The Challenge of Peace:

God’s Promise
and our Response

25th Anniversary of the US Bishop’s Pastoral
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Cover Photo: Carol Gonzalez (pictured on left) along with Lois Campbell and Henry Gonzalez (both of whom are not pictured) from Pittsburgh CLC walked together this year, in Pax Christi’s annual “Stations of the Cross” marking Good Friday in various downtown areas of cities such as New York and Pittsburgh. They march with signs and prayers at various “station-locations” highlighting the need for an end to war and violence, and the promotion of peace.

This photo was originally published in April 2008 issue of The Newpeople, Pittsburgh’s Peace and Justice Newspaper, published by the Thomas Merton Center.
EDITORIAL FOREWORD

FROM DOROTHY ZAMBITO

“There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens.” (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

The national community of CLC-USA and the many other readers of Harvest have for over seven years enjoyed and benefited from the dedicated, efficient, informed and graced leadership of Dolores Celentano, as Coordinating Editor of CLC-USA’s primary publication. I am certain Dolores feels a sense of relief to know others will be doing the service that was hers to give through those many years. I am sure she will miss some of the connectedness that occurs when you need to be closely in touch with CLC’s happenings – internationally, nationally, regionally and locally. What can we say to you, Dolores? Thank you so very much for all you have done for each of us. You leave us as Coordinating Editor to be ready for what the good Lord is calling you to at this ‘appointed time’ in your life. We wish you the blessings of peace, good health and fruitful service as you continue your journey with the Lord.

Now is the appointed time of transition as the Locust Valley CLC servant community responds to the call to work as Coordinating Editors of Harvest. Although three of the six members of the community, Nancy Head, George Willett and I, will do the actual work of soliciting information and editing, the rest of our community (John Bellamente, Carol Meringolo and Ray Zambito) have pledged their support in many ways. This is truly a communal effort, and we ask your prayers as we endeavor to be good and faithful servants.

One of the first responsibilities of the servant community was to identify a theme for this issue. Soon after we realized that the Summer issue would be our first, I was drawn to choose the topic of peace, especially since 2008 is the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the U.S. Bishops’ Pastoral, The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response. The national community and our local community approved. Besides remembering the document, I felt compelled and passionate to awaken thoughts of peace in a world that seems to have become almost casual about the absence of peace in our world, in our country, in our cities and even in our personal lives. There are days I want to cry out, “What step have you (have I) taken today to bring about a more peaceful world?” I am pleased to say that there were others in CLC who were willing and able to share their reflections with us. Read on.

FROM GEORGE WILLETT

We are fortunate indeed to be able to offer peace related articles from authors of different backgrounds and perspectives. Since our readership is similarly diverse, it would seem that an interesting and beneficial exchange of ideas should occur. There is something here for everyone! There is plenty here for everyone!

Note Ann Marie Brennan’s The Grace of Peace, wherein she acquaints us with several current CLC initiatives and interests. Desiring peace, cultivating a culture of peace and working for peace and justice are discussed. The influence of our Ignatian tradition is mentioned and the identity of several websites is offered for follow-up by those particularly interested.

Fr. Donald J. Moore, S.J. (not a CLCer…yet) offers A View from Jerusalem, a stirring, heart-rending account of some manifestations of the Jewish-Palestinian situation. He gives insight into peace and justice problems in the Holy Land and describes some remarkable men and women who, against all odds, persevere. Despite terrible personal hardship and losses, they continue to work for change — for a peace they may hardly remember. Fr. Moore’s nine years at his present post in Jerusalem afford him an ideal point of vantage from which to give us this report.

Please note too the piece by Dorothy Zambito, Graced History: A Local CLC Response to the Bishops’ Peace Proposal. She recounts what the Locust Valley CLC did in 1983 — and possibly this may be the influence needed to produce a 2008 reprise!

Fr. Benjamin Urmston, S.J. gives us Creating a World Community, wherein he presents his vision and his hope for global turning away from war and toward peace. Fr. Ben deals with the attainment of peace in the broadest sense of the concept. He mentions Maritain’s World Council of Conscience, and Pope John Paul II’s Challenge...
of Peace. He seeks some base from which a proper consideration of the just war concept, for example, could be undertaken. Rather than the United Nations, Fr. Ben puts forward the idea of another entity, a Global Democratic Authority. He believes this type of venue would better allow for the proper consideration of the great concerns of our day — weapons of mass destruction, peace keeping, promotion of the common good and true security for all.

Another facet of peace is shown by Fred C. Leone’s The Conscientious Objectors (CO). Three of Fred’s sons, opposed to war, had to become conscientious objectors. They detail the difficulties encountered when they refused to be swayed. Their firm moral foundation kept them steady and true to their consciences.

Barbara Bedolla’s Promises and Possibilities offers yet another view of peace, or rather the absence of peace. The scene is a border war between Ecuador and Peru over twenty-five years ago. She describes dangers and hardships, including those endangering women and children — even some which continued after the cessation of hostilities!

FROM NANCY HEAD

The appointed time has also arrived to bid a fond farewell to John LeVecke, S.J. who has served for four years as our National EA as well as EA for the Western Region. John has been instrumental in helping to bond closer ties between CLC and the Jesuits as well as assisting CLC to become more of a true Apostolic Community. Be sure to read the tribute and comments from those who worked with him and look at the pictures.

The new National EA is Robert "Cos" Costello, S.J. He is a Missouri native who taught at Rockhurst University and worked as counselor at the US Penitentiary at Leavenworth. He was the National EA for England and Wales. His article is about Projects 134 to 137 and our blessed CLC history. Additional insights from Monika Hellwig on gratitude and reverence derived from the Exercises and one of Pope Benedict XVI’s homilies about knowing Christ and speaking to others of our friendship with him round out where we are today as we prepare for Fatima.

The regions have been busy with retreats and leadership conferences. The Cura Personalis Leadership Conference for college/university students and campus ministers was held at Loyola University in New Orleans from May 27 to June 1. The New England region held its annual retreat in May with the Fairfield Jesuit Community. The Missouri Region CLC’s will be hosting an evening get together during the Ignatian Spirituality Conference in St. Louis in late July. The MAR “alumni group” of the Guides – Coordinators Training (2007) is still meeting monthly via phone conference. Read about Metro NY CLC’s Day of Mission and its Apostolic Groups.

Other regional news includes: The MAR KCLC has scheduled their annual silent retreat from August 9 to 13; Metro NY KCLC member Young Sook Clare Maing was elected as the new President of the Korean National CLC; Jemma Hae-Ja Hong was elected as the new Atlanta Regional CLC President. We send our best wishes and prayers as these two ladies and “Cos” take on their new responsibilities.

Nancy Head is a systems analyst for a major Long Island corporation. She is a Graduate of the Just Faith Program and the Diocese of Rockville Center Pastoral Formation Institute with an additional ministry track in evangelization. She serves her parish, St. Gertrude’s, as a lector, Eucharistic Minister, Liturgy Committee member, and as a past member of the Pastoral Advisory Council. She has been a member of the Locust Valley CLC since 1998, making her Permanent Commitment in 2006. Nancy has one daughter and three grandchildren.

Bios of Dorothy Zambito and George Willett can be found with their articles.

The field of CLC mission knows no limits: it extends to both the Church and the world, in order to bring the Gospel of salvation to all people. (GP 8)
The Grace of Peace

A typical evening at my house is usually chaotic: assuring hungry children that dinner will be ready soon, shushing the barking dog who wants his evening walk, fielding telephone calls, negotiating carpools, preparing for sporting events and attending to homework demands. Add to this an occasional family disagreement, children blasting the television or stereo, and a last minute scramble to tidy up before all arrive home for dinner. Needless to say, peace is a grace which is not always apparent.

Still, we are confident that we hold Christ’s peace in our hearts. Especially consoling are Christ’s words, “...in Me, you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33) Also reassuring are Paul’s words to the Philippians, “And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7)

In Christian Life Community®, we strive for peace in all aspects of our lives - first of all, in our own hearts, then in our families, communities, country and world! The Pre-amble to the CLC General Principles states, “The Spirit of the Gospel and the interior law of love…challenge us to…work with the whole People of God for...peace.”

In thinking about this article, three aspects of peace currently being addressed in CLC come to mind:

- Desiring Peace
- Cultivating a Culture of Peace
- Working for Peace and Justice

Desiring Peace

In the words of Oscar Arias Sanchas, President of Costa Rica and 1987 Nobel Peace Prize winner, “Peace consists, very largely, in the fact of desiring it with all one’s soul.”

One of my favorite stories that expresses this desire takes place during a lunch with Frs. Ben Urmston S.J. and Dan Fitzpatrick S.J. and some of the participants of the CLC UN Immersion this past April at Fordham University. After the entrée, Dan asked if anyone wanted anything else like dessert or coffee to which Ben requested, “I want World Peace.” So Dan says, “He has been asking for World Peace all week and I haven’t been able to deliver! Would you settle for a chocolate chip cookie?”

In our Ignatian tradition, we cultivate the desire for peace in our prayer life, meditating on scripture, and in our practice of the daily awareness examen. We reflect on those moments in our everyday life where we experience turmoil and desolation, consolation and peace. In our practice of discernment, once we have made a decision, we seek confirmation of that decision by a deep sense of peace in our hearts, a sign of Christ’s revealing affirmation in our lives.

From the brochure for CLC UN YYA Immersion: As a member of a Christian Life Community®, you are a part of a national and international network of Christians actively working to live a life consistent with the Gospel of Christ. Part of that life involves a commitment to “thinking globally” and recognizing the interconnectedness of our communities, our nations, and our world as a whole. We are called to be a force that brings about peace throughout the world, a peace born of justice.

How purely, how strongly do we desire this call to be a peace-bearing force?

Continued on page 6
Cultivating a Culture of Peace

The United Nations has defined this decade 2001–2010 the “Decade of the Culture of Peace” and has rallied many organizations to join efforts to cultivate ways to do this. A culture of peace is a set of values, attitudes, modes of behavior and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations. “Cultivating peace is like cultivating plants in that they both take root and grow. It begins within oneself and the home, spreads out to the community, then on to the regional, national and international levels.” For more information, go to: http://cpnn-world.org or http://decade-culture-of-peace.org/.

The culture of peace is much more than just peace. It includes the full range of positive alternatives needed to replace the culture of war and violence: respect all life, reject violence, share with others, listen to understand, preserve the planet, rediscover solidarity, work for women’s equality, and participate in democracy.

Some examples of CLC engagement in cultivating a culture of peace include:

**CLC World Umbrella Priority: Multi-cultural Respect, Dialogue, and Advocacy.** CLC World developed this priority before forming the two existing working groups in Geneva and New York. This priority includes positive steps toward creating peace in our community. In CLC-USA, as we are currently participating in the Diversity and Organization national process, we are in fact actively engaged in multi-cultural respect and dialogue amongst our own membership — getting to know one another, developing relationships, learning from one another — all of which go a long way as we strive to work together as one apostolic body.

**International Day of Peace – September 21:** Established by a United Nations resolution in 1981, the International Day of Peace provides an opportunity for individuals, organizations and nations to create practical acts of peace on a shared date. Annual celebrations of Peace Day highlight the Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001 to 2010. Several CLC groups have organized gatherings in their respective communities and towns on this day and have found that at the grassroots level, there is very often an upswelling of interest in working together on this—schools, libraries, municipal leaders, local churches, businesses, yoga teachers, etc. From our World CLC, we are all encouraged to participate in solidarity with people around the world to create a culture of peace on this day. For more information and ideas on how to observe this day, go to: www.internationaldayofpeace.org/

**Pax Christi Stations of the Cross on Good Friday:** In NYC as well as in Pittsburgh, CLC has had a long tradition in co-sponsoring with Pax Christi and other organizations a Good Friday Stations of the Cross march, raising awareness of social justice issues of the day and praying for peace. A parade of people in prayer for peace along 42 Street is quite a counter cultural scene!

Also worth noting at the national and world governmental level is **The United States Institute of Peace** which was recently established by our US Congress as an independent, nonpartisan institution. Its goals are to help prevent and resolve violent international conflicts, promote post-conflict stability and development, and increase conflict management capacity, tools, and intellectual capital worldwide. For more information, go to: www.usip.org.

**Working for Peace and Justice.**

As Catholics we have a long tradition of promoting peace and justice in our world through our Catholic social teaching. This teaching has also served as a model for other organizations including the UN, especially in their Declaration of Human Rights written in 1948 and which established that: recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. See also: www.un.org/Overview/rights.html.

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops has a well-developed website with much information on Catholic social teaching. The latest document on Faithful Citizenship calls us to act in the political arena. See: www.faithfulcitizenship.org which includes resources for families, young people, parishes, etc. While at times many of us feel insignificant and ineffective in responding at the political level, we are in fact called to speak up boldly on behalf of the most vulnerable in our society. We can remember the words of Mother Teresa who said, “God has not called me to be successful, He has called me to be faithful.” The rest is up God.

“Now to him who is able to accomplish far more than all we ask or imagine, by the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” (Eph.3:20-21)

I would encourage all to reread the CLC document, Our Common Mission which was written after the XIII General Assembly in Itaici, Brazil in 1998. This document can be found on the World CLC website: www.cvx-clc.net/doc.html. In it is a fairly in depth discussion of social analysis, bringing the freeing power of Christ to our social reality including to all our varied cultures and to every aspect of our daily life.
Peace Be With You…

George Willett

This issue of *Harvest* is focusing upon the twenty-five year old NCCB document, *The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response*. If we rewind to 1983 we well might ask why this document was written, or, more aptly, why it was needed. The twentieth century until that time certainly had its spectacular successes, advances, attainments in so many fields. However our nation, our world, had some very heavy-duty concerns hanging over them. The memory of two world wars, some lesser wars, invasions (they certainly weren’t excursions), assassinations, civil unrest, and in so many ways the startling changes in the demeanor of our lives — all contributed to a pervasive malaise. Of course, the coming of nuclear weapons and their increase, the grave, terrifying portent attached to them — these alone could produce this malaise, without further assistance.

It would be wonderful indeed if we, a quarter-century later, could be comforted by a feeling that we’re much better off than those 1983 folks — in a different century, a different millennium. But this wishful thinking is immediately dashed when we must admit that most, if not all, of the above concerns are still very much with us. An entirely new enterprise has been developed, whereby crowded airliners are flown into crowded buildings, thereby initiating a new era — an era wherein terror trumps malaise, wherein our entire national comity, economy, our very lives are impacted, even dominated, by just the possibility of this new evil!

It therefore seems that taking another look at this document should be providential and profitable at this time. In collectively setting out to do this, two advisories are offered: 1) do not read this document; study it! and 2) abide by the intent of the title: God’s promise is unquestioned and it is we who are being challenged. Our response is the variable on which we must work. We must act in accordance with our conscientious assimilation of this message.

The bishops begin by stating principles of Catholic teaching on war, deterrence, the arms race and our conscience. War is not one of several equal options; we start our thinking with a presumption against it. Moral principles are involved and faith, reason, prayer, and hope all must be central, not peripheral. “…there is no satisfactory answer to the human problems of the nuclear age which fails to consider the moral and religious dimensions of the questions we face.” (*The Challenge of Peace*, p. ii) Too, the point is made that deterrence alone is not sufficient; peace requires long-term promotion, reasoned and faith-filled, in justice to all concerned.

This pastoral goes on at great length regarding peace and the religious principles concerning it — a veritable handbook. Traveling back as far as the beatitude, “Blessed are the peace-makers” to the time of John Paul II’s words and writings, much of the history of church teaching (a theology of peace) is found herein. Jesus’ words and actions pertaining to the gift of peace, a peace that the world cannot give — all that he did in his passion, death, resurrection and even beyond — bring us to the realization that Jesus is our peace. Paul’s letters furnish us with early church thinking while nuclear-age popes furnish that of our time. A disquieting thought intervenes here: how would we respond if Jesus today were to ask of us, “When I was with you, I left you my peace. What did you do with it?”

The letter offers most impressive food for thought regarding nuclear weapons, touching upon their absolute prohibition, or their limited use (isn’t this somewhat oxymoronic?), or their possible utility as deterrents. Too, the Just War concept is taken up...
at length, a front burner topic particularly since our nation’s decision to pursue military action in Iraq. Could the entire Iraq endeavor furnish an unintended consequence. Might this become a case study of the Just War concept while memories are still fresh?

So we must take up these mighty topics and concepts; our world’s future is without doubt or exaggeration affected by them. We have the good fortune to have at our disposal the specific guidance of Jesus himself — peace and love personified. Too, we have the church’s pronouncements through the centuries, particularly those of recent vintage, and this 1983 document, of inestimable value indeed. Perhaps we might grant ourselves some self-satisfaction, in that we are not a group approaching this matter from a standing start. Our CLC has a history and reputation of continued interest in achieving the dream of a peaceful world; we are the choir to whom the bishops are preaching!

Saint James has offered us sage advice, “…the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who cultivate peace.” (James 3:18) We certainly seek righteousness, but note that James tells us to cultivate peace. Thinking about peace, yearning for peace, advocating peace, are all great; this means doing something, getting out our peace cultivators, getting to work! And Saint Francis encourages us with his, “Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace!” That’s practicality touching the sublime.

Lastly, the words from one additional source, from a totally different quarter, have a degree of pertinence here. Dwight D. Eisenhower almost one-half century ago, during his presidency said, “I think people want peace so much that one of these days governments had better get out of the way and let them have it.” Amen.

Our collaboration with the Jesuits and other members of Our Ignatian family on peace and justice is of current interest. From Easter to Pentecost, we participated in the Ignatian Peace Action praying, fasting and acting in solidarity with those who suffer from war and violence, and woring for our national healing through peace and reconciliation. We also had CLC representation at the Jesuit Solidarity Gathering this June at Regis University in Denver, CO and look forward to initiatives coming out of that.

So, as I hear my children and the dog calling me back to the practice of peace in the family, I leave you with some words of Paul to the Colossians: Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. (Colossians 3:15)
Several years ago, BBC broadcast a retrospect on the life of the late Margaret Hassan, the head of CARE in Iraq, who was abducted, held hostage, and then executed in 2004. In an interview with Ms. Hassan, made shortly before the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, she expressed her own opinion about the oncoming violence: “No, no, no — war will only bring grief to the most vulnerable in society.” Margaret Hassan did not know how tragically personal her forebodings about war would become. Yet how true her insight about war and violence in the Middle East: it has brought only suffering and grief to the most vulnerable in society.

Having spent much of the last nine years at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Jerusalem, I have often reflected about the possibilities of peace in this region. For many the cycle of violence is so deeply rooted and so complex in its origins that all efforts to establish a lasting peace appear doomed to failure. As a priest and a Jesuit I cannot share that opinion. My response comes not simply from a faith perspective, although that certainly enters into the picture, but also from my experience with the people of the Holy Land whom I have come to know and respect and love over the last nine years. My experience is admittedly limited. My judgments are fallible. Perhaps, however, they can shed some light on the darkness of the violence that engulfs that region.

In responding to the problems of the Holy Land I would like to make my own Margaret Hassan’s stand against war and violence. It is the stand taken by every Pope from John XXXIII to Benedict XVI, and it is the stand taken by the American bishops 25 years ago in their ground-breaking document, The Challenge of Peace. In any war the most vulnerable are always its victims. War and violence are always a defeat for humankind.

Here in the Holy Land there are many Jews and Palestinians who are adamant in seeking non-violent ways to resolve the problems that confront them, convinced that they can succeed, but their efforts, for the most part go unnoticed in Western media. One such group is the Bereaved Families’ Forum, Israeli and Palestinian families who have lost loved ones in the violence and have come together to protest the continuing cycle of violence. My first contact with the Forum was in 2002 through George and Najwa Sa’ada, a Christian Palestinian couple in Bethlehem whose eleven year old daughter, Christine, had been killed by Israeli troops in a case of “mistaken identity” during an incursion of the IDF (Israeli army) into Bethlehem.

I first met the Sa’adas four months after Christine’s death. It was an extraordinary visit. There was no hate, no rage, and no call for revenge. They had accepted this family tragedy with the profound faith that ultimately God would bring good out of their pain. Najwa was almost crushed by her grief — she longed so much for her Christine. George had a total of nine bullets and shrapnel pieces removed from his upper body. One would never guess that this was a man who had spent two months in an Israeli hospital, his life hanging in the balance. He seemed strong, resolute, determined to grow from this tragedy. They showed me their family album with photos of Christine from early childhood through her 11th birthday, two months before she was killed. In all of them she was bubbling over with joy and laughter. She must have been a great consolation to her parents, which underscores the tragedy and loss they have suffered.

They recalled the day of the shooting. After visiting grandparents, they were driving through the center of Bethlehem. Israeli troops had been warned of gunmen driving in a car that was the same model and color as the Sa’ada car. Christine saw the soldiers
and cried, “Daddy, they are going to shoot us.” George had scarcely told her “Oh, Christine, there is no danger of that,” when suddenly the firing began. George was hit in the side with six bullets. Christine fell to the floor of the car, a bullet behind her left ear. Her elder sister, Marianne, was hit twice in the leg and still carries a bullet in her right knee. As they retold the story, I listened for the anger, the rancor, the bitterness, especially since they had four months to filter through all the horrible details of “mistaken identity.” There was none. I was awed to be in their presence. If forgiveness is a necessary component of justice and peace, then justice and peace will again flourish in this land.

George and Najwa told me that earlier in the day they had met in nearby Beit Jala with two Israeli families who had suffered similar losses. They found it helpful to know that they are not alone. The shared grief across the racial and religious divide was a way of strengthening their resolution and their hope. The suffering of these parents points to the absurdity of turning to violence to solve political problems or to protect “national security."

A few weeks after the above meeting, I had supper with Rami Elhanan, an Israeli member of the Bereaved Families’ Forum. He shared with me one of his lectures. As he explains it, “darkness descended” upon his family on September 4, 1997 at 2 PM when his 14-year old daughter, Smadar, “sparkling and full of life” and walking in the street with friends, was killed by a Palestinian suicide bomber who was “insane with rage from humiliation and the lack of hope.” Even as a five year old, Smadar had begun protesting the Occupation. At the age of nine she wrote a letter to an Israeli paper expressing her hope that the leaders of Israel and of the Arab nations would sit down and come to an agreement for peace and a division of the land of Israel. And then she added, “I don’t understand why just because we returned here after 2000 years we want once again to rule, and that this land will be the Land of Israel for Jews and not for anyone else (it’s sort of like racism)… If Abraham loved Hagar who was the mother of the Muslim people, and that story is well known, how can it be that we don’t live in peace with the Muslims?” [It should be noted that the letter was never published.]

Rami explains how the tragedy of his daughter’s death placed him in a crisis. He could either “sink into the depths of hatred, depression, emptiness,” or he could try to overcome the tragedy, to understand and help others to understand “that not only is it possible, but it is necessary, once and for all, to break this seemingly endless cycle of bloodshed.” He then continues, “I am very distressed that two peoples are losing their sanity. Fired by hatred, revenge, retaliation and retribution, they rush head over heels to mutual destruction…. I believe that we don’t have to surrender to our basest instincts…. After all, we are human beings, not animals. We lost our children, not our reason. We must maintain the hope that there are other possibilities, that there is someone to talk to and something to talk about. Both sides must enter a dialogue in order to prevent more tragedies. Otherwise, after the tragedy happens there is nothing left.”

In his comments Rami adds that one of the basic premises of the Forum is that “we are all human beings…. We suffer equally. For a Palestinian mother the pain of losing a son is neither less nor more than for an Israeli mother. The tears of an Israeli father are as bitter as those of any other father…. We have suffered an unbearable tragedy and it places upon us a responsibility to tell our truth, to do everything we can to prevent other families from suffering the same fate.”

The influence of the Family Forum on the political process between Israel and the Palestinians is admittedly minimal. Rarely is it ever mentioned in the Western media. Yet if the bereaved can cry out against the absurdity of violence, it is one sign of hope for this Holy Land. There are others.
Machsom Watch is a group of Israeli women who sit quietly by some 40 of the more than 600 Israeli checkpoints and barriers that tightly control all travel of Palestinians. Most of these checkpoints are located completely within the Occupied Territories. They are among the most visible and disturbing reminders of the Israeli occupation. For Palestinians the checkpoints are a constant source of harassment and humiliation, of degrading and often brutal treatment. The Israeli soldiers at the checkpoints can prevent Palestinians from reaching work or school or medical assistance or families or their own orchards or their places of worship. The checkpoints have been condemned by human rights organizations, but often justified in the Western media as “necessary inconveniences” for Israel’s security.

By their presence the women of Machsom Watch hope to mitigate some of the more inhumane aspects of the mistreatment of Palestinians. I have met several of these extraordinary Israeli women and have come to admire their dedication and tenacity. Their monthly reports often read like a chronology of mindless brutality. For example in the report of March 2004 they write, “The phenomenon of the ‘omnipotent soldier’ has made the checkpoints sources of humiliation, maliciousness, arbitrariness and, moreover, sites that generate frustration, hatred and a strong sense of vengeance. So the checkpoints have become a major factor in the erosion of security. Anyone who is able joins in this ‘jamboree’ of making the Palestinians’ lives miserable.”

Their report of June 2005 is bitter and blunt as it strongly criticizes the actions of many of the soldiers assigned to the checkpoint: “These examples of sadistic behavior that we have been witnessing at Qalandiya (checkpoint north of Jerusalem) for some time should sound a warning alarm. To what depths of behavior will they sink? Who is guiding all this sadism? It’s not enough to say ‘The Occupation corrupts’ — because even in the framework of an occupation, this degree of brutality and evil is unconscionable.”

Month after month these women report their experiences not only with the hope of alleviating the treatment of the Palestinians but also because of their fear of what is happening to the young men and women who serve in Israel’s army. One final example of their distress is taken from their report for January 2006. They point out that “the Palestinians’ freedom of movement is inexorably being reduced to total paralysis. Cases of hardheartedness, humiliation and malevolence are multiplying. Dehumanizing and disregarding the humanity of others are fast becoming the norm, and a whole generation of soldiers is learning how to ‘carry out orders’ because ‘there is no other choice’.” They conclude this report with the words of a Palestinian man, perhaps a teacher, who had just been treated at a checkpoint in a contemptuous and insensitive manner, “They should behave with more politeness — like human beings — we too are human beings.” The experiences of these dedicated women receive occasional notice in Israeli media, and almost no notice outside of Israel. Yet Machsom Watch is another reason for hope in the Holy Land.

Liv Grinberg, a noted Israeli political sociologist, points to the reawakening of the voice of Jewish conscience as yet another reason for hope. It is a voice that “can link Jews, Christians and Muslims brought up on the sacred principle that all human beings are created in God’s image.” For Grinberg one of the clearest expressions of this voice is in those members of the military, past, present and future, who are expressing their refusal to serve.

In the fall of 2002 twenty-seven Israeli Air Force pilots signed a letter in which they refused to fly attack missions into civilian population centers. Rather than prosecuting them for their “disobedience” and giving their stand more publicity, the government quietly dismissed them from service. A spokesman for the pilots, Yonatan Shapira, defended their action by insisting that Israel must abide by the values of Judaism.

A Hebron street through an armored windshield of an IDF military vehicle. Photo from Breaking the Silence web site.

Questions for Discussion

1. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been an ongoing problem for many, many years. Are there areas of tension in your own life, even with the best intentions, which have led to little progress of healing? What approaches might be taken to solving both situations?

2. Father Moore tells stories of real people on both sides of the hostilities – stories we rarely read or see in the local media. What can we do to promote the messages of peace and hope that these people have demonstrated? How can we influence the media to bring these stories to light?
and cannot continue on a path that violates the commandment, “Love thy neighbor as thyself.” Sending the army into the Occupied Territories and degrading millions of Palestinians in order to protect Jewish settlers is undermining the soul of Israel.

Writing in The Nation for March 15, 2005, a former member of the IDF, Shamai Leibowitz, reflects on his service in the Occupied Territories from 1986-1991. He was “shocked and disgusted” at the way he and his comrades were ordered to “brutalize” Palestinian civilians. He continued to serve only because he was persuaded by Israeli leaders that they were in the midst of a “peace process.” So effective were the politicians “in their lectures on how Israel ‘only wants peace’ that we were blinded from seeing the reality of how the state is brutally oppressing, subjugating and dehumanizing the Palestinian people.” And then he adds, “Many of us who live in Israel and visit or serve in the occupied territories recognize the truth: Israel is continuously intensifying its military rule in the West Bank while stealing more Palestinian land and building more illegal Jewish-only settlements.” This is a truth that many Israelis and many peoples in the West simply do not wish to hear.

To these voices could be added the many former IDF members who have banded together in a group called “Breaking the Silence.” Its purpose is to give the former soldiers a venue to speak about the inhumanity of the actions they witnessed or were themselves ordered to perform. Their testimony may well add credence to the charges of war crimes that have already been made, or are being prepared, against some Israeli generals. The founder of Breaking the Silence, Yehuda Shaul speaks of his breaking into Palestinian homes in the middle of the night and waking everybody up. “You do not treat Palestinians as equal human beings. It’s like putting all your morality and all your education into a blender. After a minute there is nothing left.” This is the fear which many have expressed previously, that the enforcement of military rule in the Occupied Territories comes at the cost of the erosion of those values which are essential to a Jewish state. There will be nothing left. Again the voices of these present and former IDF members speaking out against the Occupation are seldom heard or seen in the Western media.

These voices complement a plea raised last year by Father Manuel Musallam, pastor of the Catholic parish in Gaza City. “The people in Gaza are suffering unbelievably. They are hungry, thirsty, have no electricity, no clean water…. I sent the Sisters of the Baby Jesus to Jabalyia Camp to check on some poor families. They returned to me crying at the unspeakable horror they saw; the cries of hungry children, the sullen faces of broken men and women who are just sitting in their hungry emptiness with no light, hope, or love…. Those outside of Gaza must care about us here in Gaza, Muslims and Christians. There are no differences here in religion. A hungry child is a hungry child. A sick person is a sick person…. When I cry out as a priest, I beg you, we do not need pity. We only need justice. Without justice there will be no peace.”

One final voice belongs to the various church leaders here in the Holy Land who issued a statement in May 2008: “We therefore urge all those working for peace and justice in Israel/Palestine to consider that any lasting solution must be built on the foundation of justice, which is rooted in the very character of God. After all, it is justice that “will produce lasting peace and security” (Isaiah 32:17). Let us commit ourselves in prophetic word and practical deed to a courageous settlement whose details will honor both peoples’ shared love for the land, and protect the individual and collective rights of Jews and Palestinians in the Holy Land.”

There are many other groups and individuals, Israeli and Palestinian, Jewish, Muslim and Christian, who have been working diligently and nonviolently for peace, justice and reconciliation. Their nonviolent protests more often than not are met with harsh repression by the military, whether the protestors are Israeli or Palestinian or internationals. The impoverishment and destruction and repression will continue. More homes will be demolished. More humiliations will be inflicted. Yet hope continues to be rooted in the many individuals and groups who seek to speak the truth and bring reconciliation to the peoples of this land: Rabbis for Human Rights, Gush Shalom, B’selem (Israeli Information Center for Human Rights), Sabeel (Palestinian Center for Liberation Theology), Palestinian Center for Rapprochement, and Holy Land Trust. These are just some of the organizations that are devoted to bringing about peace through nonviolent means. Their efforts receive very little media attention, but their commitment and determination are clearly fixed. The violence and the injustice continue, but the voices of those seeking justice and peace in this Holy Land will not be silenced.

Related Sites
Bereaved Families Forum:
http://www.mideastweb.org/familyforumactivitiesbackground.htm

Machsom Watch:
http://www.machsomwatch.org/en

Breaking the Silence:
http://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/index_e.asp
Creating a World Community

Benjamin J. Urmston, S.J.

Suppose a traveling salesman came to your door and tried to sell you a product that was extremely expensive, way beyond your budget. Suppose the product was dangerous to human persons and our earth. Would you rush to a decision and go into debt to finance it?

Even though it cripples the world economy and is dangerous beyond belief, world culture has bought the war system. At the beginning of the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius says the purpose of the Exercises is “to order one’s life, without reaching a decision through some disordered affection.” I invite Christian Life Community® to reflect on whether the war system puts order in our human family or whether we have bought the war system through excessive fear and insecurity, perhaps even through reluctance to change our life-style, or the desire to dominate. Do we have enough spiritual freedom and security to listen to another way to order the life of our human family? As St. Ignatius says in the Presupposition to the Spiritual Exercises, are we more ready to put a good interpretation on another’s proposal than to condemn it?

I propose that Christian Life Community® join the efforts of many others to change from the war system to a peaceful and practical alternative. “Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or of extensive areas along with their population merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation.” (Church in the Modern World, #80, quoted in The Challenge of Peace 104) Since modern war harms mostly civilians, Catholic theology emphasizes today a more positive theology of peace. “War is the most barbarous and least effective way of resolving conflicts.” (Pope John Paul II quoted in The Challenge of Peace 102) Again Pope John Paul II, “Violence begets violence…war must always be considered a defeat: a defeat of reason and of humanity. May we soon make a spiritual and cultural leap forward to outlaw war! Yes, never again war!” (Sept. 8, 2004. Address to religious leaders of the world at Assisi, Italy.)

You may object that we have the right and responsibility to defend ourselves. Doesn’t the Catholic Church recognize a just war if certain conditions are followed? If the cause is just, if war is declared by competent authority, if the values at stake over-ride the presumption against war, if there is a right intention, if war is a last resort, if there is probability of success, if there is proportion between the costs and the good expected, isn’t it our responsibility to be patriotic and defend our nation?

If you think the just war theory is practical today, have you tried to persuade governments and citizens to reflect seriously on the conditions of a just war? If we had established a World Council of Conscience first proposed by the Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain, nations or the world community would have a body to turn to when we are deciding that a war is just. Can we say that a war is just if we have not examined carefully the conditions for a just war?

Given modern weapons, the threat of war makes all nations insecure. One nation’s armaments makes other nations insecure. If other nations feel insecure and anxious, we are more insecure. We need common security for all. Nations need not be in competition with one another. The real enemy is the war system itself: the deterioration of the environment, decisions that are not democratic, and hoarding of resources by a few.

As The Challenge of Peace (334) states, there is a better way than our present war system. We can call it by different names or design different structures, but the basic idea is simple. Because the United States is a national federation of fifty states that...
make and enforce laws for people within their borders, if Ohio and Kentucky have a dispute, they don’t call out their national guards and see who has the greater firepower. They use negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and if all else fails, their conflict is resolved by the US Supreme Court. If we have a democratic world federation, the same way can be followed by the nations on our small planet.

After the first World War, “the war to end all wars”, President Woodrow Wilson proposed the League of Nations which among other achievements started the International Labor Organization. After the Second World War, World Federalists urged a democratic world federation. This was even a national debate topic in high schools.

Unfortunately, the five nations who won World War II insisted that they be able to veto a proposal even though a great majority of the world community agreed to the proposal. The United Nations has accomplished much. Our Christian Life Community® NGO in New York and Geneva does invaluable work. But the UN is a federation of sovereign national governments, and NGOs lack the authority and power of national governments. The UN is based on international law comprised of treaties and customs. Even though most national governments usually abide by the terms of their treaties, they violate international laws and their treaties whenever they perceive such a violation is an advantage to their own “national interest.” Individual citizens have no right to interact with the central organization. A Global Democratic Authority would be a federation. Individual citizens whose basic rights are being violated could appeal to the central organization. The Global Democratic Authority could prosecute individuals like Saddam Hussein without going to war against Iraq. A Global Democratic Authority could have a peace-keeping police force to do what the US is trying to do now in Iraq. In a Global Democratic Authority, NGOs would be able to influence the decisions of that government.

Presently, resources for the UN come only from the national governments of the member states. Some nations withhold funds until they get their own way. Although the total need for taxes would be less because of much less military spending, fairer trade, and a more moral economic system, a Global Democratic Authority would have its own independent sources of revenue, such as taxing the use of the common areas of our planet that are not within any nation’s borders.

The UN has to do its work on a very small annual budget. Every one of the states in the U.S. has larger annual budgets than the UN regular budget! The total budget for the entire UN system (including the regular budget as well as the budgets for peacekeeping, the International Court of Justice, and all of the specialized agencies) is $12 billion, or 1/4 of the annual budget for the state of Ohio! All of the national governments of the world together spend 1 trillion dollars per year on their militaries. The U.S. military budget is half of that or 500 billion. Only one-fourth of the world’s military expenditures could feed, house, and provide basic health care for each person on earth.

Today we need to formulate and agree upon a new world constitution. Many draft constitutions have been proposed including The Constitution for the Federation of Earth, created through the efforts of world citizens, politicians, civil society leaders and international lawyers over a period of thirty-three years. A new Global Democratic Authority could arrest individual citizens for terrorism or violations of basic human rights. Each nation would retain the right to make its own national laws and keep its own police force. A democratic world federation would have its own legislative body, a judicial system, an executive body, and a police force. Individual nations would need to reduce their military forces, keeping only a minimum force for internal security and to keep order during natural disasters. Of course, a democratic world federation would need limited jurisdiction following the principle of subsidiarity and have sufficient checks and balances.

If we do not make a fundamental change in the international system, we are likely to see wars or terrorist acts using nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, inhumane laser weapons, and an obscene multiplication of war-fighting robots within the next 50 years. Destruction of the earth’s environment is likely to go beyond the point of no-return. The huge resources going into the world’s military and the preparation for war must be redirected to promoting the common good of our human family.

In his 1963 encyclical Peace on Earth Pope John XXIII said, “Today the universal common good poses problems of worldwide dimensions, which cannot be adequately tackled or solved except by the efforts of public authority endowed with a wideness of powers, structure, and means of the same proportions: that is, of public authority which is in a position to operate in an effective manner on a worldwide basis. The moral order itself, therefore, demands that such a form of public authority be established.” In 1965, the world’s bishops at the Second Vatican Council emphasized everyone’s duty to “strain every muscle as we work for the time when all war can be completely outlawed by international consent. This goal undoubtedly requires the establishment of some universal public authority acknowledged as such by all, and endowed with effective power to safeguard, on the behalf of all, security, regard for justice, and respect for rights. But before this hoped-for authority can be set up, the highest existing international centers must devote themselves vig-
orously to the pursuit of better means for obtaining common security.” (The Church Today, Ch. 5, #82)

The Challenge of Peace supports the potential of the United Nations Organization but it also emphasizes the need for transforming the UN confederacy of sovereign nation-states into global systems of governance: “Just as the nation-state was a step in the evolution of government at a time when expanding trade and new weapons technologies made the feudal system inadequate to manage conflicts and provide security, so we are now entering an era of new global interdependencies requiring global systems of governance to manage the resulting conflicts and ensure our common security. Mutual security and survival require a new vision of the world as one interdependent planet.” (#242 and #244)

In their 1993 pastoral, The Harvest of Justice is Sown in Peace, the U.S. bishops, after the end of the Cold War, showed a preference for a positive theology of peace over the just war tradition. The American bishops have emphasized that solving the problem of war is part of the Catholic Church’s consistent pro-life philosophy. “Discovering God’s peace, which exceeds all understanding, in prayer is essential to peacemaking (Phil 4:7). The peace given in prayer draws us into God, quieting our anxieties, challenging our old values and deepening wells of new energy. It arouses in us a compassionate love for all humanity and gives us heart to persevere beyond frustration, suffering and defeat. We should never forget that peace is not merely something that we ourselves as creatures do and can accomplish, but it is, in the ultimate analysis, a gift and a grace from God. By its nature, the gift of peace is not restricted to moments of prayer. It seeks to penetrate the corners of everyday life and to transform the world.”

In his recent address to the UN in April, Pope Benedict XVI stated, “As my predecessors Paul VI and John Paul II have observed from this very podium, all this is something that the Catholic Church and the Holy See follow attentively and with interest, seeing in your activity an example of how issues and conflicts concerning the world community can be subject to common regulation. The United Nations embodies the aspiration for a ‘greater degree of international ordering’ (John Paul II, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 43), inspired and governed by the principle of subsidiarity, and therefore capable of responding to the demands of the human family through binding international rules and through structures capable of harmonizing the day-to-day unfolding of the lives of peoples. This is all the more necessary at a time when we experience the obvious paradox of a multilateral consensus that continues to be in crisis because it is still subordinated to the decisions of a few, whereas the world’s problems call for interventions in the form of collective action by the international community.”

Suppose Christian Life Community® has the main idea but doesn’t know where to start. Ignatian discernment can examine how to join the efforts of others: become a local chapter of Citizens for Global Solutions; support our own NGO in New York and Geneva; help groups who promote the International Criminal Court and the Responsibility to Protect. Instead of putting all our trust in dangerous weapons of mass destruction, why don’t we trust in God’s plan for us?

No one could have predicted that after hundreds of years of warfare and two world wars that France and Germany would agree to share the same currency. The Holy Spirit can give us the courage to dream. Patriotism plus humanitarianism equals a world peace with justice. Love of our country and love of our human family equals enhancing the integrity of creation. All of us have a dual citizenship: US citizens and world citizens.

A democratic world federation is only one part of my dream. The various forms of nonviolence, a global ethic, a culture of basic human rights, and global economic democracy all work together to replace the war system with a much less expensive, safer and more Christ-like alternative.

For further discussion and links, see www.xu.edu/peace/ben.htm

Questions for Discussion

1. Father Ben shares his dream/vision for a future peaceful world. Do you see his vision as a possibility in your lifetime? What is your vision for peace in the future?

2. Coming through the article is the sense of Father’s Ben’s passion for peace and justice in today’s world. What is your passion in this area, and what are you doing to bring that about?
Thanks to John LeVecke

We wish to express our most profound thanks to John LeVecke S.J., who served as Ecclesial Assistant for CLC-USA for four years in addition to serving as EA for the Western Region CLC for even longer. John has touched the lives of many and made a significant contribution in directing the vision, mission, and potential of CLC-USA. Here are the words of a sampling of folks from across the country.

I have had the great grace of serving all my four years on ExCo with John. We came and leave together. ExCo formed a bonded, supporting and loving community and John was a major catalyst enabling this to happen. Why? Although God in His love calls some to great ongoing suffering and all of us to pain and drudgery at times, enjoyment of our work is a great affirmation that we are doing His work, not our work for Him. John’s sense of humor and fun always enabled us to keep perspective, to use differences of opinion as an occasion to grow and accept differences in personality as no more than speed bumps. John’s sense of hospitality always made me feel welcome as he tended to the details that made being away from home and on the road comfortable. Be it his smiling face at the airport, his feet dangling in the water at Culver City, his willing although terrible driving, thank God he normally had looked at a minimum of three maps, his enjoyment of a good meal — I was always with him as a friend. John’s loving and specific concern for others as they faced the sorrows and problems of life always inspired me. He dropped all to be with our brothers and sisters in Miami for several days when Father Victor died. CLC owes much to John because of his ability and willingness to network with his brother Jesuits. Our growing partnership with the Jesuits is in large measure because of John. I will always remember my “Mondays and Tuesdays” of Thanksgiving week making the rounds with John and others in Washington DC. John opened a lot of doors. As president I appreciated most of all John’s understanding of the role of the laity in the Church and of CLC as a lay way of life. This understanding goes beyond the intellectual; it is in his gut and actions. Thank you, Lord, for the gift of John LeVecke!

Tom Bausch,
CLC-USA Past-President,
North Central Region

Fr. John’s ability to find new, refreshing and funny ways to advertise CLC never ceased to amaze me. His productions at the Los Angeles Religious Ed Congresses were masterpieces and worthy of five stars. He cares passionately about CLC and each and every individual, group, cluster, region, nation and world development. We in the Western Region owe him much and have been blessed to have him a part of CLC - laughing, learning and loving. I know our paths will cross again.

Steve Pehanich,
Western Region CLC

Working with John has been energizing and challenging. We have enjoyed being able to connect again to CLC, and find, with John, a commitment that has been outstanding. His laugh and enthusiasm have given the Western Region a direction that it didn’t have before he came. His understanding of CLC and his creativity were present at meetings and activities. John is a unique and gifted individual, and it has always been a blessing to work with him.

Janice and John Brown,
Western Region CLC
My experience of working with John on ExCo for the past 4 years, has been quite a ride and has provided me a life time of memories. John certainly has a special gift of hospitality and always made everything just right for our various ExCo meetings in Los Angeles. John also has a great sense of “fun” and adventure, whether its running out of gas on the way to Hoang (Peter) Nguyen’s house, talking his way into an Angels game and sitting right behind the owners, or having his cell phone go off during mass and skipping the Our Father. He would always enjoy having a good laugh with those around him. And being on ExCo with the likes of John LeVecke and Tom Bausch (and Paula Burgan when talking about football), you have to be up on your sports teams and beer—and prepared to deal with the rivalries with the NY teams in Ann Marie Brennan’s neck of the country. So John, thanks for the ride!

Kitty Gray,
CLC-USA Treasurer,
Missouri Region

One of the most memorable “John LeVecke” moments for me took place in Detroit in October, 2006, after we attended Liturgy celebrated by then Father General Peter Hans Kolvenbach. As we waited to greet the Father General, he was whisked back to his car by his handlers. Not wanting to miss this connection, John ran across the parking lot after Fr. Kolvenbach, waving a camera in the air, and shouting out, “CLC! CLC! How about a photo for CLC!” To this, Fr. Kolvenbach stopped, stepped toward us, and raised his hand up high saying, “I will die for CLC!” What greater love is there than this!

John has a knack for evoking and illuminating glorious moments such as these where Christ’s presence comes alive for us! John, we wish you many more of these moments in your new work. We have so appreciated your support and your vision for CLC. Thanks, too, for being a great friend! We love you! God bless you!

Ann Marie Brennan,
CLC-USA President,
New York Region

John has a great gift of energy! His work with ExCo, the formation committee, the regional EAs, his Provincial, Fr. Brito, S.J., and Paul Macke, S.J., was incredibly important in helping CLC-USA on the road to becoming a true Apostolic Community. He will be greatly missed.

Paula Burgan,
CLC-USA Secretary,
Northwest Region

John, your Brother E.A.’s are grateful for your leadership in CLC ministry and sad that you are leaving us. You brought us together at a crucial time in the history of the Society and CLC.

Ken Buddendorff, S.J.
New Orleans CLC EA

I especially remember John in his energetic presentation of the North Central Region’s annual Retreat/Meeting held at Iowa Falls, Iowa, in 2006. His stories, music, insights, and spirited presentation made The Spiritual Exercises come alive again for all of us. He was delighted and grateful to be driven for 4-hours through the fertile hills and valleys of Iowa farmland following the retreat, flush with tall, standing corn stalks in the drive back to Omaha. John, we’re going to miss your enthusiasm and guidance terribly in CLC-USA!

Jack Zuercher, S.J.
North Central CLC EA

I thank Fr. John LeVecke for his participation in CLC. He has been inspiring. Two years ago in Iowa at our Regional retreat, his warm presentation of “Ventanas” - “Windows into the Spiritual Exercises” led us to experience God’s love in our daily culture through the examination of media and language. As an Ecclesial Assistant, Fr. John LeVecke visited our Milwaukee cluster last summer. In Pittsburgh this past April at Mass, Fr. LeVecke invited us to speak words of peace in the various languages of those present. This bonded us as we greeted and blessed each other in languages other than our own. He has helped us to pay attention to youth, young adults and multi-culturalism in CLC. At the SOA vigil this past year, I came across Fr. John. His joyousness and grace stays with me.

Jeanne De Simone Sieger,
North Central CLC

John, thanks for your energy, smile, and enthusiasm for CLC! You’ve made a difference!

Susan Stith,
Mid-Atlantic Region CLC

Thank you for letting us introduce you to Peruvian food in Miami and for all the holy water baths in New Orleans! Most of all, thank you for your support and companionship while we dealt with the loss of Father Victor. We’re praying for you and all your future endeavors. Ignatian blessings.

Carmen Santamaria & Angelique Ruhi-Lopez,
CLC YYA Coordinators,
South Florida Region

Based on my encounter with him last year at our NCC meeting, and during the ExCo visit to our home, I consider Fr. LeVecke a gentleman with the fun, sensitive, and loving heart of a child!

Hoang Peter Nguyen,
Dong Hanh CLC

New England Region

Fr. John LeVecke’s leadership contribution to CLC as Western Region and National Ecclesial Assistant these past years evoked my admiration and gratitude. He was alertly at hand when his Provincial Superior, Fr. John McGarry, S.J. wanted to grow the already lively presence of CLC in California. His outreach into and organization of this new territory helped bring CLC into even fuller partnership with California Jesuits, an example of which is there for modeling now across the country.

As the possibility developed of juncturing at the national leadership level, thanks to the vision of CLC-USA ExCo past and present, and the openness of members of the Jesuit Conference, John was there again, bridge building, if you will, helping “the Ignatian Family” on its pilgrim journey toward becoming an apostolic American reality. The right man in the right place at the right time, graced, alert and ready. Thank you, Lord--and thank you, John!

Jim O’Brien,
Mid-Atlantic Region CLC EA

Elevator rides with the NCC will never be the same without you--that is, without your jumping up and down! Thanks for sharing your wonderful humor.

Carmen Castagno,
New Orleans CLC
We enjoyed John’s celebration of Mass when we gathered together with the Dong Hahn community last October 2007 in Worcester, MA. It was amazing to see how great he is with children and how well children respond to him.

**The Dragas Family,**
New England CLC

Dear John, thank you for your generous contributions to CLC as our E.A. for the past four years. Korean CLCers appreciate all you have done to support the work of CLC, locally, regionally, and nationally. Personally, I will miss your great sense of humor and your ability to find joy and simple pleasure in “all things.” I am most grateful I was able to work with you, and to call you by your name John — instead of Fr. John — which indicates a very comfortable relationship in Korean culture. Good wishes and blessings to you as you embark on a new journey. We will miss you...

**E. Christina Kim,**
KCLC New York Region

I think John LeVecke has made an outstanding contribution to CLC over several years! Personally, he was very kind and attentive to me when I attended the national conference in St. Louis three years ago soon after I had struggles with my heart.

**Ben Urmston, S.J.**
Chicago Region CLC EA

I cherish John LeVecke’s humble attitude, humor, joyful collaboration, and generosity that I experienced during the period when I was a member of the National Formation Team.

**Simon Shin,**
KCLC New York Region

Thank you, Fr John, for the many hours of wonderful service to CLC. Your wonderful gift of humor has made the time spent with you a real joy! May God bless you and heal you during this time of renewal. Be assured of our prayers for your next mission!

**Carol (Klosowski) and Bob Gawecki,**
Rieman Great Lakes (Detroit) Region

I admire John and was inspired meeting him in person last summer at Creighton. I was hooked the opening day of the Guides & Coordinators Institute. John said Mass in the afternoon after our arrival and I kept thinking, “This is the famous guy I hear about and read his pieces in Harvest.” I wanted to ask for his autograph. Then, we arrived the next week at Creighton Univ. campus and my father-in-law became ill so I prepared to go home. He was so nice to me and made time to stop by to let me know that he would be sure my family was remembered in prayer. At the Leadership Conference in Pittsburgh, John and I were together as a group of two a couple of times, and we made a great connection. We realized we were both looking in the same direction on the topic we had to discuss. Lastly, I was especially struck by the ending of John’s letter to all of us. He said that wherever he goes and whatever he does in the future, CLC will be a part of him.

**Mary Wescovich,**
Missouri Region

I’ve very much appreciated John LeVecke’s ministry to CLC-USA. He has brought enthusiasm and energy to spreading the gift of CLC more broadly among Jesuits and the Church. We were blessed to have him lead a retreat at Nestucca last fall. At the core of the retreat was God’s love. This has been a central part of John’s ministry and one of the gifts he has shared with us.

**Rick Kunkle,**
Northwest Region

When we look back in years to come at the blessed history of CLC-USA since Nairobi, we will celebrate all the initiatives and the wonderful growth. John, this has your imprint on it. We all continue to benefit from your imagination on how to organize our clusters of different ages and cultures, your creative design, your automatic inclusiveness and good humor. I appreciate most what we call “the quality of our presence.” That is with us now. You are always fully “there” for us. Bless you, John.

**Bob Costello, S.J.,**
Interim CLC-USA EA, Missouri Region

My sincere thanks to you for all you have brought to CLC over these past few years. I am especially grateful for all the work you have done to make a good connection between CLC and the Jesuit Conference. This was a real breakthrough! May God bless and guide you on the road ahead. Our prayers are with you. We shall miss you at our EA meetings!

**Dan Fitzpatrick, S.J.,**
Metro NY CLC EA
Graced History: A Local CLC Responds to the Bishops’ Peace Pastoral

By Dorothy M. Zambito

The publication and distribution of the Pastoral Letter on War and Peace, The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response, took place May 3, 1983 by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Soon after it appeared, the Locust Valley CLC, a community of about twelve members at the time, undertook an in depth study of the document with Father Francis K. Drolet, S.J. as our guide.

Father Drolet synthesized the pastoral and produced an unofficial summary of the lengthy document (over 100 pages). The Locust Valley CLC financed and distributed 10,000 copies of this outline. In August of 1983, Father presented two courses on the contents of the pastoral at the NFCLC Convention in Washington.

In the community, there was a felt need to go beyond digesting the contents for ourselves alone. The Locust Valley CLC began a communal discernment on next steps. After prayer and discussion, it was decided that we would promulgate the message of The Challenge of Peace in our diocese, Rockville Centre, New York.

We brainstormed about how best to do this. The result was a full day’s program, The Call for Lay Collaboration, to be held at the diocesan Seminary of the Immaculate Conception on October 29, 1983, to be hosted and funded by the Locust Valley CLC. We discerned the wisdom of having some guest speakers who would bring expertise and greater credibility to our efforts. Among those who presented papers were: Dr. Robert G. Muller, Assistant Secretary-General at the United Nations; Rev. J.P. Fitzpatrick, S.J., Professor Emeritus of Sociology, Fordham University; and Ms. Jane Blewett, Center of Concern in Washington, DC. Members of the Locust Valley CLC participated as master of ceremonies, moderators of the plenary sessions, group facilitators and ministers of welcome and hospitality. The community ‘imported’ other CLCers from the region to assist in the day’s program.

The initial hope was that the program would host representation from every parish in the diocese of Rockville Centre. (Three mailings had been sent to all the parishes announcing and encouraging participation.) The hope was not realized, but there were about 200 people who attended, some from other Christian denominations. One comment summed up how many felt about the day, “I came here looking for reassurance of the possibilities of hope and peace so that I may share it with my community. I received that and much more. I received the knowledge that I’m not alone.”

Questions for Discussion

1. Dorothy Zambito shares the fact of Locust Valley CLC’s communal discernment after study of the Bishops’ Pastoral, Challenge of Peace.” Has your CLC entered into a formal communal discernment? What was the subject of the discernment? What were the results?

2. Explore your own community’s “graced history.” Identify some of the blessings and the struggles.
The Conscientious Objectors (CO)

Fred C. Leone

When Dorothy Zambito contacted me, she wrote, “I hear that one of your sons was a conscientious objector. Could you write an article on this for Harvest?” My response was, “No, not one son, but three. Yes, I will write the article.” I thought that I could simply get them to tell their story and I would patch them together. But not so.

Let me start with an unlikely ancestral note. My wife Betty’s genealogy includes ancestors who fought at Bunker Hill in the Revolutionary War and a distant cousin in the Civil War. Her three brothers were in World War II, and my brother and I also served in World War II. Of course, these were different eras. Even in World War II, there was enough justification for us to take up arms. But let us consider the climate during the Vietnam War. The youth and young adults at that time were questioning the morality of war, of this war, in particular. Even Dr. Spock, whose book on child care was the “bible” for many young mothers at that time, spoke out in opposition to the Vietnam War.

Now let me tell you the stories of my three (of 5) oldest sons. In each case I asked three questions, namely, (1) Why did you seek a deferment as a conscientious objector? (2) What was the process in your being declared a CO? (3) What are you doing now? The first two stories were obtained by interview and the third was an e-mailed article.

Charles, the oldest, registered after completing his BS degree at the University of Notre Dame. He had a temporary deferment, allowing him to complete his Bachelor Degree. When he registered, he declared that he was a conscientious objector. He was then required to send a paper justifying his request. In it he stated his opposition to this war; he questioned the morality of this conflict. Evidently, the statement he made was sufficient for acceptance of his request. However, he was required to do alternative service for a specified amount of time. He was given a job in a nursing home in South Bend.

During this time, he became aware of the low pay scale of the employees, many of whom were heads of families. He then started a union of the workers. That made the employers very uncomfortable, and they gave him a split shift, i.e., 4 hours on, 4 hours off, and 4 hours on. A fortunate byproduct of all this was that friends organized a car pick up system for him, and that’s how he met his future wife.

Chuck is an established lawyer in South Bend, who has chaired the campaign for the election of the Mayor, at least twice. He is the City Attorney. As such, he has a staff of 7 lawyers in different fields of law. His office is concerned with policy issues, city expenditures, and many other matters. He has also established an Institute for Neighborhoods. Its two conferences on neighborhoods were attended by representatives of government, university and business.

We now hear Peter’s story. He registered as soon as he graduated from high school. His reasons for requesting a status of conscientious objector included (1) the immorality of the Vietnam War and (2) the fact that the culture of the youth and young adults was for peace and not war.

The process for finally attaining his CO status took Peter through three levels of review. At age 18, he filed a federally mandated form. At its end was a box where one
could indicate “conscientious objector.” He was required to submit a statement giving reason for this status. At the local Review Board, in Iowa City, Iowa (our home), his request was turned down. He then submitted his request to the State Board in Des Moines, Iowa. He was again turned down, but since the vote was 3 to 2, he was eligible to send the request to the Federal Level of Review. His request was then accepted. It is rather ironic, however, that his draft number was high enough (359) that he was never called.

[It is worthy to note that a member of the local Review Board (Iowa City, IA) said, at the hearing, “My children went to Regina (Catholic High School in Iowa City). They didn’t teach that there.” This was in 1968, the days of the liberal interpretation of the Just War theory.]

Peter’s primary focus today is adults with developmental disability or with serious mental health problems. There are many at this level who are incarcerated or are in institutions with inadequate facilities and/or insufficiently trained staff. He has visited facilities in over 20 states over a period of 25 years. Several of his former PhD students are working in or with such facilities. He has also testified as an expert witness in many court cases. Several years ago, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Award for his research and work in this area by the University of Maryland System (12 schools).

Frank’s story was told in an email. I am presenting it verbatim:

“In 1969 our family returned from a year in Brazil. That year heightened my awareness of world events and brought me to the point of questioning the actions of governments and those in authority. In December of 1968, a group of Brazilian military officers overthrew the government in power, a different group of officers that had themselves seized the reins of governance through non-electoral means. The coup played out before the eyes of a 16 year old. A firefight occurred blocks from our apartment. My father was suddenly without work when the University of Sao Paulo was abruptly closed by tanks and troops. Two students, a Brazilian Nordesteno (from the North of Brazil) and a Peruvian, took refuge in our home until they could flee the area. Prior to the coup my mind had been challenged with issues of poverty and homelessness played out in the streets of our neighborhood. Families living on the sidewalk, sleeping on newspapers, and begging for food were encountered daily. What kind of social policy permitted people to live and die on the streets? Was there no collective Brazilian social conscience?

I returned to the United States a skeptical 16-year-old, prone to question authority. With an unpopular war raging in Vietnam, I was challenged to make sense of our nation’s policies, the genesis of the Asian conflict, and whether I would be willing and able to take up arms. My conclusion was simple. The war in Vietnam was not legitimate. Its roots went back to colonial wars and World War II. At the time of France’s defeat in 1954 the U.S. taxpayer was footing 80% of France’s war bill. Under the guise of containing communism, our government assumed the role of the French colonialists. When I registered for the draft at age 18, I registered as a CO. I could not, in good conscience, take up arms to fight other men’s wars. The local board turned me down citing that they thought my beliefs were inconsistent with Catholicism. I appealed. My case was slated for a hearing with the local board. At the hearing, the board’s bias against COs and their misunderstanding of Catholicism was clearly evident. My appeal was unanimously rejected. Weeks later I filed an appeal with the state draft board in Des Moines. My paperwork included a verbatim transcript of the local board hearing which I had conveniently tape recorded. The state board unanimously overturned the local decision.”

Frank has been a principal of two primary schools, in Kansas and in New Mexico. He and his wife have been very active in their Church, leading small Christian Communities and as members of their church governing board. They are now in Manhattan, Kansas where he, as superintendent, is challenged to “rebuild” a primary and secondary school system.

Let me now conclude with a reflection. Charles, Peter and Frank were very articulate, and could prepare their requests in a fine manner. I ask myself, “What about the others — those with limited education, or with mental problems? Would they be capable of presenting an adequate request for deferments? What is the morality here?”

Questions for Discussion

1. Fred Leone’s sons dared to be different and unpopular by becoming conscientious objectors. Are there areas in your own life today that call you to be ‘conscientiously objecting’?

2. Charles, Peter and Frank Leone avoided going to war but sought out other admirable opportunities for serving those in need. In what ways can we meet present tensions without violating our basic moral principles?
Promises and Possibilities

Barbara Bedolla

It has been said that we learn our attitudes and create our beliefs not by what we read or from what we hear but rather from our experience. It would appear to me that understanding peace is an ongoing process. First, I would like to share with you my remembrances of encountering violence in a social context. Then, it will be to look at new personal understandings that are going on through community.

When I was the editor of the Mid Atlantic Region’s newsletter, The Pilgrim, I took the liberty of writing a column called Promises and Possibilities. Recently, I found an issue in which I shared in a deeply personal way just what it was like to experience living in Quito, Ecuador at a time when there was a border war between Ecuador and Peru.

THE PILGRIM

“The month of February brought dribbles of mail most of which told me that February was a drag. I thought how neat it would be to have a “draggy” month. February has been one of the most reflective months that I have ever had. Ecuador and Peru had a war — border skirmishes, but in the minds and hearts of the people this was very serious. I had experienced the Detroit Race Riots and that prepared me for this — in a way.

“However, this was different. This time there were planes flying overhead and rumors of bombings, and the security we had in Detroit went out the window. When I realized that bombs didn’t differentiate between Ecuadornians and Americans and our house was right under the landing pattern into the airport, I was terrified.

“Schools closed and parents were told to keep our male children nine and older off the streets as La Guardia came through the streets picking up children and taking them to the front without parents knowing what happened to them. My son Lou was scared as he was nine and couldn’t speak Spanish very well.

“I was giving the 19th annotation retreat at that time to women who were English speaking. Most people were spouses of embassy personnel. However, one woman was married to an agricultural exchange professor. She was Peruvian but was now an American citizen. Suddenly Violetta could no longer attend our group meetings nor would she answer phone calls. Other friends were arrested — people who worked for an American Oil Company — they, too, were Peruvian. We had arrived on the same day and stayed at the same hotel — we looked for housing together. These people were our friends and David was arrested, beaten and held in jail. His family had to go into hiding. The issue of human rights became a reality because of our friends who had to be smuggled out of Ecuador. Sure, I know this happens all the time — but now there is a name, a smile and kids who play on your children’s soccer team. I screamed, ‘This is insanity. This isn’t possible.’ Friends responded, ‘But we did this in World War II.’ And I said, ‘That was 40 years ago; what have we learned since then?’ 'They replied, nonchalantly, ‘but the world hasn’t matured yet.’

“We had met an Iranian family who were not Moslem but Baha’i. The husband was a cardiologist who brought his family to Quito because the Baha’i’s were being persecuted in Iran. This doctor had a great reputation in his specialty and in coming to Ecuador he could not practice medicine. The hospitals, especially those in areas of extreme poverty, needed doctors but he wasn’t allowed to work — who knows all the intricacies. Why do we treat each other this way? How can we move ourselves into this insanity and bring Christ where he is not allowed to be — in a world that has gone crazy?
Later, there was peace; planes stopped flying over head during the night; children came out onto the streets. Our friends, however, were gone and we never saw them again. Violetta and other Peruvian spouses of Americans went back to the US or another country.

“Now that the war was over, the gas prices went up and the students began to demonstrate — apparently this was a normal happening after moments of national violence. One morning three of us, my mother, my neighbor and I were taking a cab across the city to The Working Boys Center. (Every Wednesday, we worked with babies and children a year and a half old — we patterned them.) This morning we found ourselves in an area where streets were blocked by burning tires, and we were rerouted right into an area where three hundred students and workers were banging with metal pipes along the road and chanting things that we could not understand. Then there was the loud sound of a bomb going off and the students in their frenzy turned and came right toward our taxi. I remember saying, ‘This is it’ and my mother saying to me, ‘Where is your faith?’ (That was sort of a mocking remark from her.) I said, ‘I may have faith but in this situation I am not stupid — we are white skinned gringas which in this situation was a bomb in itself in mob psychology.’ They were coming right at us — and then the students swerved and attacked a large lorry behind us — with that our cab found a way to move out. We turned and looked and the lorry had been turned over and was on fire.

“We arrived at The Working Boys Center, worked with the children and then could find no way home. A woman offered to take us out a back way. En route we passed a bus filled with ‘La Guardia’ (military police) and tank type trucks used to break up demonstrations going into the city. It was a terrible thing to see and even reflect upon — the students protesting, the possible loss of lives that might take place. There was real need for issues to be addressed because of the governing powers’ grave financial difficulties which affected all people of Ecuador. Robberies have increased, as have prices — poverty is visible here, but much is cultural visibility and we have to be careful not to equate that with poverty.

“I am sharing this with you, to say that I have to reexamine my stance on many things and maybe by sharing them, you will reconsider your own realities in whatever way you choose. But war isn’t just a television phenomenon; pain and suffering aren’t just down your street. All Christians must realize that we have a portion of the world in our hands, and we must act and pray that we administer it justly. We have been given the promises, the possibilities, and now the responsibilities.”

It is now over 25 years since I wrote that column in 1981 and it is hard to believe that nothing has changed. My small experiences are happening on a large scale all over the world. What kind of people are we?

I would like to recommend a book called Practicing Peace by Catherine Whitmore. Ms. Whitmore is a Quaker and all proceeds from this book will be given to peace organizations. This book is a challenge to any person or any community that chooses to use it. In a very basic way, the author starts with prayer and discernment, and moves on to living issues. She starts with us and really challenges us in a very different approach to live non-violently. And, this is almost as scary as living under the flight path of bombers. It means real honest change as we live the gospel of non-mushy love but deep active love. In this there are Promises and Possibilities, too. Go gently. 😊

Questions for Discussion

1. Barbara Bedolla shares her past experience of being in the midst of a ‘real’ war situation along with her family and friends. How close have you been to a situation of this magnitude? Share your story.

2. Barb challenges us to be peacemakers on a daily basis using prayer and discernment as necessary tools. Describe your day to day peace efforts – or lack of them.
I have been rereading Projects 134 to 137 and highly recommend reviewing them prior to the World Assembly. These documents are intelligent, graced and wise; they connect us with our blessed history starting at Itaici, Brazil in 1998, and then develop Nairobi’s 2003 recommendations. Project 137 in itself is worth our prayer at any time.

After deciding to use the four Projects for this piece, a competing frame of reference intruded. Earlier reading of Monika Hellwig and Pope Benedict XVI built an interpretative prism that shaped the meaning in the Projects. So, I propose first to offer some thoughts about these four Projects, then connect that with Hellwig and Benedict.

Projects 134 [May 2007] reviews where we have been and where we are going, based on input to our World Council from national and regional bodies. The Council then chose the Fatima Assembly’s theme, Journeying as an Apostolic Body: Our Response to this Grace from God. That term “apostolic body” caused confusion in 2000 when many in CLC viewed us as a “body of apostles.” At Nairobi the Spirit moved delegates quite dramatically to accept we are not bodies [groups] of independent operators; we are one apostolic body responsible for the common mission that Itaici described.

The Spirit again guided our leadership in Projects 135 [July 2007]. After they reflected on feedback, they contemplated what would occur at Fatima a year later. They suggested delegates would be in a position similar to the Apostles in Mark 6:30-34, “The apostles gathered around Jesus and told him what they had done and taught.” Fatima delegates, the living Body of Christ, will tell one another what they have done and taught. This Markan contemplation is splendid, anticipating Assembly delegates relating CLC’s blessed history in truth and trust. It mirrors the Apostles’ sharing with Jesus. The prism suggested a nuance.

Reflecting on Mark’s text and Fatima’s theme, Projects 135 stated our graced history is a bridge connecting Itaici and Nairobi. These four Projects evidence CLC’s maturation over the decades by renewing our understanding of CLC’s three fundamental pillars. As with all graced histories, our maturation is consoling and challenging. In the 70s and 80s the focus was our vocation’s communal dimension, in the 90s it was our apostolic nature. Itaici recommended evaluating our attitudes and practices and this has been accomplished. Its concluding document, however, posed a question. Although the Assembly “gave…important input on the WHAT of our common mission…what is it that characterizes the way we live out our (common) mission, i.e., the HOW?”

Nairobi answered Itaici’s query: the “how” comes by our sharing responsibility as a lay apostolic body, ministering in the Church. Sharing this responsibility means discerning, sending, supporting and evaluating decisions made by individuals in groups. Further, Nairobi set the agenda for the intervening years, stating our formation and leadership greatly need new structures for growth and fidelity. Our world community is witnessing significant progress in these crucial areas. When the Fatima delegates come together they will share what we have done and taught. And as 135 noted, Fatima will take consolation from this history and deepen our commitment to be an apostolic body in the Church. My prism was suggesting, but first …

Projects 136 [October 2007] is a second preparatory number. The World Council pointed to the Spiritual Exercises and “Three Kinds of Persons,” inviting us to return to Mark 6:30, “The apostles gathered around Jesus and told him all they had done and taught.” Briefly, 136 asserts this classic meditation challenges our fidelity to the
commitments we make to this way of life. As we know, the Three Persons meditation reveals commitments are not easily kept. We are asked to review our blessed history, organize and share it with the world body. The prism has a distinction.

Projects 137 [January 2008] has wonderful prayer suggestions but shifts the focus of prayer from Mark to Acts. To my thinking, the shift to Acts is a scriptural validation of who CLC is as Christian laity. Whereas the Apostles must have rejoiced telling the historical Jesus what was done and taught, analogously the Fatima delegates will rejoice with one another as members of the Body of Christ, telling the past years of progress and struggle. Now, the prism ---

Years back Monika Hellwig wrote that the Exercises provide the graces of gratitude and reverence. Our blessed history, reviewed in these Projects, is ample reason for deep gratitude and reverence for the Spirit’s guidance. Projects 135 stated, “There have been tremendous experiences and reflections about the core of our call as an apostolic body…” Yes. The Spirit labors in the scope and intelligence of the proceedings after Itaici. There is more to do, but we are rightfully grateful, which I believe is the core, the how of our common call.

Further, Benedict XVI’s first homily in 2005 refines our gratitude. Benedict stated we live in a time of suffering and alienation, but the Gospel pulls us out of the culture of death to true life.

He then continued, “[T]he purpose of our lives is to reveal God to men [sic]. And only where God is seen does life truly begin. Only when we meet the living God in Christ do we know what life is….” He added this, “Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary. There is nothing more beautiful than to be surprised by the gospel, by the encounter with Christ. There is nothing more beautiful than to know him and to speak to others of our friendship with him.”

CLC’s blessed history fits comfortably in Benedict’s words, as we open ourselves to be more visible as “the living God in Christ.” The core call in CLC, the how of our mission, I believe is this gratitude for knowing Christ in many faces and places and for speaking to others of him. How can we be ungrateful for this call or not reverence the Spirit’s ongoing guidance?

The Exercises teach nothing is more beautiful than to know Christ the King and to respond to his call to become the living Christ for others.

Not only has the Word thought, willed and loved us into life, but Benedict’s great challenge is we are necessary for Christ to live and labor as apostolic community in this place and moment. Our vocation is so gratuitous our response itself becomes the core experience of growth and service.

So, CLC’s blessed history demonstrates Christ the Word is thinking of us as apostolic community, willing and loving us for our necessary role in the Church.

PDF files of all the Projects are available on the World CLC web site: http://www.cvx-clc.net/pub.html
• High school and college campus ministers, alumni and young adult CLC members, as well as members of CLCs with young families met several times during the CLC Leadership Conference in Pittsburgh, PA from April 24-27, 2008 to discuss the future of youth/young adult CLCs. The group built relationships and discussed possible structures for youth/young adult representation on a national level.

• The Cura Personalis Leadership Conference for college/university students and campus ministers took place May 27-June 1, 2008 at Loyola University New Orleans. The conference featured a day of service in New Orleans — a city still ravaged by the effects of Hurricane Katrina three years ago — two days of silent retreat and two days of workshops to prepare student leaders to coordinate college level CLCs. Participants hailed from Canisius College, Creighton University, John Carroll University, Loyola Marymount University, Loyola University New Orleans, Loyola College in Maryland, Loyola University Chicago, Regis University, Rockhurst University, St. Louis University, Scranton University, St. Peter’s College, University of San Francisco, and three non-Jesuit schools: Williams College, College of St. Benedict, and St. John’s University. Also in attendance were the National EA Robert “Cos” Costello, Jen Horan from the National Formation Team, National YYA Representatives Angelique Ruhi-López and Carmen Santamaria, and local youth and young adult members of Dong Hanh Vietnamese CLCs. Conference attendees were treated to warm, Southern hospitality and traditional New Orleans fare.

• A young adult manual for the creation and formation of young adult communities is being created. We request contributions from the national community. Any materials should be sent to Angelique at aruhilopez@clcyya.org or Carmen at csantamaria@clcyya.org.

Please remember CLC in your estate plan. Your contribution can make a difference in faith formation, building community and promoting the Ignatian charism.

Even a small contribution can make a huge impact over time...
Financial Report

Financial Summary: Your generous financial support has allowed CLC-USA to make significant progress on many important initiatives in 2007 and on into 2008.

For 2007, CLC-USA operating expenses slightly exceeded revenues. Yet, the net effect of distributed restricted funds from prior years mitigated the shortfall.

Revenues in 2007 were 29.4% greater than budgeted and expenses were 24.8% greater than budgeted. Compared to 2006, revenues were up by 6.0% and expenses were up by 14.1%.

Financial Details: For the year ended December 31, 2007, CLC – USA incurred a net deficit of $2,702. However, CLC – USA spent $17,796 in restricted funds received in previous years and carried forward undistributed restricted funds of $13,419, which resulted in an unrestricted net income of $1,675.

Total revenues of $76,671 consist of 34% from regional / cultural dues, 22% from Harvest subscriptions (including 36% of dues allocated to support the quarterly publication), 19% from Solidarity efforts (i.e., the annual appeal and direct contributions), 14% from Formation Guides Course held during the summer of 2007, 8% from other revenues (i.e., interest income on mutual fund account, in-kind donations, proceeds from the sale of CLC pins), and 3% from NCC reimbursements related to last summer’s in-person meeting (the corresponding expenses are included in the ExCo/NCC Meeting expense).

Total expenses of $79,373 consist of 24% paid out for Solidarity efforts (including $12,018 to the UN Working Group for funds received over the past four years in memory of Betty Leone, $1,500 to support St. Aloysius School, and $3,500 to support World CLC), 19% for Harvest publications (which net of income allocated towards Harvest equated to $1,537 in net income), 17% towards ExCo/NCC Meetings (including Development Committee conference calls and travel to various Jesuit meetings), 14% for World Dues, 13% towards the work of the National Formation Team, 8% for support of the National Office located at Jesuit Hall, St. Louis, Missouri, 3% for Diversity & Organizational Committee efforts, and 2% for Other (including web site updates and bank service charges).

On behalf of the ExCo and NCC leadership, we extend our deepest gratitude to all who contributed to the annual appeal. Formal letters of acknowledgment for those who made contributions since January 1, 2008, will be sent shortly. For those for whom we may have missed sending a letter for their 2007 calendar year contribution, please notify Paula Burgan at ppb@alaska.net.

We also want to thank each CLCer, their local CLC communities and regional / cultural groups for supporting the National initiatives through the combination of the annual appeal and the payment of annual dues of $65 per CLC’er.

Some of the current and future National initiatives include:

- Youth & young adult formation;
- Leadership development;
- Apostolic actions;
- Jesuit collaboration;
- Web site redesign; and
- Formation resources.

We are in need of additional funds to help other developing national communities send their respective delegates to the World Assembly this August at Fatima. So, if all CLCers could find within their means to give just $10 more towards the World Assembly, we could support two delegates from developing countries to get to Fatima, Portugal. Pray, think, act.

If you have any questions, regarding dues, finances, etc., please contact Kitty Gray, CLC – USA Treasurer at kgray@mocorpeu.coop or your regional representative.
**From the Regions**

**KCLC**

*New York Area*

We started our spring session of ICL (Institute for Christian Life), which is an on-going formation program for KCLC members in Metro NY area. The first class started on March 10 with Eunae Christina Kim as a guest speaker. The topic was “Cura Personalis” (Care for the Person). ICL session will open every second Monday of each month and will continue until June. Everyone is welcome.

We had a preparation meeting on April 1 for those members who are preparing for Permanent Commitment this year. The Permanent Commitment will take place on September 21 at Fordham University.

Metro NY KCLC held a one-day retreat on April 27 at Mt. Manresa Retreat House in Staten Island. It was open to Pre-CLC and CLC members. The retreat was highly recommended for those members who are preparing for First and Permanent Commitments. Fr. John Seo, S.J. was invited as a guest speaker and 48 members of KCLC attended this retreat.

We have a new Korean National CLC President. We are happy to announce that one of our Metro KCLC members, Young Sook Clare Maing was elected as a new President of Korean National CLC. We give our support and prayers to Clare.

We are also very happy to announce that Raphael JunYoung Lee was ordained as a Priest at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark on May 24. Fr. Raphael is the son of Juliana Lee of the Anawim KCLC in New Jersey. We celebrated his first mass at St. Joseph Korean Catholic Church in Demarest, NJ on June 1. We pray that God is at his side as he begins his journey in the priesthood.

The Metro New York KCLC is once again hosting the 2008 Silent Retreats. The retreat for adults will take place at the Loyola Retreat House in New Jersey during August 16 through August 24. For young adults, the retreat runs from July 24 through July 27 at the St. Mary’s Abbey in New Jersey.

*Mid-Atlantic Area*

On April 19, a one day spring retreat was held at Holy Family Seminary in Silver Spring, MD. The retreat was guided by Fr. Jung-Ho Ahn.

From April 25 to 27 we had a silent retreat at the Loyola Retreat House in Faulkner, MD. “Pray without Ceasing” was the topic. Thirty-four who were interested in CLC attended. Fr. Pyung-Gwan Pak guided the retreat.

On June 16, MAR KCLC will have a meeting led by the four individuals that attended the Leadership Training Course. They will share their experience of the Leadership Training.

From August 9 to 13, we are scheduled to have our annual silent retreat. The retreat will be guided by Fr. Benedict Jung. The topic will be “The Fool for Everybody’s Sake”.

On October 11, we will have a Commitment Mass with Fr. Jim O’ Brien. This will include a ceremony for the First Temporary Commitment, Renewal Commitment and Permanent Commitment. We are also scheduled to have a day retreat. It will be led by Fr. Howard Gray.

**Atlanta CLC**

Each Saturday we prepared lunches for students at the Special Needs School. We have many good cooks among our members and the students have enjoyed delicious meals.

On May 4, under the guidance of EA Fr. Isidore An S.J., Jemma Hae-Ja Hong was elected as the new Atlanta Regional CLC President for a two-year term ending in 2010. She succeeds Gabriel Youngee Kim.

Last Memorial Day Weekend, our previous EA, Fr. Seo from New York, visited Atlanta. On June 2, CLC members and Fr. Seo enjoyed a wonderful dinner meeting.

One of our members, Young-soon Juliana Choi, will pledge her Permanent Commitment on Friday, June 13. She will become the first member to pledge Permanent Commitment in the Korean CLC Atlanta region. Afterwards, she will leave for YeonByeon city in China as a missionary where she will assist and receive North Korean refugees crossing the Yalu River. The Korean Atlanta CLC chapter is very proud of Juliana Choi. We congratulate her and at the same time feel inspired by her devotion to the CLC movement.

**Mid-Atlantic Region**

Nineteen CLCers (including five Koreans) participated in MAR’s spring regional gathering in mid April. “Returning to Our Ignatian Roots: the Principle and Foundation” was the theme of the weekend. The Friday session began with sharing on, ‘How do we come?’ Points for Saturday’s meditation were given, and a group examen closed out the evening.
Missouri Region

This has been a time of activity for CLC in the Missouri Region as we focus on the task presented to us at the Diversity and Organization gathering in Pittsburgh this past spring. Linda Leib, the Coordinator for the Region, put together packets for each of the local CLCs to trace their graced histories. We held our summer board meeting around our graced history going all the way back to today’s CLC having its roots in Sodality. All but two of our local CLCs were represented at the meeting. We spent the afternoon listening to stories from members of Discipleship, John XXIII CLC, the People of St. Paul and Sacred Circle. All of the CLCs in attendance gave the story of their beginnings. We remembered any number of CLCers in leadership positions over the years including the Dong Hanh Vietnamese CLC in Denver and Carthage, MO. Our three Jesuit schools in the region successfully established CLC with several hundred students involved. All in all, the day gave us the starting point of a wonderful project. We have much work ahead of us to write the history of CLC in the Missouri Region.

Katie Vu and her husband, Joseph, are active in the Vietnamese CLC in Denver. Katie’s brother-in-law, Paul Vu, SJ, has been the coordinator of the Regis University CLC now called Cura. He moves to his next assignment this summer and Colleen O’Grady will be the campus minister to lead Cura this coming academic year. Steven Fowler and Bill Kriege continue in their roles at Saint Louis University and Rockhurst respectively.

John XXIII has just held its annual evaluation focusing on ‘The Particulars of Our Journey at This Graced Time.’ We considered the World Assembly; preparation for the national assembly; reflections on the Society of Jesus’ 35th Congregation; and outreach in the region following the grace of the 2007 Guides-Coordinators Training. Time and energy were spent discerning where these graced events are leading us as a region.

Our Sunday liturgy found us welcoming a new CLC group from Pittsburgh, praying over Hubert (in support of an upcoming visa hearing for his wife and children in Africa), and praying over our new chair and treasurer.


CLC is taking root in several new places in our region that could lead to future communities. We are feeling very blessed!

New England Region

World CLC Day was celebrated in March at the Dрагас’s residence in Lowell, MA. Sharing a meal and celebrating mass was part of the program. We rejoiced as we gathered together as a region. We used Project 137 (World CLC Day 2008) for the faith sharing part and enjoyed a wonderful afternoon.

The Fairfield Jesuit Community (CT) welcomed us for our annual retreat in May. As usual, this is an important event in the life of our region. The wonderful campus of Fairfield University provided us with the right atmosphere as well as being a child-friendly place to accommodate the two families in the region. The use of icons and role-playing helped us in our Contemplation.

We look forward to our summer gathering with the Dong Hanh community in the area. Having the opportunity to meet with this lively community makes us feel renewed.

Steve Stasheff and Colleen Fennell will be getting married soon. The whole region is excited about the event! CLC members will be going to PA to be part of the ceremony. Our little Lucia Dragas will be the flower girl at her godfather’s wedding. We pray for Steve and Colleen as they start this new phase in their lives.

New York Region

Over 50 people gathered for the Lenten Day of Prayer led by Father Bernie Owens, S.J. The context of the day was the moving from being Communities of Apostles to becoming an Apostolic Community. The grace we prayed for was to gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of the mission of Christ, to understand our own individual call and mission in this all-encompassing mission and then to follow Jesus in sharing the work and friendship, the joys and struggles that are involved in the building of God’s

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Honor Roll CLC 2006-2007

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Kingdom. We listened together, prayed quietly and shared one to one. Meditations on the Kingdom and the Beatitudes resulted in a spiritually fruitful day.

During the lunch break of the Day of Prayer, the region’s Apostolic Groups met for a meeting. The Lay Spirituality Group is promoting growth in praying in the Ignatian way. The Social Justice Group is working on setting up a chat room or blog for dissemination of information on social justice issues.

The annual Day of Mission at the Little Sisters of the Assumption Center in East Harlem was another success. Thirty members of the region cleaned, painted, repaired and planted for the Sisters. Others who could not attend donated funds for materials that were needed. The morning ended with Mass and a pizza lunch.

Excerpts from

**The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and our Response**

23. Because peace, like the kingdom of God itself, is both a divine gift and a human work, the Church should continually pray for the gift and share in the work. We are called to be a Church at the service of peace, precisely because peace is one manifestation of God’s word and work in our midst. Recognition of the Church’s responsibility to join with others in the work of peace is a major force behind the call today to develop a theology of peace. Much of the history of Catholic theology on war and peace has focused on limiting the resort to force in human affairs; this task is still necessary, and is reflected later in this pastoral letter, but it is not a sufficient response to Vatican II’s challenge “to undertake a completely fresh reappraisal of war.”[11]

25. A theology of peace should ground the task of peacemaking solidly in the biblical vision of the kingdom of God, then place it centrally in the ministry of the Church. It should specify the obstacles in the way of peace, as these are understood theologically and in the social and political sciences. It should both identify the specific contributions a community of faith can make to the work of peace and relate these to the wider work of peace pursued by other groups and institutions in society. Finally, a theology of peace must include a message of hope. The vision of hope must be available to all, but one source of its content should be found in a Church at the service of peace.