gravity.” He exhausts the reader under this weight, giving some of it to us.

But *The Things They Carried* has the grace of art that abides; it joins those cut lines of individual lives to the ongoing line that is life. To read this book is to be made more whole.

I remember reading the first paragraph in high school. And again, aloud. It was true. The way Lt. Jimmy Cross held Martha’s letters “with the tips of his fingers,” the way he tasted the envelope flaps, “knowing her tongue had been there,” the way he “spent the last hour of light pretending.” That first chapter was as real and near as tar on asphalt, bread, sweat. And it taught me to better see. I remember waking to the kids around me – suddenly aware that they carried unseen weights. O’Brien’s lean, clear, words slayed me then, and do now.

Last spring I taught *The Things They Carried* to a freshman who was also a veteran of the war in Iraq. Like other students who claim not to be readers, he was taken in by the work. The characters moved into his mind, ate cans of syrup peaches, tortured baby buffaloes, sent lice to draft boards, “humped” their leaden hearts and boots up foreign hills and down. Like those men, he’d been asked to carry too much, by a war-glutted government and people and, like them, he was eased by the way O’Brien’s art witnessed to this, lifting some of that enormous weight with his words. ❖

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HELPING TO RAISE A MIGHTY LEAGUE OF CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS . . . PRICELESS

Many of you have probably noticed that *The Sign of Peace* has not arrived in your mailbox for quite some time. This is due to two reasons. First, many of us on staff here belong to the South Bend Catholic Worker House, and much of our time this year has been spent battling the city, which used zoning laws to force us to relocate our work with the poor. Second (and here is where *you* come in), we are simply no longer able to afford the almost \$3000 that each issue costs to print and mail.

Some have suggested that we stop publishing *The Sign of Peace* on paper, and that we only publish it online for free. We've considered this idea, but still see the inherent value of paper journals. Jodie Setzler, one of our new sponsors, articulated her reason for agreeing to financially support a paper issue: "This way people can leave it lying around in lots of places where people might discover it, who wouldn't find it online. My kids were educated to become pacifists by reading what I left lying around on the kitchen table. I'm serious. (Luckily I'm not very tidy)." So, although the idea of a free online journal is attractive, we would prefer to continue with "snail-mail" too for as long as we can afford it.

Here's our idea: if thirty of you, our loyal readers, agree to send us a check for \$100 every time you receive a journal, this would cover the close to \$3000 each issue costs to print and mail. That would amount to only \$400 each year to get *The Sign of Peace* to thousands of people around the country! Sponsors' names would be listed in the back of our journal, and would receive multiple copies, if desired. You would only have to pay once you received the issue in the mail. This puts the burden on us to get it out on time!

For this issue already, one sponsor has contributed half of the total cost, and six others have signed up for our sponsors program. They appreciate the theological content of *The Sign of Peace*, as well as its consistent and clear promotion of the Catholic view on conscientious objection to war. The material in *The Sign of Peace* cannot be claimed by liberals or conservatives, for it is based on a Church tradition that goes deeper than political labels. This is why Jodie Setzler has joined our mighty league of sponsors. Please consider adding your name to the list, to help make *the Sign of Peace* a sustainable project for years to come!

If you are interested in becoming a *Sign of Peace* sponsor, please contact us at staff@catholicpeacefellowship.org or at (574) 232-2295.

SAVE THE DATE

**September 16th, 2006. South Bend, IN
CPF's 5th Annual Gathering**

www.catholicpeacefellowship.org



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In the Spring 2005 issue of *The Sign of Peace*, we ran a photo from the CPF office in 1965.

Here we are, over 40 years later...

Jim Forest's typewriter is now a computer; Tom Cornell's high-waters gave way to cutting-edge fashion. But the work is the same: raising a mighty league of conscientious objectors.

From the left... Ben Peters, Michael Baxter, Brenna Cussen, and Mike Griffin

