



ALL SAINTS
2002 VOL 1. 3

the SIGN of PEACE

JOURNAL OF THE CATHOLIC PEACE FELLOWSHIP

A MIGHTY LEAGUE OF CATHOLIC CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS

With the Bush Administration poised to move ahead with its plans to invade Iraq, Catholics in increasing numbers are registering their dissent in several important ways: emails and phone calls to the President and the Congress, letters to the editor, petitions, press conferences, public protests, and pledges of civil disobedience should (an expanded) war break out. All these ways of dissenting are important in trying to prevent what may prove to be an utterly senseless slaughter of innocent lives. But in addition to these, we Catholics should dissent in one more way, by raising a “mighty league of Catholic conscientious objectors.”

This slogan was used by Dorothy Day and others involved in the Association of Catholic Conscientious Objectors (ACCO), an organization that supported Catholics who refused to be drafted into the military during World War II for reasons of conscience. At that time, their number was not legion: 135 in all. But this was a substantial increase over the four Catholic conscientious objectors during World War I. This upward trend continued during the Vietnam War when Catholic COs numbered well into the tens of thousands, more than any religious group in the United States. By that time, of course, COs had received clear endorsement from the Second Vatican Council, which declared “that laws should make humane provision for the case of conscientious objectors who refuse to carry arms, provided they accept some other form of community service” (*Guadium et Spes*, n. 79). And this endorsement was reiterated by the Catholic bishops in the United States in their pastoral letter *The Challenge of Peace* (1983). In fact, on the basis of the pacifist and just war traditions of the Church, this letter endorses two forms of conscientious objection: conscientious objection (CO) to war in any form and selective conscientious objection (SCO) to particular wars judged to be unjust by just war theory. This is the official teaching of the Catholic Church

But if this is the Church’s teaching, then there is a problem, for the vast majority of Catholics are adherents of neither pacifism nor just war theory. Rather, most Catholics follow the “blank check” approach to war, which (according to Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder) means that they go to war whenever their national leaders tell them to go to war. The problem is that when it comes to war, many Catholics, like so many others, pledge their allegiance to their country, right or wrong. They are obedient to the nation before all else: before the natural law, before divine law, before the words and example of Jesus Christ, before conscience. The problem is, in a word, idolatry.

The nation-state has taken the place of God.

This is not an overstatement. In Catholic teaching, as John Paul II has recently explained, conscience is nothing less than a witness to God whose voice and judgment penetrates to the depths of a person’s soul (*Veritatis Splendor*, n. 58). As such, it can never be totally silenced, but it can be muted, ignored, garbled, and distorted by sin, and by social, economic, and political forces that reinforce sin. This is why we must be wary of what the pope calls, in another encyclical, “the tyrant state,” which arrogates to itself the right to dispose of

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Editor:

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Mark Zwick

Circulation:

Lauren Beyer

**Letters and Manuscript
submissions:**

The Sign of Peace
P.O. Box 41
Notre Dame, IN 46556
Tel: (574) 631-7666
Email:
info@catholicpeacefellowship.org

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Lauren Beyer
The Sign of Peace
P.O. Box 41
Notre Dame, IN 46556

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

In his article "The Apocalypse of Peace," Frederick C. Bauerschmidt draws a distinction between profane time, which stretches out endlessly before us, and the shortening of time associated with the arrival of the Kingdom of God, which is unveiled at every moment, unexpectedly. Taking unfair advantage of this distinction, we are sending the "All Saints" issue of *The Sign of Peace* now, some five weeks late reckoned in profane time, but not untimely at all in terms of the coming Kingdom. In any case, we apologize for the tardiness of this issue, but we believe it will still speak to the concerns of our readers.

In addition to Bauerschmidt's reflection on peace and the apocalypse, we offer two pieces written in different genres but with the same essential message: the day September 11, 2002 calls us to turn to God, to offer our lives to God, in total trust. We also include another installment in the series "Catholics and Conscientious Objection," this one focusing on the procedures by which people in the military can be classified as COs. Our intention here is to publicize these regulations in the hope that Catholics and others in the military who are having questions of conscience about participating in war will have somewhere to turn or at least an idea of what to do and not do. We invite our readers to copy and disseminate this information (which is also on our website) in any and every way possible.

These days continue to fall within Jesus' prediction, in "the little apocalypse" of the Gospel of Mark, that there will be "wars and rumors of wars" (Mk 13:7). But as Bauerschmidt reminds us, Christ's "peaceable kingdom is in no way 'contained' by violence." At the close of one liturgical year and the opening of another, let us pray and act in such a way that all of us, and all of our world, may be ready to receive an apocalypse of peace.

society's weakest, most defenseless members. His chief concerns are abortion and euthanasia, which he says must be resisted, if necessary by conscientious objection. "Abortion and euthanasia," he writes, are "crimes which no human law can claim to legitimize. There is no obligation in conscience to obey such laws; instead, there is a *grave and clear obligation to oppose them by conscientious objection*. From the very beginning of the Church, the apostolic teaching reminded Christians of their duty to obey legitimately constituted public authorities (cf. *Rom 13:7; I Pet 2:13-14*), but at the same time, it firmly warned that 'we must obey God rather than men' (*Acts 5:29*)" (*Evangelium Vitae*, n. 20 [italics in original]). The pope's point is that the readiness of Catholics to come forth as conscientious objectors is essential to the apostolic witness of the Church.

Just as this point applies to the pernicious practices of abortion and euthanasia, it also applies to the pernicious practices of war. Although the issues are not identical, the call for conscientious objection to war is equally urgent, if not indeed more so, precisely because people's passions are so easily manipulated into uncritical support of war. In a time of war, then, conscientious objection can be a means of recovering the Church's apostolic witness.

What, then, would be involved in Catholics opposing a U.S. war against Iraq through conscientious objection?

It would involve Catholics in the military, who subscribe to just war theory and thus are by definition potential SCOs, discerning whether or not they can participate in this war, and if not, insisting that their duties be changed accordingly. This may mean that some Catholics in the military would discern that they oppose participating in all war and would thus apply to be discharged on CO grounds. This pertains to Catholics in the Reserves and college-age

Catholics in ROTC as well, all of whom might be called into active duty (see p. 13). It would also involve Catholics who have registered for the draft declaring their conscientious response to the prospect of being drafted, either as COs or SCOs. Although Selective Service regulations do not afford them the opportunity to be classified as conscientious objectors, they should still come forth as COs or SCOs and file their statements with the Catholic Peace Fellowship and another organization that supports COs. It would involve parents, pastors, youth group directors, high school and college teachers, and others supporting these COs personally and institutionally. And it would also involve many Catholics going to jail if their claims are refused, which would certainly occur in the case of SCO which is not recognized in U.S. law. But this should not stop them, for we are heirs to a long tradition of going to jail for the sake of conscience, dating back to the apostles who (as the pope notes in his call for conscientious objection) informed the Sanhedrin, "we must obey God rather than men" (*Acts 5:29*).

A mighty league of Catholic COs may not impede this nation's rush to go to war with Iraq. But it would, as they say in diplomatic circles, send the signal to this nation's leaders that there are many Catholics in the United States—tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions—who will obey God rather than them, who pledge their allegiances to Christ and the Church over (as Dorothy Day put it) Holy Mother State, who regard their conscience as a witness to the voice of God, and who, in following their conscience, themselves become a voice of God, echoing the ancient words of the prophet: "nor shall they train for war again" (*Isaiah 2:4*).

— *The Editors*

On my knees I beg you to turn away from the paths of violence and to return to the ways of peace. Violence only delays the day of justice. Violence destroys the work of justice. I say to you, with all the love I have for you, with all the trust I have in young people:
do not listen to voices which speak the language of hatred, revenge, retaliation.
Do not follow any leaders who train you in the way of inflicting death.
Love life. Respect life, in yourselves and in others.
Give yourself to the service of life, not the work of death.
Violence is the enemy of justice. Only peace can lead the way to true justice.

—Pope John Paul II [Drogheda, Ireland-September 29, 1979]

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001: A SERMON A YEAR LATER

BY STANLEY HAUERWAS

Micah 4: 1-5
Ephesians 2: 13-18
Matthew 5: 43-48

September 11, 2001, a day of terror. September 11, 2001, “a day that will live in infamy” for those who remember Pearl Harbor. September 11, 2001, a day you remember where you were and what you were doing not unlike when you heard that Kennedy had been shot. September 11, 2001, a day that changed the world for those who long to live in a world without change. September 11, 2001, a day when Americans discovered that senseless violence is quite effective precisely because it is senseless. September 11, 2001, a day when Christians, long accommodated to the sentimentalities of American culture, discovered they had nothing worthwhile to say.

A year later we find we are still silence-wrapped. Our silence would be redemptive if it were an expression of patient sadness. But such a silence is hard. The images besetting us are too strong. We try to resist, to forget, but such forgetting seems too much like a betrayal of those who died. We remember the beautiful arc the second plane made before erupting into the brilliant fire ball that burned away any hope that all might not be lost. We sense the terror those in the upper floors must have felt knowing they were doomed. We see those bodies, desperate bodies, choosing to float briefly on air rather than be trapped and incinerated. It’s as if the whole world is caught in slow motion as the great towers implode leaving behind a barren sky. New York, New York, no longer a wonderful town. We divert our gaze not wanting to be reminded what is missing. This is an apocalyptic moment Christians in America cannot ignore.

Surely the way we felt as we survived the days after September 11, 2001 is something like how the followers of Jesus felt after the crucifixion. We and they felt pure terror. The one on whom all hope was placed, the one we gave up all to follow, the one we had hoped was the one to redeem Israel, dead. It is not even clear who killed him or why he was killed. It is another meaningless death against the blackness of a meaningless cosmos. Best to face the fact that it is kill or be killed.

In such a world meaning is determined by those with the largest swords. They are the ones who will write the histories which make it possible for us to

know what “really happened. Thank God, for the time being we are on the winning side. We get to call the violently secured order that makes our lives possible—peace. Only terrorists refuse to accept the order that we name “peace.”

Moreover, the only way to deal with terrorists is vengeance. Justice demands vengeance. We cannot let the innocent die meaningless deaths. They were not victims. No American may die a victim. Sacrificially they died that we might live. Their deaths were not in vain. They are freedom’s martyrs. Their lives have been made unimaginably more significant by how they died than by how they lived.

But wait. Some say he has been raised from the dead. He appeared to the disciples, showing them his nail-marked hands and feet. He even ate a broiled fish. He ascended to heaven and they worshiped Him.

Worshiped him? You can only worship God. Yet it says clearly, in Luke 24: 52, “they worshiped him.” What are we to make of that? We confess we are not quite sure. We have been at it for two thousand years and we are “not quite sure.” We often think we must find some way to explain the meaning of his death. We call such efforts “atonement theories.” But the scripture makes clear that we do not get to vindicate Christ. We do not need to avenge his death. His ascension to the Father is the only vindication needed.

In the book *He Came Preaching Peace*, John Howard Yoder observes that the New Testament sometimes describes the death of Christ as a sacrifice, and other times as a ransom. We normally assume that both descriptions are names for our reconciliation with God over the barrier of our sins. But Yoder notices that the barrier between people—a barrier as real as the wall of masonry in Jerusalem that separated the outer court for Gentiles from the temple proper—is not anybody’s sins. Instead, the barrier is the historical fact of separate stories. It is not a barrier of guilt, but of culture and communication. It is not a barrier between each person and God but between one group and another. It is not the case that inner or personal peace comes first, with the hope that once the inward condition is set right then the restored person will do some social good. It is the other way around. Two estranged histories are made into one. Two hostile communities are reconciled. Note the breaking of this barrier is not something we must try to do. The breaking has already been done. What was hidden from the ages

Stanley M. Hauerwas is Gilbert T. Rowe Professor of Theological Ethics at Duke University. He is the author of more than twenty books, including his recently delivered Gifford Lectures, WITH THE GRAIN OF THE UNIVERSE.

is now revealed. We live in a new time. We live in an apocalyptic time. So it is only now that the rulers and authorities, the principalities and powers, can learn through the church what the rich variety of God's wisdom has always been (Ephesians 3: 10-11). God has judged between the peoples, God has beat the swords of the nations into plowshares. God has abolished war. We need no longer to learn of war.

But who is the "we" who need no longer learn of war? Is it those who were taught by the One raised that we must love our enemies? How can we possibly be told to love enemies—enemies who think nothing of wanton murder? A good question, but one those who live in the new age inaugurated by Christ need not ask. We know it is possible to love our enemies. Otherwise why would Christ in the Sermon on the Mount ask that we so love? Are we to make Christ a liar? If we do not think it possible to love our enemies, then we should plainly say Jesus is not the Messiah. But Jesus is the Messiah, not dead but alive, indeed present to us in this meal of the New Age.

So we find ourselves living in the aftermath of two apocalyptic events. Those events have produced two peoples with two quite different stories, one people which fears and worships death as the only lord and another people which fears and worships the Lord of death. The people of the September 11 apocalypse, the people who worship death, do not believe that God has removed the barrier between Jew and Gentile. The people of the September 11 apocalypse do not believe that Jesus has been raised from death. So these people of the September 11 apocalypse are determined to have vengeance. They are determined to make their world safe no matter what cost others must bear to insure their safety. The people of the September 11 apocalypse rage against death, believing—with the help of the memory of their accomplishments—that they do not have to die.

The other people, the Jesus People are also an apocalyptic people. They are so because they worship the Lord of death. Like the people of the September 11 apocalypse, the Jesus People are also a storied people. But they do not believe that they get to make their story up. Their story is certainly not a story of their accomplishments. It is a story of their sinful unfaithfulness. It is the story of their living as if the work God accomplished in Christ is somehow not sufficient for our salvation. It is the story of the impatience of the Jesus People desper-

ate to convince ourselves and those outside the church that our God exists and on the whole is a pretty good guy. It is the story of our unwillingness to acknowledge to ourselves and others that we live in a dangerous world, a world of death, made all the more dangerous by our unbridled desire for safety.

If that is the story of the Jesus People, we must ask why on earth anyone would want to be part of that story? The world is terrible enough. Why can't we recognize that when all is said and done, we are pretty much the same, so let's just try to get along. Tempted though they may be by that story, the Jesus People know it cannot be their story. It cannot be their story because their story is not really about them. The story which makes the Jesus People a storied people is the story of God and God's unending love of us. How extraordinary. How wonderful. It really is not all about "us." It is about God. A God who is not rendered powerless by events like September 11, 2001, but the God who has made his church, the Jesus People, the alternative to those who would rule the world in the name of putting right the terror of September 11, 2001.

But are we Jesus People? We think we might like to be Jesus People, but we know we are those storied by September 11, 2001. We may not exactly want "to kill the bastards," but the images and the feelings we felt that day cannot be denied. I am not suggesting that we simply try harder to be Jesus People. Such trying too often only increases our narcissism, reinforcing the presumption that it is all about us. Perhaps a beginning is to recognize that we are an apocalyptic people, a new age people, who have been given all we need not to be captured by the powers fueled by our fear of death. Such a people do not need to try to be better, but rather only to receive the gifts we have been given. Gifts as simple as bread and wine made by the Spirit the Body and Blood of the One whose sacrifice is the end of all sacrifice. At this table we find God's justice. We deserve death, but God refuses our refusal and insists upon making us His storied people, His Jesus People, so that the world may know there is an alternative to terror. That alternative, at once terrible and wonderful, is us. Here at this table God lifts us up so that we become, for the world, the end of all sacrifices.

How extraordinary. How frightening. How wonderful.

Amen.

THE REMAINS OF A DAY

BY MARY MARGARET C. NUSSBAUM

September 11, 2002. At 6 a.m. strangers gather at the Jaya Yoga center in South Brooklyn. Paper printouts declare that this is a “sacred space,” and that yoga is free today. A petite blonde yogi with muscular shoulders leads the barefoot assembly through various contortions. In the toxic world of Don DeLillo’s *White Noise* a comforting mother named Babette gives classes in standing. New Yorkers pay to remember what it is to breathe. For many this yoga class *is* their sacred space: the deep lunges and vegan diets are their offering. It’s not a bad place to start. You slip into your skin, you think of how much blood and meat and sinew you are, and you sigh. The subway graffiti from last September has not been scrubbed away: “You are alive.” Ah. That’s right, *alive*, in the blue hour, breathing. Across the East River in Chinatown, the old ladies and men are practicing tai chi. They do this every morning, then mah jong, later more tai chi, always gossip. Chinatown neighbors the former site of the World Trade Center, so last year the Chinese put on surgical masks to stretch. The air was too much—a horrifying conflagration of hair and bones, carpet and computers. A year later and the elderly stretch without masks. Their swan movements soothe the eye—the way a grandfather flutters his hands about his body, as though to wake it; the way a grandmother raises her leg onto a fence and sweeps her body toward it.

It’s September 11. Last weekend men blew the shofar for the Jewish New Year. Tomorrow, in Little Italy, the feast of San Genarro begins; streamers are hung across the streets. It’s the “International Day Against Video Surveillance.” New Yorkers are encouraged to moon the monitoring device at the ATM, or perform *Othello* under the electronic eyes of the

arch in Washington Square Park. In the Bronx a pair of white pines are planted, for new life.

Everyone is waking, putting on skin. We wake soft, just returned from lands of sleep, and the city is here—annealed in the night. We wake hungry, every one of the eight million aching for God. Some are holding the tent poles that keep the sky from falling. They say, “Lord, Open my lips and my mouth shall declare your praise.”

And now the sun is up.

**Every one is waking,
putting on skin.
We wake soft, just returned
from lands of sleep,
and the city is here —
annealed in the night.
We wake hungry,
every one of the eight million
aching for God.
Some are holding the tent poles
that keep the sky from falling.
They say, “Lord, Open my lips
and my mouth
shall declare your praise.”**

How must we praise?
This is a day of absurd and
endless death. This is
Pandora’s Box and Babel
falling, this is weeping,
this is widow making, this
is us answering killing
with more. This is also
someone’s birthday, a
workday and a Wednesday.
How must we praise?

Bagpipers rose
before dawn to stream
songs from the outer
boroughs to the mass
grave in Downtown. All
day long there is music—
the more guttural the
better—we need cellos,
and bagpipes and gruff
baritones. Our words
seem silly and small. Last

year, and a day, a cellist set up camp in front of the charred remains and began to play. The *beau geste* of his bow and rosin and string! The horror that God allows.

There are cops in the subway today.

A middle-aged woman with a square jaw conducts an animated conversation with a dog on 7th St. She speaks for both of them. Miu Miu shoes in SoHo is closed “in remembrance” until noon. A bistro in Nolita requests that patrons keep silence during their meals. There are flag ribbons hung around trees and lampposts and women’s waists. A bakery has a passage from Aeschylus in the window. Pictures of eagles eating turbaned men are plastered to a dumpster. The sky is blue. The Dominicans in Union Square Park are 11 days deep in their thirty-day fast. The crowds in Washington Square Park kept an all-night vigil for peace, crying mercy and calling out names.

Mia Nussbaum graduated from the Program of Liberal Studies at the University of Notre Dame in 2001. She lives and works in New York City.

The names echo all day.

In the great gothic cave that is St. John the Divine they chant them.

Tommy Sullivan. Aisha Harris. Thierry Saada. Alysia Basmijan. Milagros Hromade. Danny Correa. Joseph Maloney. Monica Goldstein. David Lee. Margaret Seliger. Salvatore Gitto.

In the seven-story pit of the former WTC, family members of the dead stand through an alphabetized litany, waiting to hear the name that was salt, was savor and is always in their mouths.

Twenty-seven thousand roses are donated for them to carry.

Across the street is St. Paul's Church, where George Washington prayed after being named President. A Mennonite Choir is singing "Just As I Am" out front. The iron fence surrounding the church is crammed with letters, t-shirts, banners, and photographs. The memorial began one year ago like this: off-duty firefighters who were called to the scene had to change out of their plain clothes or "civvies" and into their workwear. They hung their street boots on the fence posts. At the end of the day many boots were still there, the men and women who wore them dead. The memorial grew from the ground to these boots.

One man has written, "Kill all Islam and their traitorous [*sic*] left-wing America hating asshole allies and sympathizers," over which another wrote "NO." Mostly, the outpouring is hopeful and solemn. Junior high students in Matsue, Japan have sent 7,000 folded cranes. Virginia Wesleyan College sent a banner, as did the Police and Fire departments of Shawnee, Kansas, the Carolina Square and Round Dancers, and the elementary school students of Alberta, Canada. Members of the Church of the Holy Comforter, from Augusta, Georgia were here for months last year, volunteering as part of the 24-hour food service for rescue workers. Their old sign promising "Good Grits, Good Hugs, We Love To Serve You," is in the sanctuary with a note from Reverend Cindy, "I loved being with you more than you'll know. What an honor to serve y'all." St. Serbian Orthodox sends "Christ is risen! And no one

remains in the tomb!" Girl scouts in Ohio have made an American flag out of their handprints. The "Ladies Learning to Lean," from Memphis, Tennessee painted a banner crowded with Psalms and Scripture. The old words of Romans 8 and Isaiah 61 are new when seen here. They are so wild. And there is Matthew 11, "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." Prayer is made valid here. What would happen if we held each other like this every day?

**Prayer
is made
valid here.
What would
happen
if we held
each other
like this
every day?**

Across from the church it's business. Vendors are selling snowglobes of the old skyline and tapes of that stupid Lee Greenwood song. A man with a placard for "New York Dolls! XXX!" is passing out flyers.

I go to the women's high school in Midtown where I teach. My students are like the people of this city; nearly half are foreign born. They grew up speaking Creole, Swahili, Spanish. I have been told, "three in four suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder." The tests were conducted after last year's terrorist attacks, but the trauma, for too many, is older and nearer. We are reading a heavy-handed novel and their short essays on metaphor trouble me. They are not analytical, they are confessional, and the confessions are too much. Several students write to say that they identify with Pecola, the protagonist, because they have also been raped. We don't talk about terrorism, then. But it's literature, so death is everywhere. This week we read these lines from William Carlos Williams:

Sorrow is my own yard
Where the new grass
flames as it has flamed
often before but not
with the cold fire
that closes round me this year.
Thirtyfive years
I lived with my husband.

The words belong to a widow in Staten Island.

A mother in Britain whose son traded on the 79th floor could read W.H. Auden properly:

Stop all the clocks,
cut off the telephone.

We read the words as best we can. We learn literary terms, too. For euphemism I suggest “collateral damage,” and they concur.

At school the nuns pass out flag pins with a tiny cross tacked on the corner. They are called “cross-flags” and are a popular accessory. They come with a dribbly prayer “for Our Leaders,” that ends, “May they follow Your will to direct our nation in the paths of peace and safety.”

South Korean, German, Mexican, Swiss and Israeli citizens were among those who died on September 11, 2001.

There is “a cell” in Buffalo. The joke is old now: if we attack all of the states that harbor terrorists, will we begin with Texas?

And the unsafe story of Abraham: how many *does* it render sleepless?

And the trope about New York, that “they forget death in New York.” But these days death keeps butting into conversation. You’re eating a turkey and rye and she’s eating a cheese slice and there it is. People want to talk about how their cousin’s boyfriend dashed out in time, or how their neighbor’s sister felt ill that morning and called in sick. In Midtown, where workers are stacked like matches, there are evacuation plans in the event of a bomb. Some involve jumping in the river. A friend of mine who lived in this neighborhood last year and has since moved sends me a note. She says she’s been missing the city, “I have dreams about supertall buildings. They are skinny and swaying and I descend between them on a swing . . . I accidentally drop textbooks filled with photographs of clouds and they spiral down through the miles of sky and glass and my stomach turns.” I imagine her photos as I walk out the door, littering the ground, and I’m glad.

In the evening people gather at parks and libraries and houses of prayer. (They also, of course, watch TV, work the nightshift, eat

empanadas, practice the flute, kiss). On the steps of the Brooklyn Public Library, Galway Kinnell reads his poem, “When The Towers Fell.” He uses his words like “miasmatic” and “astringent” to describe the air. He says,

Some died while calling home to say they were
O.K

Some broke windows and leaned out and
waited for rescue. . .

Some leapt hand in hand,
the elasticity in last bits of love-time
letting—I wish I could say—their
vertical streaks down the sky
happen more lightly.

**Right now
the night
does not seem
tragic
or angry,
so much as
unbearably
tender.**

Other poets read in other languages. Overhead four jets circle low. Higher in the sky a single kite is flying. When the reading is finished the crowd of listeners fold their metal chairs and head across the street to Prospect Park, a 150-acre stretch of green.

Two women are at the stoplight before the entrance to the park, passing out long white candles in ceramic holders. The movement is unchoreographed and absolutely right.

The summer’s heat breaks today.

The air is cool and crisp and the light is slant and leaving. The candlelight vigil is in the center of the park, so from every direction you see them come streaming: whole families, men on bicycles, lesbian couples, swaggering seventeen-year old boys, Orthodox Jewish women with dark skirts and dark tights. Watching the ragtag procession, something catches in my throat. This is the most beautiful sight of the day. I join the stream. I’m riding my bicycle without hands, a practice from childhood. This weightless grace is my antidote to gravity. I imagine that we could fly, or climb, like the procession in Flannery O’Connor’s “Revelation,” with the “battalions of freaks and lunatics,” and the “companies of white trash” made clean for the first time.

Right now the night does not seem tragic or angry, so much as unbearably tender. In some ways it is the sort of night you wish for a city—a good gathering in a public space. And there is something

festive, too. Fathers swing their babies to the music of a symphony and extra hot dog salesmen are out on the corner.

"Project Liberty" mental health workers are walking the grounds, handing out bottles of water and advice about coping. The symphony ends and a youth choir begins with "The Star Spangled Banner." A rippling flag is flashed across giant TV screens and the atmosphere changes again. Why do we keep singing about the "rockets red glare?"

At its best the public rituals of this night are led by those who need no prodding to remember "the events of last September." At its best this is a night of silence or music, of art, of awe and of prayer.

But in Prospect Park and all over New York the music stops and the image of President Bush is projected from Ellis Island. He speaks of "a world of liberty and security," and, as always, of criminals hiding in caves. He says, "our deepest national conviction is that every life is precious," but continues, promising, "what our enemies have begun we will finish." He turns these cello strains into a snare drum's roll and a bugle call. Those of us who sit under the moon, under the sky, those who cry in

public places, are now being told to stand at attention. He appeals to our emotions, and they are stripped bare.

The weightlessness turns to concrete and steel, heavy as the innards of the towers that fell.

Last year people papered this city with the plea that "our grief is not a cry for war." They opened their veins to give blood. They met in parks to pray. Fifty years ago, during an Air Raid Drill, some New Yorkers sat outside, like holy fools. They said, "We do not have faith in God if we depend on the Atom Bomb."

The day begins with Zechariah, who was mute, then learned to praise. The day ends with Simeon and the confessed heap of our failings.

"Who do you say that I am?" we are asked.

And we ask, "How then shall we live?"

It is late. The TV's are turned off; the speeches are made. Some are still holding up the sky. Like Simeon they ask to take leave, into sleep and into death. "Into your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit."

Into your hands.

AS MILITARY JETS ROARED OVER DOWNTOWN CHICAGO during the city's annual air and water show, ten miles to the north, at St. Nicholas Church in Evanston, Chaldean Archbishop Djibrael Kassab of Basra, Iraq stood before Sunday morning Mass last August 18 and in a homily urged U.S. citizens to call for an end to the U.N. economic embargo against Iraq. "To all you people of conscience, we raise our voice asking for your help to lift the embargo, the sanctions, from us, from the people of Iraq, and apply justice by allowing us to get what is necessary for our daily survival," Archbishop Kassab said.

Describing of the effect of sanctions on the people of Basra, and on many other Iraqi civilians as well, the archbishop spoke of scarcity of medications and medical equipment, which has contributed to an increased number of deaths, especially of children and the elderly. Unsanitary water conditions have led to the resurgence of nearly eradicated communicable diseases, and a lack of electrical power has had a severe impact on manufacturing; the damaged economy, in turn, has forced many young people to drop out of school in search of work to help support their families. Kassab also pointed to poor school conditions and inadequate or nonexistent sewerage, plumbing, and garbage collection. In addition, he said, the worry and stress of trying to cope with such conditions has destroyed social life.

After outlining the efforts the Chaldean archdiocese has undertaken to try to provide basic services to the people of Basra, Archbishop Kassab concluded his remarks with an appeal for those assembled to stand with the poor and the children of Iraq—those who suffer the most—to say no to a new war against Iraq, a war that would be waged in part by the kinds of weapons entertaining the populace just a few miles away.

—Joel Schorn



THE APOCALYPSE OF PEACE

BY **FREDERICK C. BAUERSCHMIDT**

The chapel of the former St. John's Hospital in Brugge, Belgium, has been turned into a museum dedicated to the work of Hans Memling, the late-fifteenth-century artist who is considered one of the greatest of the so-called "Flemish Primitive" school of painting. The chapel is dominated by Memling's *Saint John Altarpiece*, which he painted in 1479 to stand behind the altar of the very chapel where it is still located.

In its central panel the triptych depicts the Virgin Mary and the child Jesus surrounded by saints engaged in "holy conversation." Kneeling on either

side of Mary are Catherine of Alexandria, who is receiving a ring from the Christ child, and St. Barbara, who is engrossed in reading a book. John the Baptist and John the Evangelist, the two saint Johns from whom the hospital took its name, stand slightly behind and on the left and right respectively of Mary and the child. Mary is attended by angels in liturgical vestments: one who holds her book, another who plays a small organ, and two more who fly above her head holding a crown. This central panel conveys a sense of serenity and joy, a vision of the Church Triumphant eternally dwelling in peaceful communion.

Not so the side panels, each of which is dedicated to one of the two St. Johns. The left panel records in gory detail the political murder of John the Baptist by Herod. In the background we see Salome dancing before Herod, while in the foreground we

Frederick C. Bauerschmidt is a professor of Theology at Loyola College of Maryland and the author of JULIAN OF NORWICH and THE MYSTICAL BODY POLITIC OF CHRIST. He currently directs and teaches in Loyola's study-abroad program in Belgium.



see John's decapitated body lying on the ground and the sword-wielding executioner placing John's head on a platter held by the oddly impassive Salome. The right panel shows us the vision of John the Evangelist, recorded in the Book of Revelation. In the foreground Memling places John on the island of Patmos, where he has been sent in exile, looking up into a vision of the heavenly worship: the one seated on the throne and the Lamb, surrounded by the white-robed elders and the four living creatures. In the background we see the various scenes from the apocalypse: the four horsemen of war, famine, pestilence and death; the woman clothed in the sun attacked by the dragon; grotesque creatures and people fleeing in a futile search for shelter.

All three of these panels are painted in the same rich, vivid colors that are so characteristic of the Flemish art of the fifteenth century; as one walks into the chapel one's eyes are irresistibly drawn to the altarpiece, which seems to glow with its own internal light source. The side panels, despite their darker themes, share the same brilliant colors as the central

panel. The unity of the color scheme helps to make clear that the scenes of strife depicted in the side panels are not somehow separable from the tranquil scene of holy conversation. Indeed, the peaceful repose of the saints is flanked by images of past conflict (John's execution) and conflict to come (the apocalyptic battle).

And as we begin to look more closely — which we must do, since medieval Flemish painting excels in the depiction of the minutest details — we begin to notice that the central panel itself is not free from conflict. Behind John the Baptist we see the scene of his arrest, as well as a depiction of John's body being burnt, long after his death, by the Roman Emperor known as Julian the Apostate. In the distance behind John the Evangelist we find a small depiction of him being boiled in oil in an unsuccessful attempt on his life. Then we notice that the large figure of John is holding a chalice with a snake in it, a traditional symbol of the Evangelist that reminds us of another attempt on his life by the high priest of Ephesus. Our attention shifts to the other saints and the symbols that surround them: Catherine with the wheel with which the Emperor Maxentius first tried to kill her and the sword with which she was finally beheaded; Barbara with the tower in which her father held her captive to prevent her from becoming a Christian.

As we study Memling's triptych it becomes clear to us that the eternal peace of the Church Triumphant is hedged in on every side by the strife and conflict suffered by the Church Militant. The Baptist who stands serenely beside Mary is the same person whom we see violently executed by a foolish tyrant swayed by a pretty girl. The Evangelist who sees the tranquil repose of the saints is the same person who saw the intensifying conflict suffered by the world as history strains toward its consummation. Catherine was broken on the wheel and Barbara was first imprisoned and then executed by her own father. The symbols of the saints remind us that, despite their peaceful repose, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Revelation 7:14)

Yet Memling's altarpiece also reminds us that even though Christ's kingdom is hedged by the violence suffered by his witnesses, that peaceable kingdom is in no way "contained" by violence. The sheer beauty of Memling's painted panels is an icon of the way in which the peace of Christ spills out into the world's conflicts through the lives of the saints. The scenes of John the Baptist's execution and the apocalyptic conflict seen by John the Evangelist reflect the colors of the sacred conversation. Conflict does not darken the scene of eternal peace, rather it is eternal peace that illuminates the situations of conflict in which the witnesses of Christ refuse the

violence of the world. The altarpiece's central scene of repose, and particularly the serenity of Mary's face, is the focal point from which radiates the illumination of saintly lives. The violence that frames this scene is transfigured into witness in the lives of the saints.

This transfiguration is most vividly enacted in interaction of the "inside" and the "outside" of the altarpiece. Normally, the altarpiece would have been closed, showing only the reverse side of the outer panels, which depict the four donors — two male and two female religious who were involved in the running of St. John's — each kneeling with their patron saints standing behind them. The outer doors are not simply a tribute to those who paid for the painting of the altarpiece, but they also depict the link between the saints, represented by the patrons, and the everyday work of Saint John's hospital, represented by the donors. The colors here are much more somber, the radiance of the heavenly conversation muted by the sometimes drab daily care of travelers, the poor, and the sick, to which the hospital was devoted. Yet on Sundays and feast days the doors would be opened, unveiling the true meaning of that daily work; it is the ongoing work of witnessing to the peace and communion of the heavenly city; it is a work whose drabness is transfigured by the communion between the church on earth and the church in heaven.

We see in the *Saint John Altarpiece* an apocalypse — an unveiling — of peace. Peace is not something that we build by our own efforts and capacity for good will; peace is something that rushes toward us from God's infinite future; peace is something that arrives often in the distressing disguise of the suffering of Christ's witnesses, or the drab disguise of daily tasks of hospitality directed toward those who suffer. It is significant that this unveiling takes place on Sunday, the day of resurrection, for it is on this day that, as Pope John Paul II says, "every generation of believers hears the greeting of Christ, rich with the messianic gift of peace, won by his blood and offered with his Spirit: 'Peace be with you!'" (*Dies Domini* §33). As the doors are opened with the arrival of the Lord's day, the vision of peace bursts upon us, not obliterating the history of suffering, but transforming it into the beauty of witness.

In his book *Followers of Christ: The Religious Life and the Church*, Johannes Baptist Metz has written about the apocalyptic nature of the traditional religious vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. These vows are unlivable for those whose perspective is shaped by profane time, time

understood as a linear series of events stretching out endlessly before us. One might choose poverty or chastity or obedience for a period of time, but when taken up for an entire lifetime they are an intolerable burden. Metz says that such vows can only be lived "if the time be shortened" by the apocalyptic arrival of Christ's kingdom. It is only the expectation of the immanent bursting forth of the kingdom that makes it possible for one to take up the freedom of these vows. As such, these vows become one of the signs of the "shortening" of time; they witness to the way in which the kingdom rushes toward us.

Much the same can be said about those who commit themselves to non-violence. Seen within the perspective of profane time, non-violence seems impossible. With infinite time stretching out before us, we may be able temporarily to resist the allure of violence, but eventually we must succumb to the very sensible logic of the world, a logic that says that it is only through recourse to violence that we can guarantee the security of all the things that we value. But disciples of Christ do not live within the perspective of profane time; they live within an apocalyptic time in which the peaceable kingdom of Christ hastens with infinite speed toward us. At every moment the doors are opening, showing that our drab little daily efforts at hospitality and nonviolence contain within them all the splendor of Christ's kingdom of peace. Only such an apocalyptic perspective can sustain us in our commitment to nonviolence.

But how do we gain such a perspective? Again, Memling's *St. John Altarpiece* offers us an answer. It is by entering into "sacred conversation" with the saints gathered around their Lord that we learn to see in this apocalyptic way. The brothers and sisters who are depicted on the outside of the doors of the altarpiece do not kneel there alone; they are already accompanied by their patrons: James and Anthony, Agnes and Clare. And standing behind and between Agnes and Clare, not immediately visible, is the Lamb who is Christ, silently accompanying the brothers and sisters in their daily duties. It is in fellowship with the saints, and Christ to whom they point, that we begin to see from the apocalyptic perspective and the beauty of Christ illuminates our witness.

The exterior of the *St. John's Altarpiece* only hints at the glories within, just as our refusal of violence only hints at the kingdom of peace for which we long. It sometimes seems as if the doors will never open to let the radiance of Christ shine upon our drab, suffering, violent world. But the opening comes, with a speed and a glory that surpasses all that we can imagine.

CATHOLICS AND CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION: COs IN THE MILITARY

With war looming on the horizon, there has been a lot of talk in recent months about conscientious objection (CO). Most of this talk is focused on *civilian* COs, i.e., people who apply to be exempted from the draft on CO grounds or who simply refuse to cooperate with the Selective Service (for more info on civilian COs and the draft, see *The Sign of Peace*, Vol. 1, n. 2 [Ordinary Time]). But there is another more pressing form of CO: military COs. That's right: *military* COs. Each year a small but steady number of people in the military receive legal status as COs and are reassigned to non-combatant duties or discharged from the military on CO grounds.

Not surprisingly, this fact is not enthusiastically publicized by the military. After all, if it were to become widely known that military personnel are coming forth as COs, the idea of becoming a CO would suggest itself in the minds of more soldiers, sailors, and airmen and women, and before long COs in the military would be a story in the evening news, a growing trend, a movement. From a military perspective, this would not be good. But from the perspective of the Catholic Peace Fellowship, a mass movement of conscience in the military would be a good thing indeed. So it is also a good thing to disseminate some little known but important facts about COs in the military, which is what this article is designed to do.

Much of the information that needs to be disseminated is legal. It is based on Department of Defense (DoD) Directive 1300.6 (on Conscientious Objectors) and on the military regulations derived from this directive. Each branch has its own set of regulations: for the Army, the pertinent regulations are found in AR 600-43; for the Navy, in MLIPERSMAN (NAVPERS 15560 C), for the Marines, in MCO 1306.16 E; and for the Air Force, in AFI 36-3204. (The citations of military regulations found below are drawn mainly from Army Regulations.) This legal information is also based on the federal court cases that have tried to clarify the nature of these regulations. Other information that the CPF wants to disseminate is moral and religious and is based on a variety of sources: the scriptures, traditional Catholic teaching on peacemaking and waging war, recent popes' and bishops' statements on war and peace, contemporary understandings of total war, the emerging importance of movements of conscience in the modern world, and so on. In the following pages,

this legal, moral, and religious information is presented so as to support Catholics in the military who are thinking about coming forth as COs.

But this raises an immediate question:

WHAT IS A MILITARY CO?

DoD Directive 1300.6 and the military regulations derived from it define a CO as a person who has "a firm, fixed and sincere objection to participation in war in any form or the bearing of arms, by reason of religious training and belief." It is important to note that in court cases, this notion of religious training and belief has been expanded to include beliefs that occupy a place in the life of the adherent that is comparable to religious beliefs, namely, moral or ethical beliefs. But it is also important to note that a person does not qualify as a CO if his or her objection to war is based "solely upon considerations of policy, pragmatism, expediency, or political views." Also, a person does not qualify as a CO who objects to participating in a particular war, but not to all wars. Thus, just as with civilian COs, in order to be legally recognized as a military CO, he or she must meet three standards: his or her objection must be based on religious, moral, or ethical beliefs; it must be an objection to war in any form; and it must be sincere.

But here, another question arises: if a person is a sincere conscientious objector to war in any form on the basis of religious and or moral beliefs, then why did he or she join the military in the first place?

HOW CAN A CO BE IN THE MILITARY?

This is an understandable question. When a person joins the military, either as an enlisted person or as an officer, he or she is required to check a box indicating that he or she is *not* a conscientious objector. So how can a person in the military claim to be a CO?

The answer is simple: when it comes to a CO in the military, a person must have become a CO *after* he or she has signed an enlistment contract. This bears repeating: *in order to be legally recognized as a CO in the military, one must have become conscientiously opposed to participating in war after signing an enlistment contract.* This means that a military CO, while in the military, must have undergone some form of conversion about the morality of war. In military regulations, the phrase used for this conversion process is "crystallization of conscience." It is this "crystallization of conscience" that must

have occurred *after* entering the military.

But then, once a person undergoes a crystallization of conscience and becomes opposed to participating in war, what should he or she do? The answer, according to military regulations, is that he or she should apply for CO status.

APPLYING TO BE A MILITARY CO

The process for applying for CO status in the military is long and complicated. But at bottom, it is designed to determine one thing: whether or not a person is sincerely and genuinely a CO. The procedure for determining this is basically the same in each of the branches of the military. It can be broken down into seven steps.

STEP 1: NOTIFYING YOUR COMMANDER

After undergoing a crystallization of conscience, a person in the military who wants to apply for CO status must notify his or her immediate commanding officer. In response, the unit commander should do three things. First, the unit commander should present the applicant with a form (DA Form 4187) indicating whether he or she is seeking classification as a Conscientious Objector 1-O and thus a discharge from the military, or a 1-A-O classification and thus an assignment to noncombatant duties. Second, the unit commander will inform the applicant that he or she must forfeit several rights in order to complete the application process, privacy rights, rights to Veteran's benefits, and will ask for an acknowledgment in writing. Third, the unit commander will give the CO applicant a form (based on DoD Directive 1300.6) which, in effect, serves as the written portion of the CO application. The CO application process formally begins when a person submits this form to his or her unit commander.

STEP 2: THE APPLICATION

The CO application form requires about twenty-five pieces of information, most of which asks for name, social security number, permanent home address, educational history, employment history, and so on. But six pieces of information bear directly on the CO application and require extensive explanation. In the order they appear on the form (found in AR 600-43, Appendix B, 1, b, 2-7), they ask the CO applicant to explain:

(2) "the nature of the belief that requires the person to seek separation from the military service or assignment to noncombatant

training and duty for reasons of conscience."

(3) "how his or her beliefs changed or developed, to include an explanation as to what factors (how, when, and from whom or from what source training received and belief acquired) caused the change in or development of conscientious beliefs."

(4) "when these beliefs became incompatible with military service and why."

(5) "the circumstances, if any, under which the person believes in the use of force, and to what extent, under any foreseeable circumstances."

(6) "what in the person's life most conspicuously demonstrates the consistency and depth of his or her beliefs that give rise to his or her claim."

(7) "how the applicant's daily life style has changed as a result of his or her beliefs and what future actions he or she plans to continue to support his or her beliefs."

In addition to providing this information, a CO applicant is invited to submit letters of reference or official statements of organizations to which he or she belongs or refers in the application. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide this material.

Once this written material is submitted, the applicant must attend two interviews, one with a military chaplain and one with a military psychiatrist.

STEP 3: THE INTERVIEWS

The purpose of the chaplain's interview is to assess the applicant as to the source of his or her belief, its sincerity and depth or lack of conviction, and the ways that the person's demeanor and lifestyle bear on the claim. The chaplain is instructed to provide a written report for the record but *not* to recommend approval or disapproval of the claim itself.

The purpose of the psychiatrist's interview is to assess the applicant's mental status and report on the presence or absence of any psychiatric disorder that may warrant medical treatment or any personality disorder that may call for administrative action. The psychiatrist also is instructed to provide a written report for the record but *not* to recommend approval or disapproval of the claim.

STEP 4: THE INVESTIGATIVE HEARING

Once these interviews are held and the reports submitted, the unit commander will deliver the

application, the chaplain's report, and the psychiatrist's report to the commander exercising special court-martial jurisdiction over the applicant. This latter commander will appoint an officer knowledgeable about CO policies and procedures to investigate the applicant's claim. The "investigating officer," as he or she is called, must not be in the applicant's chain of command, nor be in the same company or battery-size unit, and must be senior in grade to the applicant if the applicant is a commissioned officer. It is the main task of the investigating officer is to conduct a hearing on the application.

The primary purpose of the investigative hearing is to create a comprehensive record to aid the investigating officer and other officials in arriving at an informed decision. It is not a formal hearing and is not governed according to the rules of evidence of a legal proceeding, nor is it conducted in an adversarial fashion. The applicant is allowed to make a personal statement in support of his or her application and to present witnesses to speak on his or her behalf. Moreover, the applicant is permitted to question any other witnesses who appear, e.g., the unit commander or other superiors, and to examine all items in his or her file. The applicant is also entitled to be represented by counsel, but at no expense to the government. In addition, the applicant may arrange to have a verbatim record of the hearing (e.g., a tape recording), but here too, this must be done at his or her expense and a copy of it must be made available to the government at the conclusion of the hearing. If the applicant decides not to provide a verbatim record, the investigating officer's summary suffices as the official record of the hearing. After the hearing, the investigating officer will prepare a written report including the documents, statements, and other material gathered in the investigation; his or her assessment as to the nature, underlying basis, development, sincerity, and validity of the applicant's CO claim; and a recommendation for action, either a denial of the CO claim, or classification as a 1-A-O or a 1-O conscientious objector.

STEP 5: THE FINAL REPORT

Once the hearing investigator produces a written report, the applicant has the right to rebut the report's findings and recommendation. The rebuttal can bring up any number of issues, e.g., bias of the chaplain or psychiatrist during interviews, not being given time during the hearing to answer difficult

questions, not being allowed to consult with counsel, and so on. The rebuttal must be submitted in writing within a prescribed time frame (the Army gives ten calendar days from receipt of the record to submit a rebuttal; the Navy, five working days; the Marine Corps, seven days; and the Air Force, fifteen calendar days.) Once the period for rebuttal has elapsed, the investigating officer will forward the final report to the commander exercising special court-martial jurisdiction over the applicant, otherwise known as the "appointing officer" (because he appointed the hearing investigator in the first place).

The appointing officer will review the record for completeness and legality. If the record is not in order, it may be sent back to the investigating officer for more information. If it is in order, the appointing officer makes a recommendation and forwards the entire record up the chain of command to service headquarters. Officers in the chain of command are allowed to make recommendations as it passes through their hands. But the applicant is to be given the opportunity to rebut any additional evidence that is adverse to the claim (in the Army, any evidence at all), including later recommendations made by higher ups in the chain of command.

STEP 6: THE FINAL RECOMMENDATION

The final recommendation is made by service headquarters which must also provide the reasons for it. Ultimately, only the Secretary of the service branch has the authority to discharge a person as a conscientious objector. Each Secretary assigns a board in the Service headquarters to review each case, although the Secretary of the Army delegates authority to approve (but not disapprove) discharge to local commanders who exercise general court-martial authority over the applicant. Most decisions are made between six and nine months after applying. Sometimes it takes longer. After about two months, the applicant should investigate the status of the application. Members of Congress, legal officers, chaplains, even one's own commanders can help move an application along. The applicant's counselor or lawyer can help too by placing phone calls at various levels in the chain of command.

During this time, the applicant should be assigned to duties that conflict as little as possible with his or her asserted beliefs. If the applicant is located in a combat zone, reassignment to noncombatant duties is still possible.

STEP 7: THE APPEAL OR DISCHARGE

When a CO claim is turned down, the applicant is in a difficult position, but there are alternatives. For one thing, he or she can contact a lawyer to explore the possibility that the grounds for refusal are unconstitutional. For another, he or she can seek remedy with the Board for Correction of Military Records, which would take a long time but may be worthwhile, particularly for reservists. Both of these alternatives are lengthy and may not result in a change of status, but they still may be worth pursuing. And then there is the possibility of submitting a new CO application. This can be a promising course of action if a genuine change or deepening of one's beliefs has occurred since the first application was submitted, which is not unusual. A second application may well be worth pursuing if: it asks for a 1-O rather than a 1-A-O classification, or vice versa; it presents new letters of support; it is more clearly based in religious or moral beliefs; it includes more official statements of one's church; it specifies how one's beliefs have changed since the first application was submitted; it presents new evidence of the depth and sincerity of the claim. A second application may be rejected by an applicant's commander if it does not substantially differ from the first application, but if it is a genuinely new claim based on new evidence, then it should be processed according to regulations.

When a CO claim is approved, the decision filters down the chain of command to the immediate commander who then notifies the applicant. The applicant is either reassigned to noncombatant duties or discharged from the military. The discharge is "honorable" unless the applicant has refused to obey orders or wear the uniform while the claim was pending, in which case it is "general." Apart from not being permitted to reenlist, an honorable discharge on CO grounds is just like any other honorable discharge.

CPF'S ADVICE TO MILITARY COS

As you can see, the process of applying and being recognized as a military CO is long and arduous, but for those who receive final approval, it is well worth it. As a way to assist Catholic COs in the military and guide them toward a felicitous outcome, CPF offers the following advice.

CONTACT A CO COUNSELOR OR LAWYER IMMEDIATELY. Some military commanders will be support-

ive of a CO applicant, but many others will not be supportive. Most will be skeptical; some will be hostile. And some will not even know the procedures for dealing with a CO claim. So contact a CO counselor and/or lawyer immediately, if possible, before notifying your commander. This way, you can be informed of the procedures, the possible outcomes, and the best way to present your CO claim, and also the best way to avoid saying or doing something that may hurt it.

REMIND YOUR COMMANDER THAT YOU SHOULD BE ASSIGNED TO NONCOMBATANT DUTIES. This is important because if you handle a rifle or participate in other combat duties, it could be used against your CO claim later. The best thing to do is respectfully remind your commander of this regulation (based on DoD Directive 1300.6), in writing, so that there is documentation of your request not to handle weapons. If you are ordered to do so anyway, and do not wish to disobey orders, then write a letter to your commander saying that you are following orders but under protest because, in your understanding of military regulations, the orders are illegal.

PREPARE YOUR CO CLAIM SOON—IF POSSIBLE, BEFORE NOTIFYING YOUR COMMANDER; IF NOT, SOON AFTER. The written application asks for clear, well thought out, concrete explanations as to your beliefs about war. This may be your first experience in putting such thoughts into writing, as it is for many applicants. So it is best to show your written explanations to a CO counselor or legal advisor who can help you to clarify the nature of your CO claim, how you arrived at it, how it conflicts with military duties, and so on.

MAKE SURE YOUR LETTERS OF SUPPORT ARE REVIEWED BY A CO COUNSELOR OR LAWYER. Letters of support are meant to testify to the sincerity and integrity of your claim, but it is quite possible that a supporter of yours might inadvertently write something that has the opposite effect. For example, he or she might write that ever since childhood you have shown signs of being a CO. A supporter might think this is strong testimony but in fact, it would undermine your CO claim which must show that you have had a change of moral view, a "crystallization of conscience," *after* signing your enlistment contract. Therefore, it is important to have your letters of support reviewed by a CO counselor or lawyer before they are submitted to your commander.

PREPARE TO ANSWER CHALLENGING QUESTIONS. The

interviews with the chaplain and psychiatrist are supposed to be fact-finding in nature, not adversarial. Still, the interviewers may pose difficult questions, and if you do not answer these clearly and confidently, it might be taken as evidence of insincerity. This is even more the case when it comes to the hearing conducted by the investigating officer, who makes the initial recommendation. Questions you may be asked in the interviews or hearing include the following:

If you managed to be in the military this long, why not stick it out for a while longer? If you are concerned about not killing people, then why not work as a medic? Chaplains are in the military; are you saying that they are (that I am) breaking God's law? The Catholic Church teaches that the military is an honorable profession; so how can you make your claim on the basis of Catholic teaching? What about when Jesus got angry and drove the money changers from the temple (John 2:13-17)? What about when Paul writes that Christians should obey all civil authorities (Romans 13:1-2)? Are you against having police? What would you do if your sister or mother or wife were being raped? If a crazy man were about to blow up a school building, wouldn't you shoot him? What about Hitler? What about Osama? What about Sadam?

Each of these questions can be answered clearly, coherently, and convincingly. But it takes time to think them through. And it takes help from someone who has put a lot of thought into them—not so you can be “coached” on what to say, but so that you can explain to others the nature of your convictions in a thoughtful way. So again, we recommend close contact with a CO counselor or lawyer.

THINK THROUGH THE ISSUE OF SELECTIVE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION. A difficult question for Catholic COs has to do with Selective Conscientious Objection (SCO). Virtually all Catholics in the military subscribe to some version of just war theory, which entails the claim that some wars are unjust and some actions within wars are unjust. It also implies that people of conscience should refuse to participate in such wars and such actions. But the military (like Selective Service) does not recognize the right to refuse participating in wars or actions within wars that may be deemed unjust on just war grounds. This creates a moral conflict that requires the SCO to discern whether or not, or to what extent, he or she will cooperate with the military. Adhering to one's

conscience in these situations is commended by the Church (see this issue's editorial), but one must also be aware of the consequences resulting from this stand, such as dishonorable discharge, court-martial, and imprisonment. Here again, we recommend close contact with counselors, lawyers, and others who will support you in your struggle to follow your conscience.

CONTACT A NATIONAL ORGANIZATION. There are several organizations geared to assist Military COs. Some have a network of counselors and lawyers to help COs in the military. Others have the latest information on regulations and policies in the different branches of the military. The following four organizations are good places to start.

CCCO (Eastern Office)
Tel: (215) 563-8787
Fx: (215) 567-2096
<http://www.objector.org>

C CCO (Western Office)
Tel: (510) 465-1617
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The GI Rights Hotline
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In addition to these organizations, the Catholic Peace Fellowship stands ready to assist military COs. In particular, it will assist Catholics who want to base their CO claim on the teaching and example of Christ and the traditions of the Catholic Church.

On the night before he died, in the Garden of Gethsemane, while surrounded by people armed with swords and clubs, Jesus said to Peter, “put your sword away” (Mt 26:52). Ancient Christian tradition holds that when Jesus disarmed Peter, he disarmed all soldiers. We in the CPF stand ready to assist any and all soldiers who are ready to be in this way disarmed.

LITANY OF PEACE

*Unless we use the weapons of the spirit,
denying ourselves and taking up our cross and following Jesus,
dying with Him and rising with Him, men will go on fighting.*
— Dorothy Day, 1965

And when they go on fighting—as they do now—we who cry peace can grow weary. Yet in the saints we have hope and know that we are not alone. The way of peace is hard, but it has been walked—and with a measure of success. Consider the victories won by these three saints. In upcoming issues of *The Sign of Peace* we will continue to hold up holy ones of God who made of their lives an offering for peace. May they pray for us and show us the way that goes forward by going deeper.

ST. TELEMACHUS (also known as Almachius) was



stoned to death in the year A.D. 400 in Rome when he tried to stop a contest between gladiators in Rome. A hermit who had

come from the East, Telemachus entered the stadium and marched into the arena while the combatants were fighting. His objective was clear and practical: to expose and eradicate this unchristian, though popular, violence. Apparently, he was successful. Moved by his witness, the emperor Honorius abolished gladiatorial combat.

ST. ELIZABETH OF PORTUGAL, whose feast day of July 4 is often lost amid fireworks and flags, was a wise woman who knew how to broker peace.



She was born in 1271 and married King Denis. Close to the poor and ardent in calls for redistribution of land, Elizabeth also prevented war between Portugal and Castille at least four times by mediating with the kings. If talking was not enough, Elizabeth's desire for peace led her to ride into the field of battle between the opposing sides. For her winning spirit, she is among the patron saints of peacemakers to whom we can turn in times of war.

ST. TERESA BENEDICTA A CRUCE (EDITH STEIN) believed there were better ways to interact with people than force, violence, and punishment. She argued instead for education and for meeting people in the ordinary reality of their lives.

Edith's experiences taught her that when God reveals himself to us, we can not stay within ourselves but rather we must shower God's love on others in ecstatic acts of sharing. When in 1942 it became certain that the Nazis would seize Edith and imprison her at a concentration camp, she prayed that her death could be an offering for the end of World War II and for the coming of world peace.

ST. FRANCIS not only prayed for peace; he was an active peacemaker. In 1219, Francis traveled to Egypt in order to convert Sultan Malek-el-Kamel to Christianity and to end the 5th Crusade. There was little hope for success and Francis thought he was going to his martyrdom. Against all odds, the Sultan did not harm Francis, but rather came to respect and admire this man who proclaimed the Truth of Christ. Though Francis did not gain a conversion, he persuaded the Sultan to end the fighting. Unfortunately he had less success with the Christian army.



ALL YOU HOLY MEN AND WOMEN PRAY FOR US

TO OUR READERS

Whatever human costs it is certain to impose, an invasion of Iraq is likely, according to most people who study such things, to impose a fiscal burden of \$50 million on all those who pay the United States of America to do such things. In this context, we humbly aver that *The Sign of Peace* and its sponsor, the Catholic Peace Fellowship, are true bargains. The publication of *The Sign of Peace*, the publications and distribution of pamphlets and other CPF materials, and the maintenance and expansion of our Web site could all be subsidized with the merest fraction of the take from any Pentagon Coke machine. Those readers who wish to help us could do so by sending donations to the following address:

The Catholic Peace Fellowship
P.O. Box 41

Notre Dame, IN 46556

We thank you and offer you the sign of Christ's peace.

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—The Memling painting featured on pages 10-11 can be found in color on the Web Gallery of Art: www.kfki.hu/~arthp/art/m/memling/2middle2/13john.jpg

—the saint images found on page 18 are from the work of Ade Bethune, published by Sheed and Ward, ©1986 Ade Bethune.

—We drew on Robert A. Seeley's, *Advice for Conscientious Objectors in the Armed Forces*. Published by CCCO, it can be ordered by phone (888) 236-2226 or by email: girights@objector.org



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A MIGHTY LEAGUE OF
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