

the
sign of peace
Journal of the Catholic Peace Fellowship

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The Life and Witness of Ben Salmon

**The remarkable story of
a husband, father and
Catholic resister of the
Great War**

**Fr. Emmanuel Charles
McCarthy on Benedict XVI
and God's "way of being"**

**An Air Force veteran on
Catholics killing Catholics**

CPF goes to Rome

**A scientist looks at the
ethics of recruiting
practices**

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letters

I am 20 years old and was honorably discharged from the Navy on February 12th as a conscientious objector (CO). My beliefs about war crystallized while on deployment. I didn't have very many resources at my disposal to go about applying for CO status. However, I was able to find websites like yours that offered invaluable support and information.

I...have begun looking at a possible vocation as a priest in the Church. I admit I wasn't a very strong or devout Catholic before going through the often-confusing struggle of trying to find what I believe in. I now feel I have been brought closer to God and the teachings of Jesus more than ever. Thank you for all that you are doing in and out of the Church....God Bless.

-Daniel Baker

I was impressed by Mike Griffin's article, "A Soldier's Decision" in *America* magazine....We should start a petition to pressure the bishops to add a section to the Catechism mak-

ing it clear that soldiers have the right to selective conscientious objection and... must evaluate the justice of each war for themselves.

-Charles McCarthy

I began listening to **Warcast for Catholics** a couple of weeks ago, and was pleased to hear Joshua Casteel on the last installment. Like Joshua, I am a member of **Iraq Veterans Against the War**. Although I have not applied for CO status since returning from Iraq (I'm due to retire in two months and don't want anything to slow the process), my experience of this war has caused me not only to leave the military and to speak out against this war and its corporatism, but it also has led me to join the Secular Franciscans and work for peace and justice within our faith.

-Andy

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

The Theology of “No”



The most recent results of the *Yearbook of American Churches* have just been published. The *Yearbook* marks the rise in numbers for the mega-churches across the land, yet it reports that there still really is only one mega-church.

Catholics in the United States grew another two percent in 2006 and now number nearly seventy million. The second largest religious group, the Southern Baptists, came in at just over sixteen million.

And it doesn't stop there. Other statistics show that Catholics are over-represented at some of the highest levels of power. Five of nine Supreme Court Justices are Catholic. The Congress, the Administration, and the military also teem with sons and daughters of Rome.

Has this ushered in the long-awaited “Catholic moment” when the Church’s wisdom finally coincides with U.S. policies?

No, it's business as usual here in America. The number of children slaughtered in abortion is holding steady, the country's death chambers are in regular use, and we have passed yet another anniversary (March 19, Feast of St. Joseph) of an aggressive war that the Vatican has labeled “illegal, immoral, and unjust.”

Yet that war could not have been launched without the massive cooperation of Catholics. We are close to one-third of the military, over thirty percent of military brass. And that brass has its own kept Catholic theologians, who did their duty by telling us to rally behind the push for war in Iraq.

To be sure, many Catholic voices did raise concern. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops raised “grave moral questions” and lobbied the Bush Administration, and the U.S. Cardinals visited Condoleezza Rice and supported the last-minute plea by Cardinal Pio Laghi to President Bush.

All of these were fine efforts to exercise Catholic influence. Yet the moment has come to say that in times such as these, our only real power lies in our ability to say “No”; in our ability to say, “Not with our bodies will you pursue your agenda of violence and greed.”

So why the reluctance of so many Catholics to speak such a “No” at this critical point?

There is a great story that Tom Cornell tells from his younger years that might shed some light on this question. He knew a landlord who happened also to be a Communist. The fellow was charging exorbitant rents. Tom challenged him: “How can you square your actions with your rhetoric of social equality for all people?”

“Oh, that's for when the revolution comes,” replied the Communist. “But it's not here yet.”

Many of us Catholics act in the same manner. “Sure, peace is the mark of the Kingdom of God, but the Kingdom is not here yet.” This view reduces the Sermon on the Mount and its hard sayings to a marginal ethic that is not meant to be practiced here and now.

“Say ‘no’ to warmaking in a risky way?” we ask. “That's for when the Kingdom comes.”

It is clear that Christ anticipated our response—He constantly reaffirmed that the Kingdom of God is *at hand*; the Kingdom of God is *within us, among us, in our midst*—here, there, now, and then. Let us live it!

Ben Salmon—the central figure in this issue of *The Sign of Peace*—is a shining example of one who chose to live in the Kingdom *now*. So great was his commitment to the Kingdom, he referred to himself as a member of “the army of Peace.” Following Salmon's lead, the Catholic Peace Fellowship has adopted the ancient Christian military symbol, known as the chi-rho (pictured above left), in its new logo. Originally associated with the Emperor Constantine's victory at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 313 AD, we hope to claim this symbol as the standard of a different army—the army of Peace, the army of Christ—and to follow Christ's example of waging war on any form of evil. And in the words of Salmon, “The surest way to overcome the Evil of War is by the Good of Peace, a steadfast *refusal* to ‘render evil for evil.’” We urge you to reflect on Ben Salmon's great “No,” and to take his example of holiness to heart.

—The Editors

Peace Briefs

News Compiled by the CPF Staff

Judge Declares Mistrial in CO Court Martial

The February 7th court martial of Lt. Ehren Watada, the first commissioned officer to publicly refuse deployment to the Iraq War and occupation, came to an abrupt halt when the military judge nullified the Stipulation of Facts accepted by the prosecution and the defense a week before the trial commenced. The judge granted the prosecution's motion for a mistrial, with a new trial set for March 19, 2007—the fourth anniversary of the resumption of declared war in Iraq. According to Eric Seitz, Lt. Watada's attorney, "The mistrial is very likely to have the consequence of ending this case because double jeopardy may prevent the government from proceeding with a retrial."

Military judge Lt. Col. John Head had gone to extraordinary lengths to try to keep Watada from achieving his objective of "putting the war on trial," ruling that Watada's motivations for refusing to deploy with his unit were "irrelevant" and that no witnesses could testify on the illegality of the war.



Watada

Prosecutors wanted Lt. Col. Head to find that Watada had agreed to pretrial stipulations that he had violated his duty when he refused to show up for movement to Iraq in June 2006.

Though Watada acknowledged that he failed to deploy with his unit, he made clear that he believed his duty, under his oath and military law, was to refuse to participate in an illegal war. The judge, realizing there was confusion, declared the mistrial, saying "the stipulation amounted to a confession" although Watada had "intended to plead not guilty."

Even though faced with the issue of double jeopardy, which prohibits a person from being tried twice for the same crime, the prosecution is free to go forward on the charges it set aside in the now-nullified agreement. In a new trial, however, Watada might be allowed to explain his motivations to a jury.

Catholic Workers Try to Shut Down Guantánamo: Declare Int'l Day of Action

On January 11, 2007, the fifth anniversary of the first prisoners being brought to Guantánamo, two hundred men and women dressed in hoods and orange jumpsuits, representing the prisoners of Guantánamo, joined by three-hundred supporters, marched through the streets of Washington, D.C., winding a path from

the Capitol to the Supreme Court and ending at the U.S. Federal District Courthouse. Throughout the morning, others entered the courthouse to file habeas corpus petitions and await the presentation of the prisoners.



After filing a motion with the Chief Judge of the Federal Court, activists gathered inside the atrium of the courthouse and began reading the litany of prisoners. Many dropped banners reading "Shut Down Guantánamo" from the balconies overlooking the atrium. Forty people representing detainees tried to enter the courthouse for their "day in court." They were denied access and proceeded to block the entrance to the building, which they occupied for several hours. A total of ninety activists were arrested.

There were over one hundred protests held throughout the world to mark the day. The protests were organized by Witness Against Torture, a group of Christians that marched to Guantánamo prison in December 2005.

Iraq Veteran, Prisoner of Conscience

Agustín Aguayo, a 35-year-old Army medic and conscientious objector (CO), was convicted on March 6, 2007 of desertion and missing movement. Although he faced a maximum of seven years in prison, Agustín was sentenced to eight months in the brig for following his conscience and refusing to participate in war.

Nearly three years ago, Agustín applied for a CO discharge from the Army and later served a full year in Iraq, all the while refusing to load his weapon. Now Agustín's wife, mother, and two eleven-year-old daughters are leading a grassroots campaign for justice and freedom for him and all GI war resisters.

"I don't think it is acceptable to God for humans to destroy each other in this senseless war," said Aguayo in a press conference before he turned himself in to authorities. "Some people would call me a coward, but I can tell them that I was there, and I did my job, and I was not afraid. But I cannot be there anymore. I cannot support the destruction of life."

Vatican Says Death Penalty Violates Gospel Teaching of Forgiveness

The Holy See says that it is difficult to justify the use of the death penalty today and warns that the practice

is an affront to human dignity and “the evangelical teaching of forgiveness.” The declaration was issued during the course of a world congress on the death penalty in Paris in February.

The paper stated, “The Holy See takes this occasion to welcome and affirm again its support for all initiatives aimed at defending the inherent and inviolable value of all human life from conception to natural death,” and said every decision to use the death penalty carried “numerous risks,” including “the danger of punishing innocent persons” and the possibility of “promoting violent forms of revenge rather than a true sense of social justice.”

It also noted concerns raised in many parts of the world over “recent executions,” likely referring to the hanging of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and other former officials of Iraq.

A capital execution, it said, is “a clear offense against the inviolability of human life” and can contribute to “a culture of violence and death.”

GI Rights Update

January 2007 was one of the busiest months yet for CPF's branch of the GI Rights Hotline, which takes calls from Indiana, Ohio, and parts of Michigan and Illinois. During one stretch, we received calls from fifteen to twenty distinct callers each day, far more than usual.

The last few months have also seen an increase in the rate of inquiries about conscientious objection (CO). However, few of these service members actually complete applications for CO discharges. This is in part because the application process is so arduous, and in part because many of these soldiers are opposed to fighting only in unjust wars, which makes them selective conscientious objectors (SCOs), and disqualifies them from being discharged under current regulations. Those interested in promoting national legislation to protect the rights of SCOs should contact the Center on Conscience and War (www.centeronconscience.org).



Over 1,000 GIs Sign ‘Appeal for Redress’

1,270 active-duty and reserve members of the U.S. military have petitioned Congress to withdraw American troops from Iraq. “Just because we volunteered for the military doesn't mean we volunteered to put our lives in unnecessary harm and to carry out missions that are illogical and immoral,” says Marine Sgt. Liam Madden, who helped found the organization called ‘Appeal for Redress.’

The appeal calls for a full withdrawal of the troops from Iraq: “As a patriotic American proud to serve the nation in uniform, I respectfully urge my political lead-

ers in Congress to support the prompt withdrawal of all American military forces and bases from Iraq. Staying in Iraq will not work and is not worth the price.”

A 1995 law, the Military Whistleblower Act, enables military personnel to express their opinions in protected communication directly to Congress.

U.S. Religious Leaders Travel to Iran

From February 17-25, a delegation of Christian leaders from the United States visited Iran to meet with Iranian religious and political leaders in the hope of improving relations between Iran and the U.S. The delegation, which consisted of leaders from United Methodist, Episcopal, Catholic, Baptist, Evangelical, Quaker, and Mennonite traditions, believe that military action is not the answer to current problems.

During the visit, delegates met with Iranian citizens, various Muslim and Christian leaders, and government officials, including former President Khatami and current President Ahmadinejad. The meeting with President Ahmadinejad was the first time an American delegation had met in Iran with an Iranian president since the Islamic revolution in 1979. President Ahmadinejad insisted that Iran has no intention to acquire or use nuclear weapons. “I have no reservation about conducting talks with American officials if we see some goodwill,” he said.

The American delegation calls on its government to welcome a similar group of Iranian religious leaders to the United States. They also call upon both the U.S. and Iranian governments to immediately engage in direct, face-to-face talks, to cease using language that defines the other using “enemy” images, and promote more people-to-people exchanges that include religious leaders, members of Parliament/Congress, and civil society.

Iraqi Catholics Making More Sacrifices

Christians in Iraq have been asked by their bishops to witness to the peace of Christ in their behavior and attitudes and to add Lenten sacrifices to the daily privations they already experience as an offering to God. Such privations include lack of drinking water, food, medicines, and electricity—a direct result of the two U.S. invasions and the twelve years of sanctions placed on Iraq, both of which targeted civilian infrastructure.

“We have asked our faithful to offer. . . [their] difficulties to God so that he will keep present the fate of Iraq, its children, its sick, its elderly, and peace and security,” said Auxiliary Bishop Warduni of Baghdad.

Because of danger, masses are no longer celebrated regularly. For Lenten celebrations, the prelate said, “We have asked our faithful to meet in homes to do little Stations of the Cross, to pray the Rosary or Vespers with the help of a committed layman or subdeacon.”

Nevertheless, the Church in Iraq is “full of hope in the Lord,” he said. ✠

On Catholics killing Catholics

Friendly Fire

BY JONATHAN D. LACE

As a theologian, a veteran, and a conscientious objector, I believe that Catholics should refrain from military service because such service allows for the idolatrous possibility of Christians violating their Baptismal oath by killing other Christians. How did I come to this conclusion? To answer this question, let us look at Baptism as it is described in the New Testament and early Christian literature.

Family Ties

At Baptism, Catholics confess their faith in the Trinitarian God and pledge their loyalty to Jesus as Lord. They become “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation...the people of God” (1 Peter 2). As twenty-first century Americans living in a democracy, we sometimes miss the political overtones these statements would have carried to those who first heard them. In a single sentence, with enormous political implications, Paul tells the Philippians that their “citizenship is in heaven” (3:20). The second century *Letter to Diognetus* confirms this radical understanding of Christian identity: “They live in their own countries, but only as sojourners; they bear their share in all things as citizens, and they endure all hardships as strangers. Every foreign country is a fatherland to them, and every fatherland is foreign” (5:5). Such language downplays traditional and modern ideals of patriotism. For this reason, most Romans looked upon Christianity with suspicion and initially classified it as a *religio illicita* (an illegal cult); it appeared to be a subtle form of treason which threatened the stability of the empire by relativizing all other commitments. After all, Christianity’s Founder taught that loyalty to him ran deeper than family bonds: “He who loves father or mother...son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Mt 10:37). People who subscribed to such radical claims were understandably seen as spreading a hubris that threatened the “family values” of Greco-Roman culture, not to mention the status of Caesar as “Lord.”

In addition to pledging loyalty to Christ, at Baptism, Catholics become members of the Church and one

another. In the New Testament, the metaphor of the Church being the “body of Christ” is used by St. Paul. According to him, followers of Christ are existentially interwoven into each other’s lives: “...there may be no discord in the body...the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together” (1 Cor 12: 25-6). This image of the body has a direct connection to the Eucharist: “Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Cor 10:17). St. Augustine makes this member-Eucharist connection in his sermon addressed to catechumens: “If, then, you are Christ’s body and his members, it is your symbol that lies on the Lord’s altar—what you receive is a symbol of yourself” (272). According to this line of thinking, the utmost reverence given to the Eucharist by Catholics at Mass should be given to each other; we become what we eat, the body of Christ.

Understood in the light of the loyalty to Christ and union with other Christians, the Baptismal oath transcends, though does not terminate, all other loyalties, relationships, and measures of justice.

What This Means Today

Last year, the Lebanese Catholic community expressed concern at the American support for the Israeli offensive in Lebanon. The U.S. Bishops repeatedly appealed to the Bush Administration to call for a cease-fire; in addition to the general humanitarian crisis it created, the Israeli offensive was destroying the lives and livelihood of Catholics. Cardinal McCarrick, retired archbishop of Washington, described a “lesson in frustration.” After his August meeting with two Muslim leaders from Beirut was cancelled due to warnings of an impending Israeli attack, he said, “Lebanon has the largest Christian population in the Middle East and we’re losing that. . . .The people are going to leave because they cannot work. There is no gas for the cars; there isn’t food to eat. We don’t know how they are going to open the schools” (*Catholic News Service*, “U.S. Cardinal describes ‘lesson in frustration’ in Lebanon visit” August 10, 2006). Indeed, the wars of recent years and decades have hurt the Church not only in Lebanon, but throughout the region, leading to an unprecedented exodus of native Catholics from the Middle East.

That there are Catholics in Lebanon, Iraq, Palestine,

Jonathan Lace teaches Theology at Seton Hall Preparatory school in New Jersey. He is an Air Force veteran, honorably discharged for conscientious objection. He has an M.T.S. from Emory University, and was received into the Catholic Church Easter 2006.

and elsewhere in the Middle East should not be news to most Catholics in the United States. However, the fact that American Catholics have inadvertently aided in the destruction of native Middle Eastern Catholic communities should at least be *scandalous* to most Catholics. The fact that it is not is a sure sign that the Baptismal oath has in some way been compromised; an illusion made harder to discern by the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11th. It seems that mutual “Eucharistic” reverence inherent in Catholic identity has been superseded by secular loyalties which ought to be secondary to the Baptismal oath: an elusive idolatry.

The teaching of the Church does not sufficiently address the possibility of Catholics killing other Catholics in defense of what their respective states consider to be their own “common goods.” This is my critique of the “Just War” teaching contained in the Catechism. As a strategy which prioritizes the minimum use of force, the Just War theory is a remarkable contribution to the advancement of international policy-making and military planning. However, Church teaching seems to assume that this doctrine is compatible with the Baptismal oath and doesn’t question whether or not such a measure of justice can be reconciled with a more specific theological understanding of the Church as a sacramentally united society in its own right. Paul rebuked the Corinthians for daring to settle their disputes before secular courts: “To have lawsuits at all with one another is a defeat for you” (1 Cor 6:7). What would he say about them killing each other to promote a “common good?”

Does the Catholic responsibility to promote the common good trump the Eucharistic call to be “members of one another?” If so, Catholics have inadvertently made an idol of the state by allowing it to relativize their Baptism. The priority of the Baptismal oath is precisely why early Christian thinkers, such as Irenaeus, Origen, Hippolytus, and Tertullian, found it difficult to reconcile military service with membership in the Church: pledging loyalty to the defense of a system which does not have a universalized concept of “neighbor” could jeopardize the oath itself.

Citizens of Heaven

Early in the third century A.D., the aforementioned Origen of Alexandria responded to charges made seventy years earlier by the social critic, Celsus, who claimed that Christians neglected the public welfare of the Roman empire. He criticized Christians, declaring “...if all were to do the same as you [Christians]...the affairs of the earth would fall into the hands of the wildest and most lawless barbarians...” (*Against Celsus*, IV.68). Origen’s response? If everyone acted like Christians, there would simply be no barbarians. To the critique that Christians did not serve the common good through military service, but should, Origen’s response deserves a full rendering:

“And to those enemies of our faith who require us to bear arms for the commonwealth, and to slay men, we can reply: ‘Do not those who are priests at certain shrines and those who attend on certain gods, as you account them, keep their hands free from blood, that they may with hands unstained and free from human blood offer the appointed sacrifices to your gods; and even when war is upon you, you never enlist the priests in the army. If that, then, is a laudable custom, how much more so, that while others are engaged in battle, these too should engage as the priests and ministers of God, keeping

their hands pure, and wrestling in prayers to God on behalf of those who are fighting in a righteous cause. . . . We do take our part in public affairs, when along with righteous prayers we join self-denying exercises and meditations, which teach us to despise pleasures, and not to be led away by them. And none fight better for the emperor than we do. We do not indeed fight under him, although he require it; but we fight on his behalf, forming a special army—an army of piety—by offering our prayers to God” (*Against Celsus*, IV.73).

For Origen, Christians did work for the common good—by keeping their hands free from bloodshed (like



Icon of Jesus' Baptism,
Constantinople, c. 1050-1100

all good pagan priests) and praying for the success of “just” military campaigns. While his defense was more concerned with bloodshed in general and notwithstanding whatever else may be said about his account of promoting the common good, two things are clear: 1) by avoiding military service, Christians avoid bloodshed and therefore the possibility of killing each other and 2) the Baptismal oath transcends other measures of justice, relativizing them without denying their necessity in the world. Origen did not deny the fact that the Roman legions could undertake “just” campaigns, but he refused to allow the justice of such efforts to relativize the sacramental union of Christians.

Living Our Baptism

The Baptismal oath made by Catholics to follow Jesus as Lord and live as members of one another tran-

Does the Catholic responsibility to promote the common good trump the Eucharistic call to be “members of one another?” If so, Catholics have inadvertently made an idol of the state by allowing it to relativize their Baptism.

scends (not terminates) all other loyalties, relationships, and measures of justice. Thus, a Catholic may live as a citizen of his or her respective nation, but not to the extent that doing so violates the Baptismal oath. At the very least, being members of one another and confessing Jesus as Lord means that Christians should not kill each other in service to the state, a possibility for which military service allows. Promoting the common good as understood politically is, indeed, a good thing. But it is not so good when doing so comes at the expense of the common good of the Church.

According to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in their 1968 letter *Human Life In Our Day*, some teachings of the Church are “noninfallible” and there are “Licit Norms Of Dissent” from those teachings. The current Just War theory is one example of noninfallible teaching and an example of how the Church’s leadership is *still* slow to (using the Holy Father’s word) “realize” the priority of the Baptismal oath in the promotion of the common good. And it is the lack of consideration of this matter in current Just War teachings that is problematic to Catholic identity. Do nations have a natural right to military force to ensure security and justice? Yes. Does the Church recognize this? Yes—but not at the expense of her allegiance to her Lord in her members. The Church may not be able to stop nations from attacking each other, but it should at least be able to prevent its own “dismemberment.” ✠

ADVERTISEMENT

Death and Taxes

Federal income tax forms have now been sent to working people around the country. When that package arrives in the mailbox of a peacemaker, the link between “me” and the war in Iraq hits close to home. If taxes are owed, what should one do?

Approximately half of every tax dollar paid to the U.S. government pays for war. That percentage includes spending for current wars and past wars (including the relevant interest on the debt) and the weapons systems for future wars.

Tax refusal can take many forms—some legal, some acts of civil disobedience. One option is to live below the taxable level. For example, for a single person, \$8,750; for a married couple with one child, \$20,900; with two children, \$24,300; with three, \$27,700.

Some also take further deductions and credits that result in no taxes owed; some earn income “off the books,” some refuse to file at all, others refuse to pay a percentage of what is due. Most war tax resisters redirect the money not sent to the IRS to life-affirming causes.

The National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee has many resources to help people decide whether and how they would like to resist paying taxes for war. Please see the website at www.nwtrcc.org or call Ruth Benn at 1-800-269-7464 to receive more information.



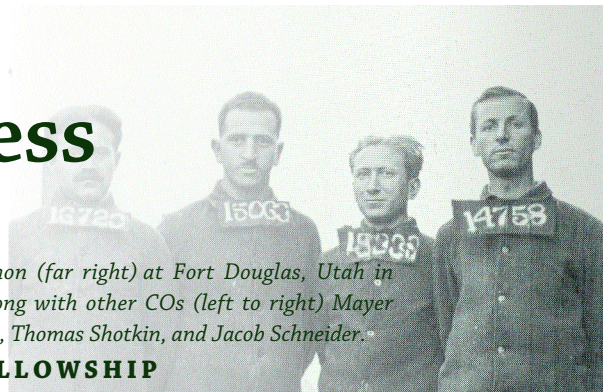
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and
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The Life and Witness of Ben Salmon



Ben Salmon (far right) at Fort Douglas, Utah in 1919, along with other COs (left to right) Mayer Bernstein, Thomas Shotkin, and Jacob Schneider.

BY THE STAFF OF THE CATHOLIC PEACE FELLOWSHIP

Two Letters

On April 6, 1917, President Wilson declared war on Germany and the Central Powers. On the following day, the presidential war declaration was ratified by Congress, so bringing the nation into the First World War, or, as it was called at the time, the Great War.

On April 18, 1917, James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore and de facto head of the Catholic Church in the United States, sent a letter to President Wilson declaring that Catholics would support the war effort (see page 17). “Moved to the very depths of our hearts,” he wrote, “by the stirring appeal of the President of the United States and by the action of our national Congress, we accept

wholeheartedly and unreservedly the decree of that legislative authority proclaiming this country to be in a state of war.” “We stand ready,” Gibbons assured Wilson, “we and all the flock committed to our keeping, to cooperate in every way possible with our President and our national government, to the end that the great and holy cause of liberty may triumph, and that our beloved country may emerge from this hour of test stronger and nobler than ever. Our people, as ever, will rise as one man to serve the nation.”

On June 5, 1917, Ben Salmon, a Catholic layman, a husband, and a father of three children, also sent a letter to President Wilson; but Salmon was stating his refusal to submit to conscription. “Regardless of nationality,” he wrote, “all men

are my brothers. God is ‘our father who art in heaven.’ The commandment ‘Thou shalt not kill’ is unconditional and inexorable.” “Both by precept and example,” Salmon explained to Wilson, “the lowly Nazarene taught us the doctrine of non-resistance, and so convinced was He of the soundness of that doctrine that he sealed His belief with death on the cross. . . . This letter is not written in a contumelious spirit. But, when human law conflicts with Divine law, my duty is clear. Conscience, my infallible guide, impels me to tell you that prison, death, or both, are infinitely preferable to joining any branch of the Army.”

Here we have two different letters, written by two different Catholics, stating two different

A WORD ON OUR SOURCES

Once the subject of national dispute, the case of Ben Salmon faded from memory until it was recalled in the pages of *The Catholic Worker*: first, in 1937, in an article on conscientious objection, then again in 1942, when the paper published Salmon’s letter to President Wilson dated October 19, 1919 (see pages 16-17).

Salmon’s letter was read by sociologist Gordon Zahn, whose studies of German Catholics during World War II, such as Franz Jägerstätter, have provided inspiration for Catholic peace activists. Zahn himself was a World War II conscientious objector, performing alternative service at Camp Simon in New Hampshire. Needless to say, Zahn took moral support from Salmon’s witness.

In 1983, Zahn passed on Salmon’s “An Open Letter to President Wilson” to a graduate student by the name of Torin Finney at the University of Massachusetts in Boston. At Zahn’s urging, Finney dug up the articles in *The Catholic Worker*, from which he learned that Salmon had a wife and three children. Finney managed to contact Salmon’s son, Charles, a priest in the Archdiocese of Denver, and two daughters—Elizabeth (born Geraldine), a Maryknoll sister, and Margaret, of Wheat Ridge, Colorado.

Mr. Finney then wrote *Unsung Hero of the Great War: The Life and Witness of Ben Salmon* (Paulist Press, 1989). His sources also included the thick file on Salmon located in archives of the American Civil Liberties Union in Princeton, N.J., and the autobiographies of Ammon A. Hennacy and Howard W. Moore, a conscientious objector who was imprisoned with Salmon during WWI. The facts of the story presented in this article are taken largely from Mr. Finney’s fine book, which we heartily recommend. We also draw on Robert Ellsberg’s popular book *All Saints*, a daily reflection on the lives of 365 holy people (Crossroad, 1997). Finally, we also found a great source of family photos in Elaine Sargent, whom we thank.

stances toward the nation's entry into the Great War, leading to two different stories of faith and action, service and sacrifice, life and death.

Two Stories

The story that began with Cardinal Gibbons' letter to President Wilson continued in the months to follow with the founding of the National Catholic War Council. The purpose of the War Council was to mobilize the Catholic population to perform "war work," as it was called at the time. The tasks taken up by the National Catholic War Council included recruiting priests for the military chaplaincy, establishing war councils on the diocesan and parish levels, founding Catholic chapters of the Boy Scouts of America, raising money for the war effort, tending to the graves of fallen soldiers overseas, sending social workers overseas for post-war "relief work," and amassing a comprehensive documentary record of Catholic war and relief work for posterity (which can still be found in a basement room in Mullen Library at the Catholic University of America). Eventually, after a series of transformations, the War Council became the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the United States Catholic Conference, the predecessor organizations to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops which now operates in Washington, D.C. For this reason, the story of the founding and work of the War Council is often told as a prelude to the rise of progressive Catholicism in the United States, indeed, as a turning point in U.S. Catholic history, when the Church made a crucial step toward entering into the mainstream of the nation.

But rather than tell the story of

Gibbons and the War Council, which has been told by many historians of U.S. Catholicism, in the following pages we tell the little-known story of Ben Salmon. In doing so, we rely heavily on the biography written by Torin Finney, aptly entitled *Unsung Hero of the Great War: The Life and*



Ben is first row, far left, with brothers John and Joe, his sister Mary and cousin Ellen.

Witness of Ben Salmon (Paulist Press, 1989) [see box]. And we do so for some of the same reasons that Finney wrote his excellent biography: as he writes in the epilogue, to tell a story that "challenges us to take a closer look at our own willingness—or unwillingness—to obey the call of God in our lives." In other words, our purpose in re-telling the story of Ben Salmon is not only to provide information about an exceptional life in the past, but also to provide inspiration and encouragement in the present, so that Catholics and others of this day and age may be inspired and encouraged to follow Salmon's lead by resisting, out of loyalty to God and conscience, the nation at war.

Early Life

First, some facts about his early life. Benjamin Joseph Salmon was born

in Denver, Colorado in 1889. He was the third of four children, with an older sister, Mary, an older brother, Jack, and a younger brother, Joe. His parents were Irish-Canadian immigrants, both Catholic. It was his mother, Catherine, who took him to Mass every Sunday at Holy Family Roman Catholic Church, enrolled him in Catholic schools, and provided him with an example of faithfulness that influenced him in his youth. His first exposure to the military was during the Spanish American War, when he and his brother nursed a wounded veteran who was housed in the Salmon home. Like most boys, he reveled in the war stories he heard, but his mother was known to have a dim view of military life which may have affected him. In any case, in his early teens, Salmon (and this is taken from his own written recollection) "began to wonder how the Catholic Church

reconciled war with the command, "Thou shalt not kill."

In 1907, after attending night school for a few years, Salmon took a full-time job as an office clerk with the Colorado and Southern Railroad. It was during these years that he was gradually transformed into a labor "agitator" (his word). Colorado had been the site of bitter labor struggles connected with the formation of the Western Federation of Miners in 1892. The state militia was frequently dispatched to break the strikes. Strikers, strike-breakers, and lawmen alike were killed. The most notorious clashes occurred in Telluride, Colorado in 1901, and Cripple Creek, Colorado in 1904, not long before Salmon first went to work. Moreover, at this time the country was being swept by the single-tax movement, as conceived by Henry George in his widely popular

and revolutionary book *Progress and Poverty* (1879). Starting with the premise that land is the true source of all wealth and productivity, George and his followers held that the cure for economic injustice lay in eliminating all taxes except land tax. The details of single-tax theory (which, in the age of cyber-space, seems quaint at best) are not important for our purposes. What is important is that Salmon was deeply involved in the single-tax movement, and he embraced the radical economic vision of its leadership and also, coupled with this, a sharply critical view of the state which, as he saw it, exercised its authority in order to enforce the economic injustices of the status quo. His view was gruesomely confirmed on Easter Night in 1914, when striking coal miners were attacked by the National Guard in Ludlow, Colorado, leaving a dozen miners dead, plus thirteen of their children and one pregnant woman. The Ludlow Massacre, as it was called, left Salmon outraged. In 1915, he stepped up his activism for the union, which cost him his job, and for the single-tax, which led him to run for the Colorado State legislature (he lost). Both efforts he saw as part of the struggle for jus-

tice. But these were but a prelude to the struggle to come.

The Great War in America

Many Americans voted for Woodrow Wilson in 1916 because they regarded him as the one presidential candidate who would keep the United States out of the war. Therefore, many Americans were shocked when Wilson declared war a few months after his election. Yet despite the formidable opposition, on May 18, 1917, the Selective Service law was put into effect, requiring all able-bodied men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-one to register at local induction centers within thirty days. An impressive array of liberal and radical leftist groups rose quickly to oppose the draft and the war, but these groups were quickly and effectively silenced. For one thing, the president's description of the war as an effort "to make the world safe for democracy" generated quick and widespread support. For another, the Wilson administration formed the Committee for Public Information (CPI) in order to manipulate the press and generate popular support for the war. (Soon after the war, the head of the CPI,

George Creel, recounted his agency's work in a book entitled *How We Advertised America*). And then, on June 15, Congress passed the Espionage Act, which imposed a fine of \$10,000 and/or twenty years in prison on anyone engaging in activities "detrimental to the war effort," such as making public statements against the war, distributing anti-war literature, or promoting draft resistance. Hundreds were arrested. Thousands were monitored and harassed. A number of anti-war newspapers were censored (including *The Masses*, a monthly magazine which employed a young journalist by the name of Dorothy Day). In 1918, the legality of these measures was upheld by the Supreme Court, which found that freedom of speech may be curbed when, in the memorable phrase of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, it poses a "clear and present danger" to national security.

Salmon Takes His Stand

Salmon was one of those who voted for Wilson to keep the nation out of the war. And he was one of those bitterly disappointed by the president's declaration of war, by his "change of colors," as Salmon put it. So it is not surprising that when Salmon registered for the draft on June 5, 1917 (complying with the deadline set a few weeks before), he wrote the president a letter of protest that same day. Not long after, he stepped out of his leadership role in the single-tax movement and took on a new role as secretary of the Denver branch of the People's Council of America for Democracy and Peace, a national anti-war organization led by leftist activists and intellectuals. He wrote more letters to President Wilson, gave speeches from soap-boxes, and distributed anti-war pamphlets, including one entitled "Ours Is the Land of Tyranny and Injustice," which was censored by the Postmaster General in the fall of 1917. That same fall, he married Elizabeth Smith, whom he had met



Ben is on the left side of photo, standing behind his mother Catherine.



Ben is on the far right, seated. The others in the picture (left to right): Ben's mother, Catherine Reardon Salmon, brother Joe, father Michael Anthony, brother John (standing).

nine years before while working for the railroad, but a conventional married life was not in store for the newlyweds. Salmon was acquiring a reputation as a radical activist, not only around Denver, but nationally too. On November 6, 1917, *The New York Times* described him as a "spy suspect," probably on the basis of his letters to Wilson which the Postmaster had forwarded to the papers. Then, on Christmas Day, he received the Army Questionnaire asking for information needed to process his draft registration. He returned it to his local Draft Board the next day with a letter stating his refusal to fill out the form. His letter concluded: "Let those that believe in wholesale violation of the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' make a profession of faith by joining the army of war. I am in the army of Peace, and in this army I intend to live and die."

Arrest, Trial, Conviction

On January 5, 1918, two Denver policemen came to Salmon's home to arrest him. Members of the local Draft Board, some of whom knew of him and his beliefs, told him it was in his best interest to complete the Army Questionnaire. Salmon refused. He was arrested and released on \$2500 bond, pending

trial. The next day, Salmon distributed a tract he wrote entitled "Killing the Wrong Men." The gist of the article was captured in the title. "If killing has to be insisted upon," he contended, "those responsible for wars—kings, presidents, Kaisers, etc.,—should be made to fight each other and not drag millions of innocent youths into a game where they would be compelled to slaughter each other."

The letter earned him expulsion from the Knights of Columbus chapter of his parish. The episode was reported in a newspaper article describing him as a "slacker," the standard epithet for draft resisters at the time. Salmon had quickly become Denver's most publicized opponent of the war. On January 7, he sent a telegram to the National Civil Liberties Union in New York City explaining his refusal to comply with the draft law and asking for assistance. Three days later came the reply: "Supreme Court has held conscription constitutional. No use fighting." He fought anyway.

Salmon's trial was held on March 30, 1918. His attorneys argued that the Army Questionnaire was unconstitutional because it violated their client's First Amendment right to free exercise of religion. The argument was to no avail. He was convicted and sentenced to nine

months in the Denver County Jail. He appealed and was released again on \$2500 bond, paid by a friend. On May 16, 1918, Salmon received a draft notice out of the blue, requiring him to report for training three days later. He protested, claiming that his case was being adjudicated in the courts and that he had a dependent wife and mother. The Draft Board conceded that the situation was fraught with "irregularities," but insisted that he must report on May 20. Salmon refused, and sent a messenger to inform the draft board of his decision. That afternoon, he was arrested by the Denver municipal police. With no opportunity to consult with his attorneys, he was immediately turned over to military authorities and placed in solitary confinement at Fort Logan, Colorado.

Prison and Court-Martial

On the morning of May 21, 1918, Salmon was roused out of his cell and dragged before the post commander. The commander demanded that Salmon join the work crew on the base. Salmon refused, insisting that he was not a soldier. He was put back into the guardhouse and all his belongings were taken. That evening, as Salmon was brought into the mess hall, the new recruits chanted, "Get a rope! Get a rope!" One of the guards handed him a copy of a newspaper in which new inductees were quoted as saying that if he ever appeared in Denver again, they would "tie Salmon by the neck to the next train to Fort Logan." The next day, Salmon was put on a military train to Camp Funston, Kansas. After about two weeks there, he was informed that he would be tried by court-martial for "desertion and propaganda." Salmon protested that he had never actually been inducted, but his argument fell on deaf ears. On June 12, he was transported to Camp Pawnee, Kansas, where he was placed in detention for three weeks. From there, on July 2, he was transferred

to Camp Dodge, Iowa, where he appeared before a Review Board assigned to hear the claims of all conscientious objectors in federal custody. The Board found him sincere and offered him a farm furlough and commutation of his sentence in Denver, if he would cooperate with military authorities. Encouraged by the ruling, Salmon nevertheless refused to cooperate with the military in any way.

On July 24, at Camp Dodge, Salmon was court-martialed. With no legal counsel available, Salmon presented his own defense by arguing (1) that he had been inducted illegally, (2) that he was responsible for a dependent wife and mother, and (3) that conscription violated the First and Fifth Amendments of the Constitution. The court listened and then, without taking a recess, found him guilty of desertion and propaganda: "desertion," for refusing to report for training, and "propaganda," for distributing his June 5 letter to President Wilson to some Hutterite Brethren also being held at the camp. He was sentenced to death, but then, without explanation, the sentence was commuted to twenty-five years of hard labor at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

However, in late August, Salmon was offered a position as first-class sergeant and legal clerk at Camp Dodge. If he accepted, he was told, his twenty-five year sentence would be reversed. When he received this offer, he wrote to his wife telling her the news. On September 6, she replied, telling him that she had given birth to their first son, Charles. She closed her letter by pleading with him to accept the offer. Needless to say, her news and her plea sent him into deep conflict. After weeks of inner turmoil, he decided not to accept the military's offer, on the grounds that such non-combatant service would entail cooperating with an institution that was "antithetical to Christianity."



Ben in Washington D.C. on July 11, 1921.

Soon, he was transferred to a fifth place of federal incarceration, Fort Leavenworth, to begin his sentence of twenty-five years at hard labor. He arrived at Leavenworth on October 9, 1918, his first wedding anniversary. Just over a month later, on November 11, Armistice was declared and the war in Europe was over. But Ben Salmon's prison sentence was just beginning.

More Refusals, Hardships

At Leavenworth, Salmon was

"Let those that believe in wholesale violation of the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' make a profession of faith by joining the army of war. I am in the army of Peace, and in this army I intend to live and die."

placed in the post guard-house with several hundred conscientious objectors. Initially, he worked in the prison commissary. But after several weeks of reflection, he determined that he would not continue working, so as not, as he later put it, "to aid the killing machine." For refusing to work, and for organizing a protest of the misappropriation of funds that he discovered while working on the kitchen financial records, he was placed in the solitary confinement cellblock, dubbed by prisoners as "the Hole." This was on December 13, 1918.

"The Hole" consisted of several rows of small, five-by-nine-foot cells located over the prison sewer system.

The cells were damp and dark. Many lacked a bed or blankets. There were no toilets, only openings located at one end of the cell floor. The diet was restricted to bread and water. At night, the prisoners were visited by bedbugs and rats. The stench from the flow of sewage was constant. Salmon suffered physically. He suffered emotionally too, for in January of 1919, he learned of the death of his brother Joe a month or so before. While Joe had been traveling to visit Ben in Leavenworth, he got caught in a blizzard and contracted pneumonia. Ben spent more than five months in The Hole, until April 29, when he and the other "absolutists," as the total resisters were called, were moved into regular cellblocks.

On June 23, 1919, the Fort Leavenworth absolutists were handcuffed, loaded on to a military train, and sent to Fort Douglas, Utah. The fort consisted of ten acres of long, wooden barracks surrounded by seven-foot-high barbed-wire fences, with towers at four corners and guards manning the towers with loaded machine guns. In mid-August, these 142 remaining abso-

“Christ’s doctrine to overcome evil with good” stands as “the most effective solution for individual and societal ills that has ever been formulated. It is a practical policy, because Christ is God, and God is the supreme personification of practicality.”

lutists were ordered to work. Only a handful complied. The rest were placed in solitary confinement with a bread-and-water diet for two weeks. Salmon was among them, for which his sentence was extended another eighteen months. Conditions at Fort Douglas were harsh: “starvation, beatings, cold baths in zero weather, bayoneting, were the order of the day,” Salmon later recalled, belittling them as “petty persecutions.” In October, he wrote “An Open Letter to President Wilson,” detailing the mistreatment of conscientious objectors in prison and calling on Wilson to release the objectors still being held, now almost a year after the end of the war (see pages 16-17). In early December, a request for clemency was submitted to the War Department by John Salmon on behalf of his younger brother, Ben. The request was refused. Salmon spent another Christmas in prison.

Hunger Strike

In the early months of 1920, Salmon spent much of his time writing letters. He wrote one to the Secretary of the War Department denouncing his incarceration. He wrote another to an attorney in Washington, D.C., seeking assistance in applying for a writ of habeas corpus. He wrote yet another

to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in New York, telling them of his refusal to work and his failed legal efforts up to that point—and of his plans to refuse preparing and eating food, as he saw even these acts as forms of tacit cooperation with the military system he abhorred.

Salmon began his hunger strike on July 13, 1920. Four days later, he wrote a letter to the Secretary of War, Newton D. Baker, among others, stating, “I have missed my meals for four days, and I will continue to starve until released by a discharge from prison or by death.” He went on to insist, “I am not demented, but I tell you that unless you relieve me of the assistance that my imprisonment gives to militarism, you will thereby cause my death from starvation, for I cannot honestly continue to support Mars [the Roman god of war] as I have in the past, since I now fully realize that even the tiny bit of assistance that I was rendering in the way of accepting your food, was too much.” He contended that “Christ’s doctrine to overcome evil with good” stands as “the most effective solution for individual and societal ills that has ever been formulated. It is a practical policy, because Christ is God, and God is the supreme personification of practicality.” After stoutly decrying the way he and other conscientious objectors were being treated by the military, he declared, “My life, my family, everything is now in the hands of God. His will be done.”

The hunger strike continued as the days turned into weeks and the weeks turned into months. On July 18, Salmon received a letter from his mother pleading with him to eat. On July 23, Salmon, believing that he was near death, sent for a priest, but the priest refused to hear his confession, or give him communion, or anoint him, claiming that his refusal was suicidal and thus a mortal sin in the eyes of God and the Church. Salmon responded that his refusal was no different than that of the Irish hunger strikers in British

jails, but the priest demurred. The next day, two priests came from Salt Lake City to hear his confession and give him communion. One disagreed with him nevertheless and said so. The other supported him, and was transferred to Oregon after his sympathies became known. On July 25, Salmon was transferred to the infirmary and force-fed. On July 28, he was taken to Ogden, Utah. And on July 31, he was transferred once again, this time to Washington, D.C., and was placed in a wing of St. Elizabeth’s Catholic Hospital for the Insane.

Hospitalized and Released

By the time Salmon was taken to Washington, his case had been taken on by the ACLU, which sent protest appeals to the War Department and contacted the press. On August 4 and 5, a story on Salmon appeared in *The New York Times*, and, in the weeks to follow, it gained national attention. The ACLU contacted prominent churchmen, including Monsignor John Ryan of Catholic University, who agreed to see what he could do. On October 2, his health deteriorating, Salmon was presented with an application for a writ of habeas corpus. On October 19, his case was argued in the District of Columbia Superior Court, but on October 27, the application for the writ was turned down. He resolved to take his case to the Supreme Court. At this point, Salmon’s cause was championed by several papers and groups, including, remarkably, some of the members of the Knights of Columbus chapter that had had him expelled. On November 13, Salmon was moved from St. Elizabeth’s to Walter Reed Government Hospital, where his mail was censored, his visitors were barred, and he was not allowed to use the phone to contact his attorneys. Letters continued to pour into the War Department, and in mid-November, Monsignor Ryan spoke directly with the Secretary of War. On November 24, the situation was resolved. The War

Department granted pardons to thirty-three conscientious objectors remaining in federal custody. On November 26, the day after Thanksgiving, Salmon gathered his belongings, signed his release papers, was handed a Dishonorable Discharge from the Army, and walked out of Walter Reed Hospital a free man.

The Aftermath

When Ben Salmon was released in late November of 1920, his story was featured in almost every major newspaper in the country. It was a remarkable story indeed: from the time he had taken his initial stand in June of 1917, Salmon had been arrested, tried, and convicted in a civilian court; he had been convicted by a military court as well, even though he had never been properly inducted into the military, he had been sent to military prison, where he had endured serious hardships for refusing to cooperate with his imprisonment, including extended periods of solitary confinement; all of this culminated in a hunger strike that dragged on, due to a regime of forced feeding, for 135 days. It was the hunger strike, and the adverse publicity it brought for the War Department, that led to Salmon's eventual release. Not that all the publicity was in favor of Salmon; to the contrary, several veterans groups, particularly those located in his hometown, promised retaliation against "Denver's notorious slacker," as he was often called in the press. The threat of further hostility kept Salmon away from Denver. Moreover, his relationship with his wife was strained, owing apparently to his decision years before not to accept the military's offer of release in return for taking on non-combatant duties. At any rate, Salmon decided to move to Chicago, where his older sister Mary lived, and to go to work for the American Freedom Foundation, which was affiliated with the ACLU. Sometime the following year, in 1922, his wife Elizabeth, and their son Charles,

joined him in Melrose Park, Illinois. The next year, their second child, Margaret, was born, and a couple of years after that, they had their third child, Geraldine. By this time, Salmon went to work at the Lindbergh Airport in Chicago—not a great job, but the best he could do with a Dishonorable Discharge from the Army. When the Great Depression hit in 1929, the Salmon family's economic difficulties worsened. Late in the year 1931, Ben contracted pneumonia, and, like his brother Joe, never recovered. He stayed at home. On February 15, 1932, attended by his wife and three children, Ben Salmon died.

A Faithful Catholic

Ben Salmon was a faithful Catholic. He was baptized as an infant and he grew up fortified by the Sacraments. As a youth, he was placed in Catholic schools. As a young man, he joined the Knights of Columbus in his home parish (until he was expelled for war resistance). When he wrote to President Wilson to announce that he would be resisting military conscription, he cited the commandment "thou shalt not kill," and the teaching and example of Jesus. At his arrest, trial, and conviction, he defended his stand by referring to his duty to keep the commandments and to follow the teachings of Christ. In military prison, he understood his sufferings to be a share in the sufferings of Christ. He received priest-chaplains who visited him in prison, even if they were there only to try to talk him out of his war resistance. He was released from federal custody at the urging of Church leaders. For the remainder of his life, he prayed his daily prayers, stayed close to the Sacraments, and kept the Lenten fast each year, including a three-day fast at the Easter Triduum. His children were educated in Catholic schools. Finally, he was buried in the Church after a Mass for the Dead. His wife, for her part, remained a faithful Catholic until her death, as did the Salmon chil-

dren, one of whom, Charles, became a priest in Denver, while another, Geraldine, became a Maryknoll sister, taking for her religious name Elizabeth (in memory of her mother). Again, he was a faithful Catholic.

For Salmon, being a faithful Catholic meant allowing the Light of Christ to guide every aspect of his life, particularly, of course, when it came to the command of Christ to love our enemies and to conquer evil with good. And this meant challenging the teaching of the Church when it came to the morality of war. What is remarkable about Salmon is that he investigated and challenged Church teaching so thoroughly and conscientiously, with such intellectual honesty and seriousness. These qualities marked Salmon's thinking and acting throughout his ordeal, but nowhere were they so clearly demonstrated as in the 200-page statement (single spaced) that he wrote while held at the insane asylum at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C. in October of 1920.

The purpose of Salmon's statement was to give an account of his ordeal since he had declared his resistance to the war more than three years before. He opens with a review of his original stand, his arrest, trial, and conviction, his subsequent incarceration, his refusal to cooperate with military authorities, and his encounters with the priest-chaplains who tried to dissuade him from his course. Then he launches into a lengthy intellectual defense of his conscientious objection to the war, based on political, humanitarian, and religious grounds. Regarding the political and humanitarian grounds, he was rehearsing from memory many of the arguments he had developed before his incarceration. But when it came to the religious arguments against the war, Salmon was able to work directly with several texts. He obviously had access to scripture, for his statement includes direct quotations from Daniel, Matthew, and Romans. But he was also able (with

the help of one of his guards at the hospital and two secretaries of the Knights of Columbus) to gain access to the article, "War," from *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Written by a Father Macksey, S.J., Professor of Ethics and Natural Right at the Gregorian University in Rome, the article presents the standard Catholic teaching on the morality of war. Salmon quoted the article at great length (more than nine, single-spaced pages worth, meticulously numbering the lines—496 lines in all), and then methodically, yet tortuously, rebutted every important tenet of Macksey's article, an exercise that took scores of pages of

In light of Cardinal Gibbons' letter to President Wilson pledging Catholic support for the war effort, Salmon's critique was certainly not unfounded.

Nor, regrettably, is it unfounded today, when Catholic prelates and lay people cast their support for this nation at war.

single-spaced typescript.

Salmon's rebuttals are too detailed to go into at length, but his central claim is that just war theorists do not take seriously the teaching of Christ. "Man is anterior to the state," he wrote at one point. And "since God has forbidden him to kill, the State cannot confer the right to kill, and therefore the power to order its citizens to slaughter their fellow men is not vested with the State. God alone can issue such an order. Either Christ is a liar or war is never necessary, and very properly assuming that Christ told the truth, it follows that the State is without (and here he quotes from Father Macksey) 'judicial authority

to determine when war is necessary,' because it is never necessary."

While his argument might be contested by just-war theorists, it is based on two uncontested Catholic premises: that Christ taught us not to kill, and that the state has no right and thus no power to issue a command to the contrary of Christ's teachings.

To state this argument in positive terms, Christ has provided us with all the means necessary to overcome evil. We are, in the words of St. Paul, to "overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21). And Salmon went on to explain the "philosophy" entailed in Paul's teaching in a passage that is worth quoting at length:

"In ordinary affairs of life, we apply this philosophy. For instance, we do not attempt to overcome lying with lies; we overcome it with truth. We do not try to overcome curses with curses, but we overcome with silence or with words of friendship. . . . Sickness is not overcome with sickness; it is overcome with health. If I cut my finger, the remedy is not to cut another finger, but to succor the original wound. Anger is overcome with meekness, pride by humility. And the successful way to overcome the evil of war is by the good of peace, a steadfast refusal to 'render evil for evil.'"

This is the argument of a man out of step with his times, at odds with a nation at war, and at odds with his Church's support of that war. But it is at the same time, unquestionably, the argument of a faithful Catholic.

Ben Salmon, Confessor

But this argument is more than the argument of a faithful Catholic. It is also the argument of a "confessor." This term is often associated with the persecution of the Church in ancient times, as a way to designate, not only those who had actual-

ly died for the Faith—martyrs, in other words—but also those willing to die for the Faith whose sentences were not carried out and who then underwent great suffering for their witness—the seizure of property, imprisonment, exile. With this understanding, Salmon surely qualifies as a confessor. Originally sentenced to death, his sentence was commuted to twenty-five years in prison, two and a half years of which he served before being released—all due to his unswerving commitment to Christ.

We believe it is important to tell the story of Ben Salmon for the same reason the stories of confessors of ages past are told by the Church: to serve as an inspiration for Christians in this day and age, to embolden those now seeking to follow Christ, to point out a path that may be taken.

In introducing *Unsung Hero of the Great War*, Finney describes Ben Salmon as "a vivid character in the drama of 'the war to end all wars.'" Needless to say, the drama of wars waged to end war continues. As Salmon wrote in his statement of October 1920, "Today, we find the scene that preceded Christ's death reenacted. When He began to become unpopular, His prophecy that all would be scandalized came true. One denied Him, another betrayed Him, nearly all of the disciples fled. And so it is today in the question of wholesale murder." In light of Cardinal Gibbons' letter to President Wilson pledging Catholic support for the war effort, Salmon's critique was not unfounded.

Nor, regrettably, is it unfounded today, when Catholic prelates and lay people cast their support for this nation at war. But along with Salmon's stinging critique comes his encouraging example, showing us that we are not fated to reenact the roles of Peter, Judas, Pilate or Caiaphas, disclosing the possibility that we ourselves can follow the way of the cross, and become, like Ben Salmon, confessors of the Faith. ¶

The Cardinal's Letter Backs War

From the Archives of the Archdiocese of Baltimore
April 18, 1917

Mr. President:

The Archbishops of the United States, at their Annual Meeting in the Catholic University at Washington, April the eighteenth, unanimously resolved to address to you the following letter, signed by all the Archbishops who were present, the six remaining Archbishops being unavoidably absent from the meeting.

Standing firmly upon our solid Catholic tradition and history from the very foundation of this Nation, we reaffirm in this hour of stress and trial, our most sacred and sincere loyalty and patriotism toward our Country, our Government and our Flag.

Moved to the very depths of our hearts by the stirring appeal of the President of the United States and by the action of our national Congress, we accept whole heartedly and unreservedly the decree of that legislative authority proclaiming this Country to be in a state of war.

We have prayed that we might be spared the dire necessity of entering the conflict. But now that war has been declared, we bow in obedience to the summons to bear our part in it with fidelity, with courage and with the spirit of sacrifice which, as loyal citizens we are bound to manifest for the defense of the most sacred rights and the welfare of the whole nation.

Acknowledging gladly the gratitude we have always felt for the protection of our spiritual liberty and the freedom of our Catholic institutions under the flag, we pledge our devotion and our strength in the maintenance of our country's glorious leadership in those possessions and principles which have been America's proudest boast.

Inspired neither by hate nor fear, but by the holy sentiments of truest patriotic fervor and zeal, we stand ready, we and all the flock committed to our keeping, to cooperate in every way possible with our President and our national Government, to the end that the great and holy cause of liberty may triumph, and that our beloved country may emerge from this hour of test, stronger and nobler than ever.

Our people, now as ever, will rise as one man to serve the Nation. Our priests and consecrated women will once again, as in every former trial of our Country, win by their bravery, their heroism and their service, new admiration and approval.

We are all true Americans, ready as our age, our ability and our condition permit, to do whatever is in us to do, for the preservation, the progress and the triumph of our beloved country.

May God direct and guide our President and our Government, that out of this trying crisis in our national life, may at length come a closer union among all the citizens of America, and that an enduring and blessed peace may crown the sacrifices which war inevitably entails.

James Cardinal Gibbons, Chairman.
William Cardinal O'Connell, Archbishop of Boston.
John Ireland, Archbishop of Saint Paul.
John J. Glennon, Archbishop of Saint Louis.
Sebastian G. Messmer, Archbishop of Milwaukee.
Henry Moeller, Archbishop of Cincinnati.
Edward J. Hanna, Archbishop of San Francisco.
George W. Mundelein, Archbishop of Chicago.

J. Card. Gibbons Chairman.
William Cardinal O'Connell, Archbishop of Boston.
John Ireland, Archbishop of Saint Paul.
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Henry Moeller, Archbishop of Cincinnati.
Edward J. Hanna, Archbishop of San Francisco.
George W. Mundelein, Archbishop of Chicago.
J. Card. Gibbons

In its famous stand against the 'Good War,' The Catholic Worker invokes the 'Great War' objector

Salmon and The Catholic Worker

The following excerpts are taken from Ben Salmon's "An Open Letter to President Wilson," originally published by the Baltimore Amnesty League in 1920, and reprinted in The Catholic Worker in January 1942. Salmon wrote the letter on October 14, 1919, while he was still in prison, after the war had ended.

"Consider...the case of conscientious objectors. They have taken precisely the same position that you took in several addresses. 'The example of America must be a specific example of peace,' you said immediately after the sinking of the Lusitania. On February 2, 1916, at Kansas City, you said: 'We can show our friendship for the world and our devotion for the principles of humanity better and more effectively by keeping out of this struggle than by getting into it.' On September 3, 1919 you said at St. Louis: 'The seed of war in the modern world is industrial and commercial rivalry. This war was a commercial and industrial war. It was not a political war.' In these statements you have voiced the opinions and convictions of conscientious objectors. . .

"Religious objectors are such through their faith in God. They believe the best way to preserve the nation's honor is to avoid dishonoring God; the best way to conquer an enemy is to treat him as God prescribes. The religious objector helps his country more in one hour than a regiment of military men could in a hundred years, for God holds the destiny of nations in the palm of His hand. To serve Him is to ensure the country's future. . .

"I do not belong to a religious sect whose ministers oppose war, but I belong to one whose

Creed forbids its members from participation in war. Clergy and laity will dispute this declaration now, but some day will admit that my attitude is correct and practical. I am a Catholic, or as some would have it, a Roman Catholic; not an apostate, but what is known in the Church as a "practical Catholic." I am a member of St. Catherine's parish, Denver, Colorado, and was a member of the Knights of Columbus until expelled for publishing an article against war. Expulsion from the Knights of Columbus does not in any manner affect one's communion with the Church.

"My religious stand is based on God's command, 'Thou Shalt Not Kill.' Some argue that 'in olden times God commanded men to slay the enemy.' Well, God may command us to do one thing at one time and another thing at another. That is His affair. But there has been no command from Him for thousands of years that permits deviation from the command 'Thou Shalt Not Kill.' Christ reiterated this command on many occasions.

"The Catholic who tries to justify the taking of human life by quoting from the Old Testament, as do the compilers of the *Catholic Encyclopedia* in the case of capital punishment, might with equal force argue in favor of divorce. But though the Old Testament sanctions divorce the Catholic Church properly insists that

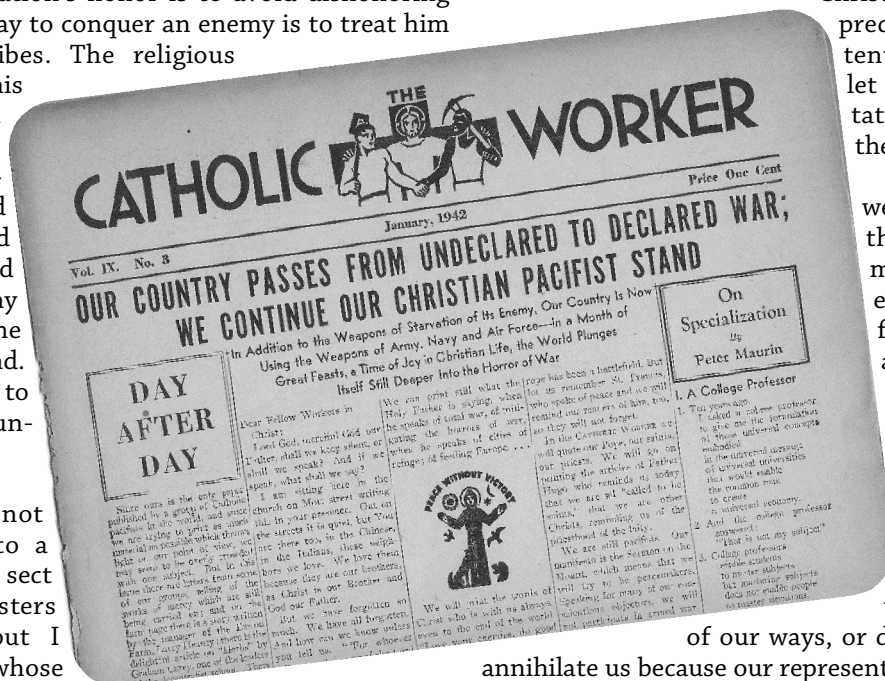
Christ's prohibition takes precedence. So consistent Catholics will not let Old Testament quotations lead them into the war game.

"In Matthew 7:12, we are told, 'All things that you would that men do unto you do even so unto them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.'

Do we want other nations to wage war against us?

Suppose our statesmen err, do we want other nations charitably to show us the error

of our ways, or do we want them to annihilate us because our representatives, rather, 'mis



An Open Letter to President Wilson

By
BEN SALMON

The following article, originally published by the Baltimore Amnesty League in 1920, is reprinted here as a study in history.

Fort Douglas, Utah,
Oct. 14, 1919.
Woodrow Wilson, President
of the United States
Washington, D. C.

Mr. President:

A few months ago the King

victed and sentenced. I have not heard what has happened to them.

One of the men under sentence was William Scheiman, decorated by the State of Indiana for distinguished service. He was doing time in Leavenworth because he was brave enough to go to the bedside of his dying father, in spite of the refusal of his commanding officer to give him leave.

Harold Keyes, condemned because he not only refused to

Their activities show their willingness to give their lives for the wage-slaves' freedom. You cannot crush the spirit of such men by imprisonment. You only strengthen their determination to fight for justice. You, of all men, should be with them, not against them.

"But," it is said, "the objectors should have obeyed the will of majority (political objectors are sicklers for majority rule), but the opinion of the majority was not

grounds. If I had no religious scruples, common sense humanitarianism would keep me from slaughtering my fellowmen. If I had neither religious nor humanitarian motives, then I would refrain for political motives.

I do not belong to a religious sect whose ministers oppose war, but I belong to one whose Creed forbids its members from participation in war. Clergy and laity will dispute this declaration now, but some day will admit that my attitude is correct and practical.

the New York World, contains the following, which was reprinted in a subsequent issue of the Denver Catholic Register:

"If a Christian may be permitted to suggest, would it not be possible to found a better and more lasting peace upon the Ten Commandments than upon the Gentlemen's Pledge? . . . Why does not the West now, after 1900 years, try the experiment of founding a state upon the teaching of its Christ? We Christians believe that trade

representatives,' blundered? Christ tells us not to resist evil. Should we obey or ignore Him? If His policy is correct then war is wrong. If 'overcome evil with good' is not a practical method for handling national and individual ruptures then Christ is wrong and the Temple of Christianity falls.

"When the government orders me to do what is righteous, I will obey with pleasure. But when I am ordered to do what is iniquitous it is my duty to disobey. If the state requires a citizen to violate God's law he must ignore that state. Loyalty to God is loyalty to your country. The trailblazers of Christianity flaunted themselves in the face of pagan emperors and openly paid homage to the living God. The religious conscientious objector, ignoring pagans, refuses to yield to militarism's decrees. . .

"We conscientious objectors thought of the verdict of conscience and followed it. The result was that we were not only sneered at, but we were imprisoned and tortured. And a too large percentage of our group were actually murdered in the process of wreaking vengeance upon us for having accepted 'the verdict of a conscience.'

"We have been called cowards who make a subterfuge of 'conscience.' You are aware of facts which show the contrary. You know that we were offered safe bomb-proof positions in non-combatant branches of the Army. On our refusal of these we were offered farm furloughs. We declined because acceptance would have made us nonetheless participants in the killing game. Personal safety was no attraction. . .

"In our military prisons ruined health is a certainty and death is highly probable. Disease and emaciation registered a hundred percent toll among conscientious objectors. Many lost their minds. The percentage of deaths was greater than in the Army. The Army was the safest place for the man 'afraid to fight' . . .

"The 'war to end war' has been won. . . We were told the war would crush militarism. We find the world super-militarized. In place of disarmament, nations are armed to the teeth and expending larger sums than ever for preparedness. There is but one solution to the war problem: an uncompromising refusal to kill, and a willingness to suffer anything, even death, rather than kill God's children. The conscientious objectors have led the way. Time will tell how many have the wisdom and courage to follow. . .

"When I was in solitary confinement at Fort Leavenworth, my brother Joseph came 3,000 miles to visit me but was not permitted to do so. As I stood in that dark hole, I thanked God for religion, for nothing else restrained me from seeking an opportunity to murder Colonel Rice. Joe went to Chicago and wrote to Colonel Rice, again asking permission to visit me. I was told that unless I went to work permission would be denied me. Joe came anyway and after several unsuccessful attempts was finally allowed to see me for ten minutes on Christmas Eve. The strain of that long and needless prohibition weakened him. He contracted a cold in the severe storm that raged as he came to prison for the last time. He died ten days later. Through his intercession may God be merciful to those who so wickedly and so unnecessarily persecuted the men whose only crime was a steadfast refusal to commit wholesale murder.

"When Frank Burke, one of our conscientious objectors, became sick a few months ago, he was told at the hospital: 'If you were not a CO you would get decent treatment.' Two days later he paid the supreme penalty for godliness. He died in terrible agony. . .

"Mr. President: If you have the tiniest flame of chivalry and justice within your breast, you will consider the godliness of the move and declare a general amnesty. ✠

The Sign of Peace Interviews Sister Elizabeth Salmon, MM

Remembering Dad

On January 10, CPF got in contact with Sr. Elizabeth Salmon (born Geraldine Salmon in 1925, five years after her father Ben's release from military custody.) Sr. Elizabeth is now a Maryknoll sister based in Nicaragua.

Sign of Peace: Tell us a little about family life growing up. Would you say you were a "typical" Catholic family?

Sr. Elizabeth: Yes, I think I'd say we were a typical Catholic family. My Mother had great faith and it surely rubbed off on us. We said the Rosary as often together in the evenings as we could. Not often enough, though, for our mother! We remembered our dad each time in prayer and for what he stood. Although at the time we didn't understand what he stood for—other than justice and peace (which I say now)—but then it was, for what Daddy did! Our mother didn't explain too much, since she was quite persecuted by her own brother and three sisters and she didn't want us to have to undergo any of that. Our youngest brother had brain damage at birth, so of course we remembered little Johnnie also, along with the litany of other needs. I remember being sad at not having a father as all our friends had, but our mother surely made up for that in many ways.

SOP: Your brother became a priest, right? In an order?

Elizabeth: Yes. Although he had gone to the Jesuits in Regis, Denver (graduated *summa cum laude*), he entered the diocesan. He was rather young, only twenty-four years old, to serve in many parishes around Denver. Then he served out in Crook & Ilif, Colorado. The last thirty years he was a Chaplain at the Gardens of St. Elizabeth for Senior Citizens in north Denver.

SOP: Do you trace your own vocation to your dad?

Elizabeth: Although I was already at Maryknoll when I went down to the Catholic Worker there in New York to find out from the letters that our Dad had written to Dorothy Day, just what he was up to—I'm sure his determination and deep faith influenced us all as my

mother prayed about him and for him.

SOP: Over the years, how did your mom remember your dad's objection and the sufferings that followed?

Elizabeth: As I said, our mom had been so criticized and downgraded by her family, except her kindly father (Samuel Charles Smith) who was, I think, the only one who understood what our father's reasoning and actions meant. Because of that she remained quiet about her own sufferings but upheld our father's position strongly. Her family wanted her to divorce our dad and she opposed the very notion of this.

SOP: Were you old enough to remember how your dad reflected on what happened?

Elizabeth: Sorry, I was not. I only remember sitting on his lap singing to him, "When It's Springtime in the Rockies," a song he loved, when I was maybe six years old. We were at our home in Melrose Park, west Chicago. He was with another visitor who I later learned was the second of the four Catholic conscientious objectors (COs) who had been imprisoned (first sentenced to death) for their objection. I'll bet our mother kept in

touch with the other CO, but I have no other clue except a surmise. It was our cousin Paul (next to Margaret in the picture) who remembered the other CO who also lived in Chicago after being let out of prison.

SOP: Did your dad ever talk about his ouster from the Knights of Columbus?

Elizabeth: That I wouldn't know, but I heard that he used the K of C stationery in jail to write his life story and about his bitterness toward all war!

SOP: Did he ever seek to rejoin?

Elizabeth: I think he did not as they prevented his return to Denver after being let out of prison. He had to settle down in Chicago, where his sister Mary lived and where my sister and brother and I were born. ✂



Ben with his hands on his daughter
Margaret's shoulders

Ought a Husband, a Father...?

BY BENJAMIN PETERS

Benjamin Joseph Salmon was exceptional. One of only four Catholic conscientious objectors who refused participation in the United States military in World War I, his refusal to enlist in the army began with his December 26, 1917 letter to his local draft board in which he declared, "Let those that believe in wholesale violation of the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' make a profession of their faith by joining the army of war. I am in the army of Peace, and in this army I intend to live and die." Exceptional words, though sadly uncommon words.

Yet as a man, Ben Salmon possessed a quite ordinary and quite common "state in life": he was a husband and father. Just before his imprisonment, Salmon's wife gave birth to a baby girl. Knowing this made his many refusals all the more painful. When Salmon refused to take the offer of non-combatant status, it was against the pleas of his wife. He knew that his young family would also suffer from his refusal.

Even more difficult was his hunger strike. Again, Salmon's family begged him to change his mind. Hearing such pleas and knowing he could end them surely was more torturous than all the forced feedings. Sitting alone in his cell, he pondered his family.

When we realize his family responsibilities, Salmon's refusal touches us more deeply, yet at the same time makes us



Ben with Elizabeth Smith Salmon on their wedding day.

from Ben's Letter to President Wilson

"I could have obtained a fourth class classification by answering the questionnaire, for I had dependents—a wife and widowed mother. Such classification was tantamount to exemption. . ."

"I was sentenced on August 10, 1918 to twenty-five years at hard labor in Leavenworth. Execution of the sentence was delayed from day to day. Finally, on September 5, I was offered remission of the entire sentence and a first class sergeantcy in non-combatant service as clerk in the 19th Train Headquarters. My wife was in the hospital and begged me to accept the offer. Baby Charles was born the following day. I wanted to please my wife. Moreover she and the baby and my widowed mother were dependent on me for support. I assure you, Mr. President, it was not cowardice that caused me to choose twenty-five years in prison in preference to the safe and easy course."

more uncomfortable—especially for those of us with young families of our own. Looking at Salmon from the view of the normal American life of daily but "necessary" cooperation with evil, his radical insistence to only return good for evil does not seem rational—rather, it seems like the fanaticism of a zealot, who would forsake even his family for the cause.

This was how Salmon was viewed by most in his day, and how he could be viewed today.

Yet Salmon's witness is rational when viewed within the long tradition of Christians who have given up everything to follow Jesus. It is rational in the view of the Gospels, who record the call to give up everything to take up the Cross with the Lord. It is rational in the view of the first Christian martyrs, many of whom were married, and who knew that marriage is a school to *acquire* holiness, not to avoid it. And it is rational in the view of later objectors, like Franz Jägerstätter in Nazi Germany. Pressed by reminders of his wife and three daughters, Jägerstätter insisted that it was better for their father to be a martyr than to be a liar.

Indeed, Ben Salmon would not respond to compromised morality with more compromised morality: "We do not attempt to overcome lying with lies; we overcome it with truth." The truth was, and is, that the soul belongs to God. We give our hearts, our bodies, and our lives to one another in marriage, knowing all the while that, ultimately, we are claimed for God. ✠

Ben Peters is a Ph.D candidate at the University of Dayton. He and his wife Liza will soon be the parents of two.

Debunking the myth of an “all-volunteer” military Informed Consent?

BY JOHN CARAHER

The principle of informed consent is central to the ethical conduct of scientific research involving human subjects. The World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki, paragraph 22, begins, “In any research on human beings, each potential subject must be adequately informed of the aims, methods, sources of funding, any possible conflicts of interest, institutional affiliations of the researcher, the anticipated benefits and potential risks of the study and the discomfort it may entail.” This sounds like a very reasonable standard by which to judge whether a subject has the information required to be a true volunteer for some potentially hazardous treatment. It is instructive to apply this kind of standard to assess the “informed consent” given by members of the “all-volunteer” Armed Forces.

Even with an honest recruiter, it is exceedingly unlikely that “the anticipated benefits and potential risks” of military service “and the discomfort it may entail” receive much attention beyond signing bonuses, educational benefits and promises about advanced training that might lead to civilian careers. Yes, most recruits have some notion that being in the military involves elevated risk of death or injury. But how many learn that they are more likely to become psychological casualties than to die in combat? How many learn how much more likely they are to lose a limb than their life? How many are told what the divorce rate is in military families?

Compare the standard for military recruiting under which so many Americans are content to say, “They volunteered—they knew what they were signing up for,” to the one we would apply to a volunteer in a medical or psychological study. Every research institution has something known as an Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB reviews proposals for research involving human or animal subjects, with a strong emphasis on ensuring that the experiments meet the institution’s ethical standards. This includes vetting the consent form human subjects must sign in order to volunteer for a study.

Imagine a psychology researcher interested in the

effects of military training proposing to duplicate “boot camp” in a study. Wouldn’t a typical IRB consider exposing subjects to these often-severe psychological stresses too unethical to approve the study at all? At the very least, the consent form would be a lengthy, fascinating document! And this only scratches the surface of the risks of military service.

How would we react if a leading university routinely enticed human subjects into participation in hazardous research without fully informing them of the risks? Would we say, “They knew this was experimental research. When they signed up for the study and the \$500 check they should have thought of that.”

There is no doubt that unanticipated harms may result from an experimental procedure. Provided the researchers conscientiously informed volunteers of the foreseeable risks, who would condemn them for occasional surprise adverse outcomes?

But if researchers routinely failed to inform volunteers of the known hazards, including some estimate of the likelihood and severity of each hazard, we would rightly condemn their actions as deeply unethical, perhaps even criminal. And we would place the burden of informing volunteers squarely on the shoulders of those researchers. They are the ones with the expertise and information. The volunteers necessarily trust those recruiting them for any required information. They cannot be expected to guess all the “right questions” to ask in order to know about the most significant risks. A comprehensive list of the potential risks and benefits of study participation, including details of the likelihood and personal ramifications of each outcome, is the very least the researchers must provide volunteers in order for us to regard their participation as reflecting informed consent.

Why do we not hold military recruiters to a similar standard? Is not informed consent a necessary condition for a military whose members have truly “volunteered”? It is not hard to understand the pragmatic arguments against having something like a comprehensive “consent form” for our military recruits to sign. But if we cannot maintain an “all-volunteer” military under conditions of informed consent, should that not be an occasion for us to reconsider the size, composition, nature, and use of the military, rather than an excuse to maintain it at the expense of our trusting youth? ♣

John Caraher is an Assistant Professor of Physics and Astronomy at DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana, where he recently taught a Winter Term course, “War and Conscience.” He currently resides in Crawfordsville, IN, with his wife, Lynn, and their sons Jim and Brian.

Coming Home

BY MAXWELL CORYDON WHEAT, JR.

"Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised."

*George W. Bush
President of the United States
State of the Union Address
January 28, 2003*

In catacombs of military transports
destined for Dover Air Force Base,
loves, beliefs, ideals, plans:
Hancock Community College,
University of Miami,
New York Police Academy,
weddings, children,
barbeques, baseball, bass fishing—
All lidded down inside caskets
carefully, caringly covered with The American Flag

25-year-old Marine Corps Corporal
St. George, Maine.
Sailor, rock climber, stargazer.
On dance floor, "... like a magnet."
Loves lobsters, mussels—
All lidded down inside casket
carefully, caringly covered with The American Flag

30-year-old Army Private First Class
Tuba City, Arizona.
"... young, a single mother and capable."
Her boy, 4—her girl, 3.
Woman proud of her Hopi heritage—
All lidded down inside casket
carefully, caringly covered with The American Flag

20-year-old Marine Corps Corporal
La Harpe, Illinois.
High school football, basketball player,

lifeguard at health club pool,
lifts weights,
going to be a physical trainer.
Joins Marine Corps Reserve
to pay for studies at Southern Illinois University—
All lidded down inside casket
carefully, caringly covered with The American Flag

21-year-old Marine Corps Corporal
Gallatin, Tennessee.
Nurses dying mother with his humor,
dresses in clown costume for nieces' birthdays.
History buff, reads fat books about generals,
presidents, the Revolutionary War—
All lidded down inside casket
carefully, caringly covered with The American Flag

24-year-old Coast Guard Petty Officer
Northport, New York.
Wife, three months pregnant.
Wants to be a policeman like his father.
"... the kind of person that you fall in love with
the minute that you meet him," a friend says—
All lidded down inside casket
carefully, caringly covered with The American Flag

A father, a mother grieve for their only son, an
Army Specialist.
"He wanted to be an engineer," the father
remembers.
"He wanted to set up his own business when he got
out.
And I says, 'Amigo, I'm waiting for you to get out
so we can put up our own business.'
And all that, well, you know, is history."

The Major General carefully, caringly folds The
American Flag,
places the nation's ensign into the mother's hands

Benedict XVI Hails Nonviolence

BY FR. EMMANUEL CHARLES MCCARTHY

Pope Benedict XVI is recognized as an eminent theological scholar by his academic colleagues, regardless of their denominational association. In his Angelus Address, “On The Revolution of Love,” he superbly crafts a statement on Jesus’ teaching on the nonviolent love of friends and enemies and on its being “the nucleus of the Christian revolution,” and hence, central to a correct understanding of the Gospel. For those who spend the time with it that it deserves, it will be an illumination of a truth hidden or obscured, perhaps since their Baptism.

Consider Benedict’s words on how nonviolent Christlike love operates: “The revolution of love. . . changes the world without making noise.” At one level this could mean that the Gospel revolution of Christlike nonviolence and love of enemies changes the world without the noise of war or violent revolution—both of which are always suffused with the noise of weapons, the noise of propaganda, the noise that drowns out dialogue, the noise that overrides the voice of conscience, the noise that numbs the faculty of empathy. Such an interpretation would be acceptable.

But, “the revolution of love...which changes the world without making noise,” reaches infinitely beyond this interpretation. It proceeds to the very core of who Jesus was and the revolution He started, and in which He invites us to participate, namely, the revolution that the Pope says “is not afraid to confront evil with the weapons of love and truth alone.” In Benedict’s address, “the revolution of love. . . which changes the world without making noise,” is a direct reference to the counter-violence, revolutionary Hymn of the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12), the summit of salvific nonviolent love in the Hebrew Scriptures:

“Here is my servant whom I uphold,
my chosen one with whom I am pleased,
upon whom I have put my spirit;
he shall bring forth righteousness to the
nations,
Not crying out, nor shouting,
not making his voice heard in the streets.
A bruised reed he shall not break,

Emmanuel Charles McCarthy is a priest of the Byzantine Rite of the Catholic Church. A co-founder of Pax Christi-USA, Fr. McCarthy was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his life's work on behalf of peace within and among people.

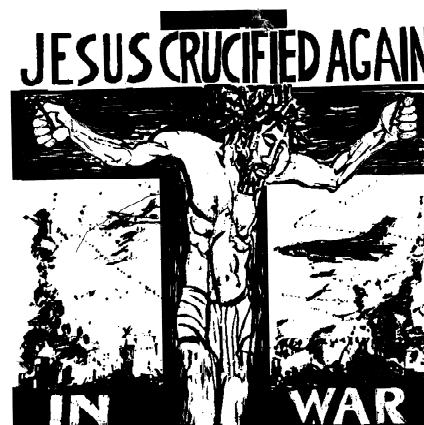


Image by Rita Corbin

and a smoldering wick he shall not quench,
Until he establishes righteousness on
earth;
the coastlands will wait for his teaching”
(Isaiah 42:1-4).

Below are some excerpts from the writings of the renowned Catholic Biblical scholar, Rev. John L. McKenzie, on the Hymn of the Suffering Servant that help reveal its intimate connection with Jesus and His Way:

“The number of allusions to this passage [Hymn of the Suffering Servant] in the New Testament is difficult to count. But they are enough to establish the thesis that this passage had a central position in the proclamation of Jesus. The early Church attributed the proclamation of this theme to Jesus himself and no convincing reason has been urged to show that it should be attributed to another. It is as deeply embedded in the Gospels as anything else; to repeat what I have said in other connections, if this theme is not the work of Jesus himself then we know nothing of his words or his person.”

“It is remarkable that the words at the baptism of Jesus (Mt 3:17; Mk 1: 11; Lk 3:22) are almost an exact quotation of Isaiah 42:1.”

“It remains true that Jesus demands that his

Below is a translation of the address Benedict XVI delivered on Feb. 18, 2007, before reciting the midday Angelus in St. Peter's Square.

Dear Brothers and Sisters! This Sunday's Gospel has one of the most typical, yet most difficult teachings of Jesus: Love your enemies (Luke 6:27). It is taken from the Gospel of Luke, but it is also found in Matthew's Gospel (5:44), in the context of the programmatic discourse that begins with the famous Beatitudes. Jesus delivered this address in Galilee, at the beginning of his public ministry: It was something of a "manifesto" presented to everyone, which Christ asked his disciples to accept, thus proposing to them in radical terms a model for their lives.

But what is the meaning of his teaching? Why does Jesus ask us to love our very enemies, that is, ask a love that exceeds human capacities? What is certain is that Christ's proposal is realistic, because it takes into account that in the world there is too much violence, too much injustice, and that this situation cannot be overcome without positing more love, more kindness. This "more" comes from God: It is his mercy that has become flesh in Jesus and that alone can redress the balance of the world from evil to good, beginning from that small and decisive "world" which is man's heart.

This page of the Gospel is rightly considered the "magna carta" of Christian nonviolence; it does not consist in surrendering to evil—as claims a false interpretation of "turn the other cheek" (Luke 6:29)—but in responding to evil with good (Romans 12:17-21), and thus breaking the chain of injustice. It is thus understood that nonviolence, for Christians, is not mere tactical behavior but a person's way of being, the attitude of one who is convinced of God's love and power, who is not afraid to confront evil with the weapons of love and truth alone. Loving the enemy is the nucleus of the "Christian revolution," a revolution not based on strategies of economic, political or media power. The revolution of love, a love that does not base itself definitively in human resources, but in the gift of God, that is obtained only and unreservedly in his merciful goodness. Herein lies the novelty of the Gospel, which changes the world without making noise.

Herein lies the heroism of the "little ones," who believe in the love of God and spread it even at the cost of life. Dear brothers and sisters: Lent, which begins this Wednesday, with the rite of the distribution of ashes, is the favorable time in which all Christians are invited to convert ever more deeply to the love of Christ.

Let us ask the Virgin Mary, the docile disciple of the Redeemer, to help us to allow ourselves to be conquered without reservations by that love, to learn to love as he loved us, to be merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful (Luke 6:36).

disciples identify themselves with him as the Suffering Servant."

"As Suffering Servant, Jesus experienced nothing, we have noticed, which is not part of the human condition. And he thus placed his achievement within the reach of all people."

"The Suffering Servant theme is the peak of faith in the Old Testament, the supreme affirmation of God's power. When we meet the theme of the Suffering Servant as proclaimed in the New Testament, we are at the very center of the Christian revolution."

The purpose of these quoted reflections on the Old Testament theme of the Suffering Servant and its relation to the New Testament proclamation of Jesus is to try to insure that the momentousness of what Pope Benedict is proclaiming, regarding Gospel nonviolence and love of enemies, is not recklessly brushed-off with the usual well-nurtured flippancy, "Oh, that stuff is only spiritual cotton candy, a bit of unrealistic piety." Let me assure my readers, first, that a full year's doctoral level university theology course could be built around this address. Secondly, if this is an easily dismissible piece of sweet theological fluff, it is the first such piece that the former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, twenty-five-year Prefect of the Congregation of Doctrine and Faith, has presented for public consumption in the last four decades!

Do give this address much thought and prayer. In a world where the tools of violence and enmity are the tools of choice for ushering in a "better future," where these tools have been so technologically honed that a few people can generate degrees of destruction and desolation that in the past would have required thousands of people years to inflict, where the production and selling of these tools is the most lucrative business on the planet, and where practically all of this is done with "God" as its source and/or supporter, is it not time for Christians and their Churches to teach what Jesus taught and to struggle to live what Jesus struggled to live in relation to violence and enmity? Has not the fullness of time arrived for one of the world's major religions to say an absolute and never-ending "No" to violence and enmity, on the basis that they are in radical opposition to the Way and Will and Reality of God? Is it not time for Christians and their Churches, in Benedict's words, to choose as their "way of being, the attitude of one who is convinced of God's love and power, who is not afraid to confront evil with the weapons of love and truth alone?" Why should Christians and their Churches be the first to so witness to this truth about God by choosing this "way of being"? Because their Founder, their Lord and Savior, so witnessed to this truth about God and His Way by this very same "way of being." ✠

A Pilgrimage of Conscience

CPF Goes to Rome

BY MICHAEL GRIFFIN

As we go to press, I am preparing to help lead a Catholic Peace Fellowship (CPF) journey to Rome. The next issue of *The Sign of Peace* will include a more comprehensive review of our efforts.

This “pilgrimage” was initiated with the desire to share with Church officials our experience working with conscientious objectors and to push for even stronger ecclesial support for them and their opposition to war.

The delegation also includes Tom Cornell (who with Jim Forest co-founded CPF in 1964) and Joshua Casteel, Iraq War veteran and Catholic conscientious objector.

While in Rome, we will mark with prayer and mourning the anniversary of the opening phase—“Shock and Awe”—of the Iraq Invasion, launched on the Feast of St. Joseph, March 19, 2003. We will have several meetings with Vatican officials as well as with leaders of lay movements like Sant’Egidio. And we will travel to Assisi to help lead a peace conference.

As we go, we remember Dorothy Day, who made a pilgrimage to Rome during the Second Vatican Council. We will ask the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to remember her, too, when we drop by their offices for an update on her cause and that of Franz Jägerstätter, the Catholic layman who refused to fight for Nazi Germany when drafted.

We travel with four objectives:

- To ask for even clearer public statements that conscientious objection is a central tool through which the Church can resist war and be a sign of peace.
- To ask for a future addendum to the Catechism section on war, making clear that just war doctrine is more than “a tool for statecraft” and can be applied by soldiers.
- To address problems that arise when the chaplains are supposed to act both as agents of the military *and* as ministers of the Church.

- To urge Church leaders to call for the legal protection of selective conscientious objectors. Absent such protection, we will urge that the Church advise pastors and youth leaders to counsel extreme caution toward enlistment, as that would mean giving one’s conscience over to the state.

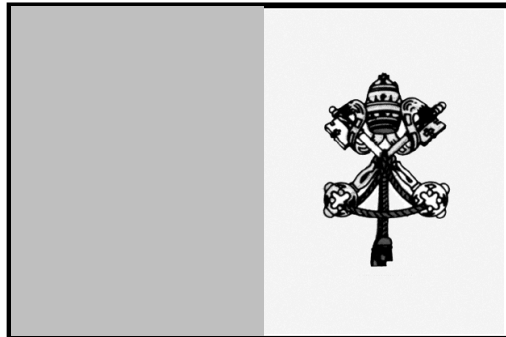
The mission of CPF has never been extractible from the mission of the Church. We are unapologetically ecclesial. Our hope is where the hope of the Church is: in Christ Jesus. On this we should be clear. When we promote the rights of conscience, this is no attenuated secular notion of “getting to do what I feel like.”

Rather, we take as our own the words of the Second Vatican Council: “Deep within his conscience man discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Its voice, ever calling him to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, sounds in his heart at the right moment” (*Gaudium et spes*, 16).

We also recall the words of John Paul II, addressing the way of conscience in a sin-sick society accustomed to violence: “When **conscience**, this bright lamp of the soul (cf. Mt 6:22-23), calls ‘evil good and good evil’ (Is 5:20),

it is already on the path to the most alarming corruption and the darkest moral blindness” (*Evangelium vitae*, 24).

So in a sense we go to Rome simply to make concrete that which Rome has already pronounced—and pronounced much more eloquently than we have. Again, John Paul II in *Evangelium vitae*: “And yet all the conditioning and efforts to enforce silence fail to stifle the voice of the Lord echoing in the **conscience** of every individual: it is always from this intimate sanctuary of the **conscience** that a new journey of love, openness and service to human life can begin” (24). ✠



Warcast for Catholics

A podcast dedicated to a discussion of war and peace in the Catholic tradition.

found at www.catholicpeacefellowship.org



2007 ST. MARCELLUS AWARD

The fourth annual St. Marcellus Award will go to CPF's cofounders Jim Forest and Tom Cornell. The award reads as follows:

In grateful recognition of their creative and energetic leadership in founding the Catholic Peace Fellowship in 1964, and of their encouragement and guidance in re-founding it in 2001. Steadfast in their commitment to resisting war, clear-sighted in their conviction to the peace of Christ and to seeing Christ in others, especially those discerning their consciences, never afraid to take the arduous course of direct action when necessary—they also took up the equally arduous task of education and counseling, and so brought a personalist approach to Catholic anti-war activity. And they did so with intelligence, grace, wisdom, and (always important) with humor.



St. Marcellus was a Roman Centurion who realized that Christianity was not compatible with service in the Roman army. He was beheaded in 298 for his refusal to serve.

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

-Tom Cornell

"The Sacraments, the Gospels, the stories of the Saints, the ability of friends and strangers to risk everything rather than take part in murder. . . all these things helped to keep us going."

-Jim Forest

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Dominus vobiscum (May the Lord be with you)
Joshua Casteel, Tom Cornell, and Michael Griffin in St. Peter's Square