

Nuclear Weapons are Illegal

by Bill Hartman - long time active member of the Catholic Peace Fellowship, and participant in Plowshare Actions

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICANW) became a Globally Understood Treaty under The United Nations Charter on Friday, January 22, 2021. Most Nuclear Weapon Nations such as the USA and Russia have not offered to join the agreement or signature to the Treaty but a ratification of the Treaty was initially realized on September 26, 2020 with approximately 1/4 of the member nations who have a "nation seat" at the United Nations in New York. – continued on page 5



Philadelphia Art Museum, January 22, 2021

Exposing Our Country's Caste System

by Frank McGinty - long time active member of the Catholic Peace Fellowship

"Caste is insidious and therefore powerful because it is not hatred; it is not necessarily personal. It is the worn grooves of routine and unthinking expectation, patterns of a social order that have been in place for so long that it looks like the natural order of things."
Elizabeth Wilkerson, author of *Caste, The Origins of Our Discontent*.

While working in its Chicago office as a national correspondent for the *New York Times* several years ago, Isabel Wilkerson arranged by phone for an interview with a prominent businessman. When she arrived at the appointed hour, the mogul refused to meet with her. He was unable to believe that a *Times* correspondent would be a woman of color. – continued on page 2

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Exposing Our Country's Caste System – continued from page 1

A white man who had recently moved into a wealthy Midwestern suburb noticed a Black woman coming to his front door. He immediately gathered clothing items for the dry cleaner—presuming that the visitor, the wife of a prominent cardiologist coming to introduce herself as his next door neighbor and to welcome him to the development, was an employee of a dry cleaner's shop that was advertising a discount.

When the first Black person moved into our co-op apartment, she met her neighbor who asked “Whose aide are you?”

In the deep South, a mother used Brillo to scrub the hands of her daughter who had touched the hands of a Black child, “to eliminate the germs.”

A dominant-caste man raised in the Depression-era South had been taught the rules of the caste system and adhered to them as expected. When he went north in the mid-twentieth century and joined the military, he had to confront the mythologies of his upbringing. Up north on occasion, he found himself in situations where black people were permitted in the same work settings as the whites. “I thought I was entirely prepared emotionally and intellectually,” the man, an editor of *Look* magazine, recalled years later. But he discovered that he was a captive of his own conditioning, which he called a certain madness.

“Each time I shook hands with a Negro,” he said, “I felt an urge to wash my hands. Every rational impulse, all that I considered best in myself struggled against this urge. But the hand that had touched the dark skin had a will of its own and would not be dissuaded from signaling it was unclean. That is what I mean by madness.”

Four of these incidents are among the many related in *Caste-The Origins of Our Discontent*, by Isabel Wilkerson, who researched caste systems of India, Nazi Germany, and the U.S. The *New York Times* calls the book “an instant classic and almost certainly the keynote non-fiction book of the American century so far.”

Caste, Wilkerson writes, is social classification characterized by an automatic hierarchy placing whites as dominant and people of color as subordinate. Caste explores the structure of an unspoken system of human ranking and reveals how our lives are still restricted by what divided us centuries ago. “Modern-day caste protocols,” Wilkerson writes, “are often less about overt attacks or conscious hostility. They are like the wind, powerful enough to knock you down but invisible as they go about their work.”

Wilkerson asserts that the social constructs of race and caste are not synonymous, but that they “can and do coexist in the same culture and serve to reinforce each other. Race, in the United States, is the visible agent of the unseen force of caste. Caste is the bones, race the skin. Caste is the usher walking down the aisle in a darkened theater, flashlight in hand, to direct a person to their proper seat for a performance.”

Wilkerson's caste system is essentially two-tiered—dominant or white and subordinate or non-white. Caste and race continually blend into each other. Wilkerson defines a racist as someone who harms, mocks, or institutionalizes inferiority on the basis of race. A casteist is someone who upholds or benefits from an ingrained system of hierarchy, never challenging its assumptions. Caste is an insidious force that speaks outside of hate and intolerance; it is animated by practice and reflexes. It is not just the far right or trigger-happy cops; even the “good” can be casteists, such as the guest at a Tina Brown book party who asked the then Illinois state senator, Barack Obama, to fetch drinks.

Caste, says Wilkerson, is the granting or withholding of respect, status, honor, attention, privilege, resources, benefit of the doubt, and human kindness to someone on the basis of their perceived rank or standing in the hierarchy. Caste pushes back against an African-American woman who, without humor or apology, takes a seat at the head of the table speaking Russian. It sees as logical a sixteen year-old white teenager as store manager over employees from the subordinate caste three times his age.

Thus a slight exposure to Isabel Wilkerson's explanation of the caste system in the U.S.--a COVID-like virus infecting us all.

Also by Frank McGinty is “Scripture Scholar Corrects Christian Misreading the Trial of Jesus” on page 10

MERCY AND THE BOARD OF PARDONS

By Ellen Melchiondo - co-developer of the Women Lifers Resume Project of PA (www.wlrppa.org)

How does a government agency such as the Pennsylvania Board of Pardons practice “mercy” in the form of evaluating and recommending commutations of life without parole sentences to the governor?

To expect mercy from the Board of Pardons may seem like a contradiction and possible violation of the separation of church and state. Mercy appears in old religious texts, literature, song, and can even be a child’s name. Interestingly, nowhere is the ability to practice mercy a requirement to run for an elected office. Oddly, the state attorney general, an elected position, is a member of the Board of Pardons, and so is the lieutenant governor. Presently, the attorney general’s MO is to re-litigate the cases and the lieutenant governor’s motivation is to expose the inhumanity of life without parole sentences, without referring to moral leadership.

The other three members of the board are appointed by the governor. I am not sure if these other positions: corrections expert, victim advocate, and psychologist have to take any kind of oath that they will practice mercy in their unique position of power. In order to grant a pardon, the five-member board of pardons must vote unanimously to recommend a person’s petition before sending it to the governor for his signature. That means that one member can usurp this by voting no and so his or her vote is a powerful as the governor’s!

As each term of an elected official ends and a new administration begins, so does the direction, commitment, and philosophies of its members about how to do the job of extending mercy and what is required of the applicants. This can be very confusing and stressful for the applicants and advocates.

Currently, the Board of Pardons no longer wants letters of support until a public hearing is granted and does not allow the applicant’s narrative to discuss their religious practices as they pertain to their rehabilitation. At the moment, religion has no place for an applicant to express remorse, redemption or hope! The board does not view religion or faith as an example or extension of one’s conversion from criminal to peaceful citizen. Isn’t that a paradox?

So many prisoners credit rehabilitation to God, faith, and, more importantly, hope. I reflect on this topic not as a churchgoer, but rather as someone who believes that even the most marginalized, deprived, and repentant prisoners who took a life, or assisted, deserves mercy. I believe that they deserve a second chance to return to society and rebuild their lives as they see fit, albeit while on lifetime parole as required by the law.

At the same time, the Pennsylvania Office of Victim Advocate stipulates that prisoners may not write a letter of apology as an expression of their remorse or quest for forgiveness. Prisoners I know want their victims to know how sorry they are for the harm they caused. Their desire for forgiveness could aid their own rehabilitation to progress to another meaningful level. However such letters will be rejected by the Office of the Victims Advocate.

These two powerful offices could do the most good in our society, but they sure make it difficult not only for the prisoner, but their family and friends too. The job of the Board of Pardons is a glorious one. Sadly, their members seem oppressed by the pressures from forces that believe in prisons as a way to create some semblance or mirage of “public safety” and hold on to retribution forever. “Bear your soul” is the unofficial mantra of the board to the applicant for commutation. They expect the applicant to do this while at the same time see no place for religion or faith. What the heck is going on?

I believe the PA Board of Pardons has become secular. So what is their job description? How do they line up mercy with recommending commutation if there is no place for a prisoner to share their most profound purpose in life: to make amends, to ask for forgiveness and be a loving member of society once again-the type of person their God expects?

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END THE SIN AND CRIME OF STATE-SANCTIONED KILLING AND RACISM!

by Art Laffin - long-term member of the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker Home in Washington DC,
author, and participant in Plowshares actions

On December 11, 2020, Alfred Bourgeois was executed by lethal injection at the federal prison in Terre Haute, IN. The second Black man executed within a 24-hour period, he was pronounced dead at 8:21 PM. Outside the Terre Haute prison, the Terre Haute Death Penalty Resistance Network kept vigil in protest. In D.C., nine abolitionists kept vigil at Black Lives Matter Plaza near the White House decrying this act of state-sponsored killing of yet another Black man. We kept vigil in solidarity with all the groups and countless people throughout the U.S. and worldwide who have appealed to the Trump Administration and then Attorney General Barr to stop this execution and all previous and future state-sanctioned killings.

The blatant racism of the recent state-sanctioned murders does not go unnoticed, nor does the flawed legal process which sanctions their deaths. Since the resumption of the federal death penalty began in July of 2020 after a 17-year moratorium, four Black men have been executed by the Trump regime. Lezmond Mitchell, of the Navajo Nation, and the only Native American on federal death row, was also executed on August 26. A total of 10 federal executions have now been carried out during the last 6 months.

Christopher Vialva was executed on September 24. He was in his teens at the time of the crime for which he was convicted. His jury was not allowed to hear testimony that he was developmentally delayed as a result of having meningitis as an infant. Orlando Hall was convicted by an all-white jury and executed on Nov. 19. Brandon Bernard, who was 18 and an accomplice in the crime he was convicted for, was executed on December 10th, International Human Rights Day. Five jurors changed their minds about his death sentence and appealed that he not be executed. A prosecutor and his former warden opposed his execution. Alfred Bourgeois was intellectually disabled and therefore constitutionally ineligible for the death penalty. His jury never heard this evidence.

The sin of racism, which lies at the heart of these state murders, must be addressed, repented for and resisted. BLACK LIVES MATTER!

Before his execution, Brandon Bernard asked forgiveness and apologized to the relatives of the victims. See this link: <https://www.wlky.com/article/brandon-bernard-asks-for-forgiveness-apologizing-to-relatives-of-victims-before-execution/34937393#>

Also please see this link regarding the action that was held on Dec. 10, 2020 whereby the Department of (in) Justice was turned into a "crime scene": <https://www.breitbart.com/news/groups-call-for-end-of-politically-motivated-executions-in-d-c-protest/>.

The Trump Regime's federal execution killing spree was not over. Three more federal executions were planned (at the time of this writing) before Mr. Trump's term ends: on January 12th -- Lisa Montgomery; January 14th -- Corey Johnson; and January 15th -- Dusitn Higgs. (January 15 is also the actual birthday of Dr. King.). Protests were planned in Terre Haute, Washington, D.C., New York City and elsewhere to resist these executions. For more info about how you can help stop executions and abolish the death penalty please see: <https://catholicismobilizing.org/>.

In this New Year, let us renew our commitment to uphold God's command "Thou shalt not kill" and act in solidarity with sisters and brothers everywhere who are laboring to end all forms of state-sanctioned killing and racial injustice, and make God's reign of justice, love and peace a reality. Let us live in the hope that "Nothing will be impossible for God." (Lk: 1:37)

America: Pope Francis closes the door on the death penalty in all circumstances in 'Fratelli Tutti':
<https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2020/10/04/pope-francis-closes-door-death-penalty-fratelli-tutti>

Pax Christi USA Statement: White fragility cannot block the conversations we need to have on race in our church – July 12, 2020
<https://paxchristiusa.org/2020/07/12/pax-christi-usa-statement-white-fragility-cannot-block-the-conversations-we-need-to-have-on-race-in-our-church/>

Virtual Retreat Offering—"Finding Hope in Turbulent Times"

Camden's Sacred Heart Gathering for Peace and Justice is excited to offer a virtual retreat on the topic of "Finding Hope in Turbulent Times," on Saturday, February 20, 2021. The event will run from 10 am to 12 noon; 'Doors' open at 9:45 am.

Presenters will include Jim Forest, respected biographer of peace activists Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, Daniel Berrigan, and Thich Nhat Hanh and author of *The Ladder of the Beatitudes*. Forest was a member of the New York Catholic Worker and the Milwaukee 14 Draft Board Community. He will be speaking live from Alkmaar, The Netherlands.

Also leading the retreat will be Kathy Kelly, who is the founder of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, and an ambassador for peace in the Middle East. She has conducted multiple tours aiding the people of Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, and Yemen. Kelly has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. She will be speaking live from Chicago, Illinois.

To register contact:

catholicpeacefellowship.phila@gmail.com

Organizers request a free will offering to help cover costs.



Dan Berrigan by
Bob McGovern

Nuclear Weapons are Illegal - continued from page 1

"On October 24, 2020, the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons reached the required 50 states parties for its entry into force, after Honduras ratified just one day after Jamaica and Nauru submitted their ratifications. In 90 days, the treaty will enter into force, cementing a categorical ban on nuclear weapons, 75 years after their first use."

ICANW's Executive Director Beatrice Fihn welcomed the historic moment: "This is a new chapter for nuclear disarmament. Decades of activism have achieved what many said was impossible: nuclear weapons are banned." (ICANW was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on December 10, 2017 in Stockholm, Sweden.)

Setsuko Thurlow, a survivor of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, recently said: "I have committed my life to the abolition of nuclear weapons. I have nothing but gratitude for all who have worked for the success of our treaty." As a long-time and iconic ICAN activist who has spent decades sharing the story of the horrors Setsuko faced to raise awareness on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, this moment held particular significance. "This is the first time in international law that we have been so recognized. We share this recognition with other Hibakusha* across the world, those who have suffered radioactive harm from nuclear testing, from uranium mining, from secret experimentation." Survivors of atomic use and testing all over the world have joined Setsuko in celebrating this milestone. * Hibakusha are survivors of Hiroshima.

HEALING AND THE ENVIRONMENT

By Mary Hansbury, Ph.D. - taught and studied the Syriac Church Fathers in the US, the Middle East, and India since 1976.

The Syriac Church Fathers, especially St. Ephrem (4th cent. Iraq), cared deeply about the sickness and health of humanity. Ephrem also had a great concern for the environment. According to Ephrem, nothing in Creation exists in isolation. He saw a physical and spiritual bond between all of Creation. In fact, he says that Creation/Nature, like the Bible, reveals God's presence. Not that Creation is the Bible, but like the Bible it is part of revelation.

We don't see this type of thinking again until Teilhard de Chardin in our times. Chardin was a French Jesuit, who died 1955. His writings helped us to see the universe as the wonderful manifestation of the power, glory, and love of God. Like St. Ephrem, he saw the link between Scripture and Nature and how they reveal God's presence.

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In the Church there is the Latin Western Church (Rome), the Greek Eastern Church, and the Syriac Oriental Church, which is closer to the Hebrew traditions of the Bible. Ephrem writes in this Syriac tradition. In his writings he includes 70 references to Jesus as the One who heals: the heavenly Physician, the wise Physician, the great Physician, the good Physician, the pure Physician.

To St. Ephrem, healing is something divine and it can be called a “second creation.” God created the world and then Jesus fulfilled it by His healing, i.e. the “second creation.” For the fallen state of humanity, described as a sickness, the skilled Physician (Jesus) prepares medicines of repentance, including fasting and prayer, for the sores and wounds of human nature.

Some healing imagery is found in Western Christianity (Rome), but much more in the writings of the Syriac fathers. For instance, concerning penance, in the West there is predominately a juridical approach to penance. For the Syriac fathers, humanity is healed, rather than absolved, of the harmful effects of sin, the wounds inflicted by Satan.

Of course here healing is used to describe penance but Christ the Physician also cares deeply about physical illness. There are several Syriac homilies on healing by Christ in the New Testament.

This is what is meant by salvation history: spiritual sickness and the process of healing. The cause of spiritual sickness is sin, a result of the misuse of human free will and the influence of Satan. Ephrem understood Adam and Eve’s expulsion from paradise as a fall into a state of sickness. God then provides heavenly medicine for the healing of humanity through the Patriarchs and the Prophets, and then through His Son who is the Physician, and ultimately the Medicine of Life that is present in the Eucharist.

This incentivizes our prayer for all who are suffering with COVID: Jesus as the Physician who cares deeply, according to Ephrem.

What Ephrem says concerning Nature/Creation and the environment is of particular interest now as well. A paper was written in the periodical *Science* (1967) saying that Judeo-Christian theology was to blame for Western society’s “ruthlessness towards nature.” The basis for this is a reading of Genesis 1.26/28 in the Revised Standard Version (also in the New Jerusalem Bible). Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

Whereas in the Syriac Bible, it is Let us make humanity in our image and according to our likeness and as a result they shall have authority over fish... birds... sea, etc. This perspective sees humanity as God’s agent or representative within Creation, an agent to whom authority has been delegated. It is not a ticket for tyranny but a proper use of authority, inspiring love and not control and that humanity lives this out in the likeness of God. This reading from the Syriac Bible would have influenced St. Ephrem in his conviction that both Bible and Creation reveal God’s presence.

Experts are now saying that we know from past epidemics that changes in temperature, rainfall, and humidity can have profound effects on the spread of infectious disease. Climate change may have triggered COVID 19 to jump from animals to humans. So if we harm the environment we bring epidemics.

To quote from a contemporary Syriac bishop in India, Mar Gregorios:

“Technology is the way of humanizing the world of matter in time-space, and thereby of extending the human body to envelop the whole universe. But that humanizing and extension, if it is to be salvific, must find its proper culmination in man’s offering of himself and the universe to God in love. A secular technology of mastery of nature for oneself is the “original sin, of refusing our mediatory position between God and the universe, dethroning God, and claiming mastery for the sake of indulging our own cupidity, avarice and greed. The mastery of nature must be held within the mystery of worship. Otherwise we lose both mastery and mystery.”

For Further Reading: Sebastian Brock, *The Luminous Eye, The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem*, Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1992.

DOES THE MILITARIZATION OF CIVILIAN POLICE FORCE REPRESENT A FAILURE TO UNDERSTAND THE GOLDEN RULE?

By Dr. Ted Beal - Professor of Psychiatry at Georgetown University School of Medicine, and has worked at Walter Reed Army Medical Center with service men and women who were deploying to and returning from Iraq and Afghanistan

Black and white people on occasion encountered one another in the old world. Some Africans journeyed to Europe and a few whites went to Africa. In the new world following the settlement of America their lives became more interwoven. The initial divide which separated them was, among other things, physical, cultural, economic, religious, and ethnic. Each group had ideas about differences and equality.

Seeing the color black negatively has been a part of white culture for some time, most likely even before 'white' skinned people encountered 'black' skinned people. White then was the opposite of black and was valued. There is no reason to think that blacks were any different from whites and saw the absence of color as ugly. T. H. Breen in the Colonial British America, 1984 quotes a West African man describing a white man as looking like the devil.

After 1619 in the new world of what would become the state of Virginia, the white view of these differences would predominate. In contrast to the Pilgrims landing at Plymouth Rock in 1620 in search of religious freedom, the English who settled at Jamestown went there on business, to take advantage of the enormous resources in the new world and to make money. Using enslaved Africans, white indentured servants and Native Americans was an efficient and effective way to capitalize on their efforts. Initially there were varying degrees of freedom for these three groups. Slavery while primarily black was not entirely black nor permanent.

How slavery became 'black' and permanent in the United States is both complicated and straightforward. In 1676 Nathaniel Bacon, wealthy and white, entered a dispute over profits, taxes, and perceived favoritism with his cousin, William Berkeley, then colonial governor of Virginia. Bacon wanted Native Americans removed from their land so he could expand his business. The governor refused, fearing it would unite all the tribes against the government. Bacon organized a militia of black and white indentured servants and black enslaved people to fight the Native Americans in exchange for their freedom. Bacon's group burned Jamestown to the ground. Bacon soon after died but similar revolts followed.

Fearing the loss of their superior status and economic dominance the colonial elite and Virginia lawmakers shifted their strategy for maintaining the status quo. Rather than rely on so many white indentured servants from England they 'imported' more black slaves from Africa. They hoped this tactic of relying more on forced African labor and giving additional rights and status to poor white indentured servants, would make it less likely the two groups would unite in future rebellion against the colonial white elite. This is a basic school yard fight that had profound far reaching historical consequences not only for the victims, but for the bully and bystander alike.

Maintaining differences between groups of people based on color had not previously been enshrined in this manner. The effectiveness of this tactic, giving limited rights to indentured white servants, led them to identify as white with the possible hope of eventually being wealthier as well as being white.

Apparently, the idea of classifying people according to color was new. The Oxford English Dictionary printed the adjective white in reference to "a white man, a person of a race distinguished by a light complexion" for the first time in 1671. Before then Colonial charters and other official documents rarely referred to Europeans as white.

Slavery thus became black and permanent in Virginia, and eventually in the United States. In contrast, in Africa it was neither black only nor permanent. The process of making slavery black was intimately tied to maintaining the status quo, social dominance, and economic productivity. Democracy and capitalism were intertwined.

-continued on page 8 (editor's note: 'white' and 'black' in reference to people are constructs with no basis in biological reality)

Believing that white lives matter more than black lives became a cornerstone of life in America and the very fabric of the way life evolved. The Declaration of Independence, an aspirational document, declared that "All men were created equal" under the natural rights, those created by God. Our Constitution, however, formed at a time when slavery already existed, allowed slavery to persist. The Declaration acknowledged God's intention to treat other's as one would want to be treated, the Golden Rule. The Constitution was a compromise that launched the United States, yet mankind still had not implemented universal civil rights, a way to codify treating all of us as equals. The problem persists.

Over 700,000 men and women died in our American Civil War ultimately declaring at Gettysburg that for each of us to be free and equal all of us needed to be free and equal. The concept of white supremacy, nevertheless, had become so enmeshed in our collective self-image that it remained alive and well even though slavery was no longer legal. Notwithstanding the passage of the 13, 14, and 15th amendments granting citizenship to 'Blacks' and equal protection and voting to all, (except women) Jim Crow and the KKK continued as substantial expressions of white supremacy.

Now in the 21st century in the United States nearly 2/3's of the population professes that Black Lives Matter. One thing virtually all African Americans agree on is that policing of roles and behavior in America still is largely dictated by what people look like.

With each unjustified arrest of a person of color, we, as a society, are symbolically continuing to say we want you to remember that white lives matter more than black lives. When an embattled people feel a system is about to change, they become militaristic and violent.

The increased militarization of the U.S. civilian police force has been attributed to our involvement in recent wars, violent protests, and criminals with automatic weapons and body armor. And yet no demonstrated benefit to either the police or our citizens. Retiring military personnel and equipment to our civilian police force while admirable in intent compounds our domestic relationships. Militaristic policing of peaceful protest among other things has no place in a democracy.

Our differences should not be resolved violently. The Golden Rule should prevail over a militaristic response. While the equality of opportunity in the Declaration of Independence was aspirational, it is the charge to our generation to make it foundational. Reestablishing trust begins with treating one another as equals. We need to rethink how we police our own behavior. Be the change you want to see. *Editor Note: Chattel Slavery in the Americans was uniquely horrible i.e. selling families apart from each other.*

Kings Bay Plowshares

By Patrick O'Neill - father of eight children, cofounder and member of the Fr. Charlie Mulholland Catholic Worker House in Garner, NC.

As I write this article, I am just 10 days away from reporting to federal prison to begin serving a 14-month federal sentence for my role in the Kings Bay Plowshares anti-nuclear protest against the nuclear-armed Trident submarine. Our group of seven Catholic pacifists were arrested April 4, 2018 at Naval Station Kings Bay, the Southeast home port of six of the Navy's Trident submarine fleet.

One Trident sub carries a payload of D-5 nuclear missiles that could end life as we know it on planet earth. Trident is literally a diabolical doomsday machine embraced by most Americans as virtuous and godly. Such unquestioning assent to these weapons of mass destruction is idolatry of the most dangerous kind. The D-5 is a weapon of mass idolatry. Our action stands as a wake-up call to the nation that Trident is not proper to life and must be disarmed.

The seven of us entered the base on the 50th anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. We used household hammers, blood, spray paint and crime scene tape to expose the horror of Trident. Humanity is in a race against time. Either we abolish nuclear weapons or their eventual use will abolish us. The risk of nuclear weapons being deployed -- whether by accident, computer hacking or intentionally in a war -- has become an "acceptable risk" for our world.

Disaster almost struck on September 26, 1983, when a Soviet command center for a nuclear early-warning system erroneously reported a nuclear missile had been launched from the United States, followed by up to five more. - continued on page 9

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It was only the courageous and cautious response by Soviet Air Defense Forces Lieutenant Colonel Stanislav Yevgrafovich Petrov, who suspected a computer error was to blame, that prevented a "retaliatory" nuclear attack on the United States. Petrov, who died May 19, 2017, became known as "the man who single-handedly saved the world from nuclear war."

This is madness. Nuclear weapons are risky death-dealing props disguised as deterrents. The U.S. deploys them and, like other nuclear powers, we train our military personnel to launch them without question when ordered to do so. This is our peril every second of every day. Worse, our WMDs represent our willingness as a nation to inflict horror of an untold magnitude on our fellow humans.

The seven of us--Elizabeth McAlister, 81, grandmother and widow of iconic peace prophet, Philip Berrigan; Martha Hennessy, 65, granddaughter of Dorothy Day, a 20th Century Catholic pacifist who will likely be canonized by the Catholic Church; Fr. Stephen Kelly, S.J., 72, who like Pope Francis, is a Jesuit priest; and Catholic Workers Clare Grady, 60; Carmen Trotta, 56; Mark Colville, 58; and myself, were convicted in 2019 of three felonies and trespass. As of New Year's Day, six of us have been sentenced and three are incarcerated. On December 29, Fr. Kelly marked his 1000th day in jail since our arrest.

Since Trident is almost without opposition, we were compelled by our Catholic faith to come to St. Marys, GA to warn the world about the dangers of Trident. After cutting a lock and entering the base, the seven of us split into three groups.

Fr. Steve, Carmen and Elizabeth went to the "restricted area" where we believe weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) are kept in underground bunkers, cut a fence, entered the bunker area and held anti-nuclear banners until they were arrested by U.S. Marines.

Martha and Clare went to the base's administrative headquarters building, hung crime scene tape, taped an indictment of the base to the door, poured blood, and spray painted the words, "Love Your Enemy" on the sidewalk.

Mark and I went to an area we call the "Nuclear Shrine," a public memorial where the Navy has erected statues of D-5 missiles. We hammered on those statues in a symbolic expression of smashing idols. I also splashed blood on the base logo. It was our use of blood that was most unsettling to jurors trying to discern why seven followers of the Disarmed Christ would do such a thing. I told the jury what I see as the obvious truth represented by the blood. Of course, it represents the Blood of the Jesus shed for the collective sins of a fallen people – and the blood also makes real the purpose of Trident: massive destruction of God's Creation.

"I believe the blood was already there," I told the jurors. "I just made it more visible." During our October 2019 trial, the judge asked the jury pool of 73 people if any of them held strong personal opinions -- pro or con -- about nuclear weapons. Not one person raised a hand. Such a reaction reveals a tragic truth: most people have come to accept the fact all of us live in a world on 24/7 hair-trigger alert. The omnipresence of nuclear weapons has become "normal."

Trident is illegal under international law because treaties, which the U.S. has signed, prohibit the manufacture and deployment of WMDs. On January 22, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons will come into full force, declaring all nuclear weapons illegal under international law.

Pope Francis said the "very possession" of nuclear weapons is to be "firmly condemned." Christians are called to love their enemies. Today, the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists' "Doomsday Clock" stands at 100 seconds to midnight, the closest it's been to Armageddon in more than 50 years. Like lemmings hurtling to the sea, we humans act as if "nuclear posing" is the only way to insure peace for our children and grandchildren. Distracted by this presumption, we ignore the greatest threat to human survival: our own WMDs.

The Kings Bay Plowshares, acting on the words of the Old Testament prophet Isaiah, decided to "beat swords into plowshares." (Is. 2:4) Our actions were a minor transgression of the law, yet we are going to prison. The court is protecting Trident, and leaving creation dangerously vulnerable to nuclear attack.

Let us recall the prescient words of Dr. King: "The choice is no longer between violence and nonviolence, it is either nonviolence or non-existence."

Scripture Scholar Corrects Christian Misreading the Trial of Jesus

This article, edited by Frank McGinty, is an expansion on one CPF previously printed.

Recently deceased at 99, Father Sloyan was Professor of Religion at Catholic University, Temple and Georgetown.

When CPF asked Catholic scripture scholar, Father Gerard Sloyan, for permission to print excerpts from his books, [1] “The Trial of Jesus” [Fortress Press], [2] “The Crucifixion of Jesus: History, Myth, Faith” [Fortress Press], and [3] ‘Jesus Word Made Flesh’ [Liturgical Press], Father Sloyan wrote: “Of course the answer is ‘yes’ - There is the possibility that the revised version of Jesus on Trial is the most important book I managed to write...with its stress on the passion narrative of the four gospels as late first century ‘passion plays’ rather than the historical chronicles of Jesus’ last days and hours. Its portrait of the historically improbable crowd shouting ‘Crucify him’ has helped create a Christian[i.e. Gentile] antipathy to Jews that grew more intense with the passage of centuries.” Here are excerpts from Fr. Sloyan’s books:

“The literal interpretation of symbolic material—taking metaphor for fact—has probably caused more harm than any other practice in religious life. This seems to be the case in the trial narratives. The real harm that continues to be done consists in the natural supposition of worshippers that they are hearing historical chronicles correct in every detail. What they are hearing is Semitic stories told by Semitic storytellers adept at multiplied metaphor and the interspersion of snatches from scripture as fulfillments of ancient prophecy. Hearers are understandably led to believe that they are privy to what the high priest, what Pilate, Peter, and Jesus said, each in his exact words.[1]

“The writers of the Gospels.....reported that Jesus died through a miscarriage of Roman justice, but they featured the villainy of the temple priesthood and the Jewish elders even more. By adding in the jeering mobs with their cries, ‘We have no king but Caesar,’ His blood be on us and on our children,’ and ‘Crucify him’ the Gospel writers outdid themselves....The tragedy of those colorful accounts is that they have haunted Christians ever since and worked horror upon Jews.”[1]

“Once Pilate has asked the crowd, ‘What has he done?’ and has seen that his attempts to release Jesus are going nowhere, Pilate performs a characteristically Jewish gesture—one totally unlikely to have been done by a pagan Roman—washing his hands publicly as a sign of innocence of ‘this man’s blood.’ Mention of the practice is found several times in the Scriptures [Duet 21:6-7; Ps 26:6; for a declaration of innocence of bloodshed Josh 2:19; Acts 20:26]. When the people cry with one voice in response to Pilate’s actions, ‘his blood be upon us and our children,’ they use a phrase that is likewise a claim of innocence, meaning may our family suffer the consequences for generations if we are guilty of this crime. Nowhere in the Scriptures does it mean acknowledgement of guilt. Because a gentile Church has been ignorant of this as well as many other Semitic locutions, it has tragically misread its own biblical heritage. Mathew attributes the outcry to ‘the whole people,’ meaning the assembled crowd, but while he is at pains to implicate the Temple priesthood in Jesus’ death he scarcely intends to say that the Jewish people are accepting the guilt of one of their own for generations to come. But that is the way gentile Christians have understood it, to the pain and persecution of Jews at Christian hands for centuries. Mathew, like the other evangelists, is very much a Jew. He is familiar with the Roman oppression of his people in the land of Israel, even though he, like the others, does not write from there. He has no interest in multiplying their woes, hence, could not conceivably have created a shout calculated to accomplish it.” [3]

“The outcry, ‘Crucify him’ could scarcely have come from Jewish throats applauding one more cruelty of the oppressor. If it was heard at all in that noisy mob scene it would have been, ‘Crucify them,’ directed not at Jesus but at the two who died with him.”[3]

What is to be hoped for in reducing Jewish-Christian tensions from a scholarly inquiry like the present one? Much in every respect. If such study were to be engaged in seriously not only by pastors and other preachers but by religion teachers and the producers of catechetical materials, much would be accomplished. But much more would be done if agencies charged with the public prayer life of the churches...were to keep a careful eye out for the lyrics of hymns, sermon aids for preachers, and above all the reading of a lengthy Gospel Passion narrative on Palm Sunday or Good Friday. There still live in the United States and Canada the descendants of

- continued on page 11

Scripture Scholar Corrects Christian Misreading the Trial of Jesus – continued from page 10

European Jews who have learned that their parents or grandparents stayed behind bolted doors on Good Friday in fear of marauding bands of thugs. The thugs were often illiterate. What they heard in church or catechism class gave them what they thought was a free pass to thuggery....The real harm that continues to be done consists in the natural supposition of worshippers that they are hearing historical chronicles correct in every detail. What they are hearing is Semitic stories told by Semitic storytellers adept at multiplied metaphor and the interspersion of snatches from scripture as fulfillment of ancient prophecy. Hearers are understandably led to believe that they are privy to what the high priest, Pilate, Peter, and Jesus said, each in his exact words. A dramatic reading by three readers at lecterns is undoubtedly interesting because the story is interesting. Far more interesting and, more importantly, faith-nourishing would be a short selection from each Synoptic Gospel on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday every year [in Holy Week] and a homily or sermon in exposition of how the individual Evangelists created a faith literature from their already theologically developed sources. A book like the present one could provide immense help in this.On Palm Sunday, a seven minute prior instruction on what to listen for and what not to believe as historical fact will do." [1]

Remembering Rev. Neil Ver'Schneider, S.J. (1966) 1931–2021 by John P. McNamee - long time member of the Catholic Peace Fellowship and Pastor Emeritus of St. Malachy's

Jesuit Founder, St. Ignatius Loyola, is remembered as saying that if any decision from on high curtailed his mission and work he, Ignatius Loyola, would quietly respond in obedience and move to what was next presented to him.

When Gesu Parish was closed those years ago, Fr. Neil responded in like manner.

Since the Gesu Parish School, sustained by the Society of Jesus, remained intact, Fr. Neil continued his faithful ministry to those students, their parents, their teachers.

His official ministry had included being a Parochial Vicar at Gesu Parish. Perhaps in those days, it was called Assistant Pastor. St. Malachy was now the official designated parish and Fr. Neil had no designated ministry there.

But that was not Neil Ver'Schneider. What he did was take his other ministries to St. Malachy with him informally. We can number some of them:

The Holy Week Services including the Good Friday Way of the Cross on the streets – Gesu Church to St. Malachy

Parish Mass on Sunday at Malachy, taking his turn at presiding and preaching. He was a devoted and prepared homilist.

Hospitality at Malachy where Fr. Neil was social with all, occasionally helping with food service. He provided transportation, often door to door service, for Gesu Parishioners now needing the somewhat longer walk or ride across Broad Street.

Men's retreats for the fellows he brought with him from Gesu to Malachy. Jesuit Houses were often available for weekends for these gatherings. And Gesu and Malachy men, old and young, loved Frs. Neil and George with them.

What was most obvious about Fr. Neil was his attractive silence. A man of few words.

When the two Sunday Masses at St. Malachy became one and neither of us was presiding, we were nearby in pews with the congregation and closer to the sound system. Report is that the people loved to see us among them, both of us together in the pews with them.

May Father Neil's soul and all the souls of the faithful departed, rest in peace. Amen.

Fr. Neil Ver'Schneider, S.J. (1966) 1931 – 2021

by Ava M. Murray-Z

Walking though the hall of the Gesu School on my way to Bible Study with Fr. Neil, I often spent time looking at the new photographs and new art work, so many images of black excellence that affirmed the student body of the Gesu. At the end of Bible Study, I will leave Gesu filled with the spiritual food of the Bible reflections, the fellowship of the Bible study community and the powerful reinforcement that this black woman was a "Child of God".

Fr. George Bur, S. J. on reflecting on the life of Fr Neil reminded us about Fr. Neil's constant search for art pieces and stories that would illustrate the history of Black Catholics and God's love for people of color. I share this passion with Fr. Neil. I have searched for years for a black angel or similar image of holiness. I am reminded of this search each time I observe the six angels on the altar; the memory of Fr. Neil, will also renew my commitment to persevere in my search for images that reflect the diversity of God's creation.



Good Friday 2009 Way of the Cross from the Gesu to St. Malachy's second from the right Lee Hoinacki and Fr. Neil on the right

John J. Wanenchek 1945 – 2020

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/inquirer/obituary.aspx?n=john-j-wanenchak&pid=197284821>

John, a longtime member of Sacred Heart's Peace Community, Catholic Peace Fellowship and dedicated to various forms of activism and the humble tasks of folding and mailing the CPF Newsletter, passed away suddenly on Sunday, November 22, 2020. Survived by his daughter, Sharon (her husband James), and his four brothers, John was avid reader. He served in the US Army after graduating South Philadelphia High; retired from the Sunoco Oil Company. The following excerpts in St. Malachy's Parish Bulletin, Dec 20, 2020 are from an email to pastor Fr. Tom Kletzel from Fr. Vince Guest, pastor of Sacred Heart in Camden, New Jersey: continued on page 13.

“Our parishioner and good friend, John Wanenchek collapsed beneath the cross in the back of the church shortly after the 10:30 Mass...parishioners...EMT’S responded quickly...acted heroically, but they were unsuccessful... John’s death was pronounced at Cooper Hospital... ..this good and faithful man, literally died at the foot of the Cross...on Christ the King Sunday. John did not die alone, but was in a place and church he loved, surrounded by caring friends who prayed for him. Now he prays for us. ...John was a quiet man...would help anyone... Please keep John and his family in your prayers.” Thank you, Fr. Vince Guest.



John J. Wanenchek, second from the left, standing in solidarity in front of the Supreme Court

Good Friday 2019 Way of The Cross: Joe Bradley second from the left - Fr. Neil on the right



John J. Wanenchek

After an hour ...
wrestling with angels
and demons

Others arriving
summoning to
the smaller room

The Daily Mass
a gathering of two
or five or eight

Sitting Quaker like
A round small table
become an Altar

Surfacing unnoticed
from the dark church
he says to no one but himself:

“I don’t know that
I can continue to do this”

Yet, continue he does:

Dark churches beach
walks bookstores
retreat houses

And upstate a Russian
Orthodox Monastery
plumbing his origins

Work social friendships
peace walks protests
peace mailings friendly
meals – his treat

Everything is
“sustained prayer”
as one writer called it

And restless, yes
but restless like
a thoroughbred
in the starting gate

John P. McNamee
January 2021

Way of the Cross with Fr. Neil Ver'Schneider, S.J. 1931 – 2021

by F. Zampetti - Pierre Toussaint Men's Group

On a typical Good Friday the weather is brisk, the sun often breaks through the clouds and Fr. Neil is in front of the Gesu Church next to St. Joseph's Preparatory School (SJP) handing out green binders with the text for our annual Way of the Cross. Good Friday 2019 Joe Bradley would start us off with the first reading before we would carry the cross to each of the stations as we walk through the streets of North Philly on our way to St Malachy's. That year was only less typical because Fr. Neil and Joe were no longer able to make the 15 block walk but instead met us over a St. Malachy's where the Stations were prayed inside the church. Those of us walking would include some St. Malachy's parishioners, St. Malachy's / Gesu Men's Group, members of the SJP and Jesuit Community and Catholic Peace Fellowship, and that year Fr. McNamee (as well as often in the past with Fr. George Bur).

We walk, stop, read, pray and morn at places where mothers of our community lost their children to gun violence. Stops at Freedom Theater and the Broad Street 'Y' where we would also give thanks for the creativity of the community and then praying for our students, teachers and staff of our schools public, Gesu, St. Malachy's, SJP and the nearby universities as well as community empowerment groups like POWER. Each of us taking turns to carry the wooden cross, singing and reading the text Fr. Neil organized.

Excerpts from the Way of the Cross:

"... deceived by the fear of not having enough for ourselves, we often fail to share our resources with our neighbor in need. We put excessive profits above paying living wages. To balance our budgets we cut our social programs and neglect fixing our infrastructures rather than enact just taxes on the wealth resulting in more poverty and a widening gap between the very wealth and the rest of society. ...We pray for those who are marginalized and ignored by society. We pray for those who are working to provide better housing and employment in our community. We ask that work begun for the homeless and those living in shelters may speedily produce good results. We pray for those who make decisions about our neighborhoods that they may listen to those who live here."

"We know that violent conflict begins within each one of us, as the Book of James tells us: 'You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. You covet something and can't obtain it, so you engage in disputes and conflicts.' In the United States, our budget resources are misspent to maintain a colossal military machine instead of being directed toward the urgent need of our people and communities. It is also a form of violence when companies arbitrarily dismiss massive numbers of employees for the purpose of enhancing their stock market performance. ...Violence cannot be redeemed; it can only be abolished. We pray that individuals and governments will turn less toward violent repression, jails and neglect of those on the margins as they learn to trust God for their needs and to respect the dignity of all people above the false gods of financial profit, consumerism and military security."

"Lord, we lift up to you all those in our neighborhood who are burdened by the physical weaknesses... Help us to learn how to better assist our elderly and the homebound ... All of us experience powerlessness in the face of the evils that surround us. Help us to learn that the source of our strength is you and your way. Help us to shoulder our responsibilities with the love that you show us.

Governing authorities, too, are responsible before God to be voices for the voiceless, 'defend the rights of the needy,' and uphold justice and righteousness against the powers of greed and oppression in all its forms including slavery and war. Today millions of marginalized and voiceless people, refugees, immigrants, especially women and children, continue to carry crosses of poverty, disease and death, while leaders of the nations give their attention to lesser concerns. Help us, Lord, to become a people, a nation that changes its culture of greed and selfishness to one that mirrors God's care and mercy."

"How easy it is to denounce structural injustice, institutionalized violence, social sins! All ... true, but where are the roots of social sin? In the heart of each human being. We are all sinners and we have all contributed our bit to the huge accumulation of crimes and violence in our country. Thus salvation begins with us ... uprooting the sin in each of us, seeing each person with a deep sense of respect for their dignity, whether rich or poor, native born or immigrant, refugee or citizen of any faith, color, creed or language -all human beings like us. ...We lift up to you, O Lord, all those who feel crushed beneath the weight of their problems."

"...turn us from our constant buying and selling, our coming and going, our eating and drinking, our dreadful normalcy in the face of such a multitude of people suffering from man-made disasters of war, neglect, hunger, sickness, from the lack of shelter, jobs and education. ...Open our ears that we may hear the cry of the poor, the refugee, the immigrant. Help us, the 6% of the world's people who consume some 40% of the world's resources, to lift the burden ... of the world's poor ... caused by our excesses."

"...we confess that we too often attempt to enforce our will through the violence of angry words and selfish acts. On a larger scale, violence and injustice are destroying your sons and daughters. We pray that those directing the nations of our world will redirect national priorities, reduce military spending, and use these resources to bring about an economic order that is just and sustainable without regard to race, creed, color or national origin. We ask, God, help us to recover a sense of seeking the common good for every person and all of your creation."

"In the heart of the city, we are surrounded by places of finance, commerce and profit. On this day of Christ's blood, we make the connection which the Frenchman Leon Bloy intended when he said, 'Money is the blood of the poor', we want to connect Christ's passion with our greed, our excess, our consumerism, our waste. We want to know, to face fully how much of the third world's misery is in great part the work of multinational corporations and our silence. Let us remember in our prayer those who try to live simply so that others may simply live, as our friends at the Catholic Worker. And let us, ourselves, find ways to live our daily lives more simply."

"Lord, we lift up all those who struggle with addictions of any kind. We lift up their struggle to seek and accept healing. We ask you to bless the recovery programs, especially the 12 step programs that meet in our churches and buildings throughout the city..."

"...Yet millions of people remain nailed to a cross of poverty and hunger. Each day 40,000 children die needlessly of poverty-related illnesses. The relationship between our excess and their poverty must be examined in the light of biblical faith..."

The day after Fr. Neil passed from complications from COVID19, I called Fr. McNamee to let him know. He challenged us to write about Fr. Neil in the newsletter and shared a story about how Fr. Neil encouraged him to write on his sharing the rectory with traveling priests, Lee Hoinacki and others as an example of Christian hospitality; a 'clerically' risky endeavor at the time. While Fr. Neil was not a member of CPF he often encouraged us in the men's group to join the CPF retreats to be our group's spring retreat. As we considered Fr. Mac's challenge, we pondered Fr. Neil's particular peace activism. His service to communities who have suffered deep structural injustice through his role as priest and educator, his bible studies and retreats connecting environmental and social justice with an interior peace brought by faith and as a typical Jesuit emphasizing works for peace and justice are how we show Divine Love.

A Poetic Surprise by Frank McGinty - CPF newsletter committee

It comes as no surprise that Joe Biden's inauguration would have flashes of poetry. The young Joe Biden had overcome stuttering by reciting the poetry of William Butler Yeats, and he is fond of quoting Seamus Heaney's poetic insight that "Once in a lifetime,/ The longed- for wave of justice can rise up/ And hope and history rhyme."

In the inaugural address he lamented "lies told for power and profit", and said, "Politics doesn't have to be a raging fire" and hoped "We must end this uncivil war".

But the poetic surprise came from the 22 year-old National Youth Poet Laureate, Amanda Gordon, whose poem, "The Hill We Climb" exclaimed, "But one thing is certain:/ If we merge mercy with might/ And might with right/ then love becomes our legacy/ And change our children's birthright." - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZ055illiN4> - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwOvBv8RLmo>

January 2021 - CPF by Bill Hartman - CPF newsletter committee

Catholics, devoted to the *Gospels* and *The Ladder of the Beatitudes* need to appreciate that the 'Meek' represent souls committed to nonviolence. Catholic Peace Fellowship was started by Thomas Merton, the Berrigans and Jim Forest in 1965. Now, 56 years later CPF has always made the tenets of nonviolence the very bricks of its foundation. Living in 2021 at the end of the Presidency of Donald Trump, those devoted to peacemaking need to keep speaking, acting and seeking a conversion of the heart and mind for our self, our neighbors and those beyond our reach. We need to reject the contagion of fear and anger in our society as we work for justice, care for the homeless, shelter the refugee and seek to visit the imprisoned. Most assuredly, we need to daily wake and walk in prayer.

What I Learned in College in 2020

By Scott Fina

Scott's commentary has been published in the Santa Maria Times and its affiliated presses in California

It had been decades since I taught government to college students at Temple University, so I was unsure how it would go when I took a part-time faculty position at a local community college in Santa Maria on the Central Coast of California last year. Wow did 2020 prove my fears groundless!

2020 was a year with an impeachment trial, contested presidential election, controversial Supreme Court appointment, revolving door of top federal officials, decennial census, gridlocked and finger-pointing Congress, widespread protests and riots, and record-setting economic recession—all with a pandemic exploding in the background.

A cadaver could have held college students spellbound as an instructor with such political drama leaping off the pages of our government textbook in real time!

My government class quickly took on a life of its own. The students were primed to have their eyes opened. One especially stood out for me. She was always among the first to sign onto our Zoom sessions—and usually the last to sign out. She seemed engrossed in the course content and class discussions. It was no surprise she would prove to be an excellent student. But she did surprise me in another way.

It happened when the class was analyzing a case reviewed by the U.S. Supreme Court this year on whether to allow the Trump Administration to cancel the DACA program (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). DACA was adopted by the Obama Administration through executive action. It protects certain undocumented immigrants who came to our country as children from deportation.

I chose the DACA case for study because it was loaded with themes of checks and balances on the power between the branches of our national government, and a constitutional question of due process. It was also technical and dry—until that special student informed the class that she had DACA status, and worked picking strawberries to support herself and her family.

Suddenly this was more than just an academic exercise. One of us stood at the heart of the matter: a breathing and walking subject of the inquiry into who is an American.

On days when I sat comfortably in my armchair prepping classes and grading papers, that student hurried along rows of berries, bending to fill crates in the early morning chill and midafternoon heat. My work meant picking up a couple of extra bucks in my semiretirement; her work was part of the very backbone of the economy of the Santa Maria Valley (known worldwide for its strawberry production).

My student and I were on two very different sides of the same coin of the American Dream.

She made me think of my ancestors who came from Ireland during the Potato Famine, debarking penniless from a ship docked on the East Side of New York, and my great grandfather from Sicily who was later processed at Ellis Island in the New York Harbor. Here I was teaching a young, industrious immigrant thousands of miles away from where my folks first touched American soil. My student literally had her hands in that soil, and was seeking exactly what my ancestors had come here for.

Too often I take my American citizenship for granted. Most of us never earn this privilege, but inherit it. Others merit it by their work and contribution to our society, yet are denied the benefit of possessing it.

Donald Trump should never be forgiven for his disparaging treatment of immigrants, nor should Joe Biden for his complicity in the record number of deportations carried out by the Obama Administration (despite DACA). But our presidents don't define us.

We Americans at large ultimately carry the responsibility for our unjust, unworkable and hypocritical immigration policy. Let's get this policy fixed!

John Wanenchak

After Mass and CPF meeting at St. Malachy's 2019

We encourage passing on our newsletter
and since that may include black and white printouts:
for active links and color images please see our website.

www.cpfphila.com

catholicpeacefellowship.phila@gmail.com



Dear Catholic Peace Fellowship Supporter,

With the passing last year of Joe Bradley, a founding member of CPF and its newsletter and then losing John Wanenchak, a force behind the mundane tasks of its mailing, a few of us came together to form a committee to pursue keeping their legacy. Having surveyed the readership this past Fall on delivery preferences, we are making a final attempt to reach all who have not responded before we discontinue a comprehensive USPS mailing of the newsletter with the hope we get everyone's email address (or a request otherwise) so we can transition to a primarily website and email based distribution; (please see the other side for more info and a final survey). These changes will cut costs and simplify distribution and make it easy to forward and share with others.

After this first issue of 2021 we hope to turn our attention to the website for which the committee has temporarily taken responsibility. Other CPF projects include plans to resume CPF annual retreats using zoom; if you are interested in helping and or joining CP Fellowship's Zoom Meetings on the second Sunday of the month, please let us know and check out our website, www.cpfphila.com.

Many of you have responded and offered to write for the newsletter, thank you again and we encourage others to consider. We hope to publish our second electronic newsletter in the Spring of 2021. Going forward, our goal is to offer theme-related content such as the environmental crisis, gun violence, racial justice, LGBTQ individuals and women in the Church, and peace activism in our Philadelphia region and beyond. If you have an article you would like to submit for inclusion in the Spring 2021 issue, please submit to CPFnewsletter@gmail.com by Sunday, March 14, 2021. If you would like to pitch an idea prior to the deadline, please send it to us by the end of February so we can give you feedback. Articles should be limited to 1,000 words or less and please include a brief one line bio. Photographs and/or graphics submissions are also encouraged. We are looking forward to continuing the respected tradition established by CPF, as well as adding timely content also with the hope to expand membership. If we cannot fit everything in a printed format for our friends in prison and other subscribers who cannot receive email or access the website (including recent donors who we are hoping to hear from), we can post to our website until we get a chance to include in the next printed version for those who need it.

Another change we must make because CPF presently has no mechanism (or compelling reason) to have an appeal letter in 2021. Our plan is to phase out the mailed appeal letter and to simply include a how to donate notice on the website and at the end of each newsletter; updates in this regard will be posted on the website. Going forward we hope to opt for specific appeals in the newsletter and on the website; for example creating memorial honorariums in memory of our beloved founding and active members who have passed away. We could entertain the possibility of using such honorariums to give to activists, particularly students and those of modest means, to support their efforts for peace and racial, economic, gender and environmental justice along with other forms of needed social activism. Your thoughts, suggestions and help are welcome and encouraged.

Thank you,

CPF Newsletter and CPFNL Website Subcommittee

Catholic Peace Fellowship and CPFNL expenditures are as follows. Membership in Pax Christi USA, website maintenance, media/meeting center and mailing address (St. Malachy's), event costs/ refreshments, honorariums with travel cost and other reimbursements for guest speakers for our annual retreats in addition to the cost of Newsletter USPS mailings to our friends in prison and other subscribers who need this continued service. Reminders: donations are NOT tax deductible and all in-person events are postponed. Thank you for your interest and past support,

CPF treasurer

catholicpeacefellowship.phila@gmail.com

The CPF Newsletter Editorial Committee:

Phyllis Grady, Bill Hartman, Frank McGinty, Barbara Sheehan.

Thank you again for your response to our September 13, 2020 survey of the readership. We thank you for your notes of support, appreciation and even the constructive criticisms. We also ask for your patience and pardon especially if you have tried to email us or have not been able to access the website; we humbly ask you to try again; see text option below. If you have not had a chance to respond to our earlier inquiry OR if you have another spare moment, we have added more questions to this follow up and final survey. We graciously invite you to update your response; please send your answers to the following questions via email (which can be copied & pasted from the website): cpfnewsletter@gmail.com (please include your name and address and CPF SURVEY in subject line).

For those of you who generously sent a gift with your response to our last questionnaire or past appeals,
Thank You Again,
Catholic Peace Fellowship catholicpeacefellowship.phila@gmail.com (Please use this email for all non-newsletter correspondence)

Q1. Did you received this newsletter through a friend / colleague and would like to be a new subscriber? (Yes or No): _____

Q2. Have you provided us your email address so we can insure you will receive the next CPF newsletter? (Yes or No): _____

Note to Previous Subscribers: without your email address or your request to continue to receive a printed version, we cannot insure you will receive future newsletters since we need to discontinue comprehensive USPS mailings with the exception of those who have informed us of a need to receive a printed copy, archiving institutions and of course for our incarcerated brothers and sisters.

Q3. Are you interested in submitting articles for CPF newsletters, images or news quips about upcoming peace & justice events to be included in CPF newsletters? (Yes or No): _____ (If your answer is Yes, please consider providing us your phone number.)

Q4. Do you know of anyone who would like to receive the newsletter OR who should have and has not received this latest issue and our last survey OR has not has a chance to respond to our last survey? (Yes or No): _____
(If your answer is Yes, please pass on the PDF / link and our new email OR contact us on their behalf: cpfnewsletter@gmail.com.)

Q5. Have you had a chance to see our website? (Yes or No): _____ (If Yes, please share any comments you may have.)

Q6. Are you interested in Future CPF Zoom Retreats or other events? (Yes or No): _____ (If Yes, please email us at catholicpeacefellowship.phila@gmail.com so we can try to keep you posted BUT Please also regularly see our website for the announcements as/when they are posted.)

Q7. The CPF meets on the second Sunday of every month, starting at noon (Philadelphia time). Would you like to join in our meetings by Zoom? (Yes or No): _____ (If Yes, email us at catholicpeacefellowship.phila@gmail.com so we can send a Zoom Invite.)

Q8. Are you interested in volunteering to help with advice for or logistics of the newsletter, virtual retreats, the website and or CPF's mission in general? (Yes or No): _____ (If Yes, please share your contact info, desired focus and thoughts with us.)

Q9. Do you have any ideas, thoughts, concerns, comments and or criticisms? (Yes or No): _____ (If Yes, please share with us.)

We thank you again for your time and attention; please be patient with us for it will take time for us to respond.

If you wish to unsubscribe, (for you know one can access the newsletter at www.cpfphila.com), still please take a moment to let us know via email or text to 609 682-3631 (we will need your name and address to remove you from the subscribers list). This option can also be used to help subscribers contact us. Please note 609 682-3631 text option expires at the end of March 2021.

Thank You, CPF Website Sub-committee of the CPF Newsletter Committee