



St Francis of Assisi, wood cut print by Robert McGovern

October - the Month of Francis

"Laudato Si" - Examen

CPF Retreats on Pope Francis Encyclicals - Part 1
page 2

"Fratelli Tutti" - Examen

CPF Retreats on Pope Francis Encyclicals - Part 2
page 3

The Decolonization of Palestine: Towards a One-State Solution

by Jeff Harper – page 7

Supersessionism Rejected

—Judaism Affirmed

excerpts from the work of Gerard Sloyan – page 9

Judaism Affirmed

by Frank McGinty – page 10

Is it anti-Semitic NOT to criticize the actions of the State of Israel?

by admirer of Lois and Cy Swartz - page 10

The Culture of Encounter is the Foundation of Peace

By Frank McGinty, Catholic Peace Fellowship

Pope Francis teaches us that a culture of encounter, based on the fact that all people without exception have been given the command to do good and avoid evil, is the foundation of peace in the world. Human life is a gift of the creator, who has given each of us a conscience which imposes on everyone this obligation.

Francis, in a homily in 2013 on the feast of St. Rita, explained the Gospel reading of that day in which Jesus's disciples prevent a person not of their group from doing good. "He is not one of us," they said. "He cannot do good."

Jesus tells the disciples not to stop him, but to "let him do good."

The Pope says that Jesus is correcting the disciples' somewhat intolerant attitude that doing good is a virtue of the faithful exclusively. Jesus widens their vision by asserting the obligation of everyone to choose what is good, and avoid what is evil.

Francis raises relevant objections regarding this errant reasoning of the disciples in the Gospel for us today. How can they do good, they are not Catholic?...or, they are not Christian...or, they are atheists. The Pope replies, "Yes they can. Everyone can do good. Everyone must do good."

continued on page 2

The Culture of Encounter - continued from page 1

“The duty to do good” says Pope Francis, “is a principle that unites all of humanity beyond the diversities of ideologies and religions and fosters a culture of encounter which is the foundation of peace.”

Demonizing certain groups as incapable of doing good is a wall that leads us to war and killing in the name of God. This is simply blasphemy according to the Holy Father.

“Christ has redeemed us all. All. We have been created children in the likeness of God, and the blood of Christ has redeemed us. And all of us have the duty to do good.”

“This commandment I believe,” says the Pope, “is an excellent way to peace.”

The argument asserts that all will live peacefully within the human family if they follow the dictates of conscience. This foundational duty urges the people of our nation to deal honestly with the seemingly implacable conflicts in, for example, Afghanistan and Israel, and with our unfinished conversion from the slavery in our past and our racism in the present. It requires that our politicians have charity for their opponents and always speak truthfully, and it urges us as individuals to respond serenely to rifts in our own families and in the Catholic community over the Clinton or Trump and Biden or Trump electoral choices.

The culture of encounter means that those considered to be enemies, if approached in prayer and fraternity, would no longer be targets of our hateful speech. They should not be written off as irredeemably evil. They are as capable of conversion from their faults as we from our own. The culture of encounter offers a directive for dialoging with those with whom we disagree.

To walk in the way of peace we must purify our own intentions, extend the hand of friendship to our supposed adversaries, and cast out our own eye's beam before finding a splinter in another's. We must meet others in prayer if not in dialogue. The culture of encounter is a way to peace.

Pope Francis concludes his homily by urging us to ask St. Rita, patroness of impossible causes, for the grace that all persons may do good and meet each other charitably, remembering that we all are children of the same Father. May Saint Rita grant this grace, which seems almost impossible, that all, who must do good, will.

"Laudato Si" - Examen

CPF Retreats on Pope Francis Encyclicals - Part 1

CPF's Annual Spring 2021 Retreat "Laudato Si – Examen" was held virtually on April 17, 2021 and led by Fr. George Bur S.J who guided an online gathering using "Reconciling, God, Creation and Humanity" by Ignatian Solidarity Network to reflect on our interaction with nature and how environmental harm first hurts the poor.

Angie and Phil Berryman began the morning with a brief synopsis of the most recent papal encyclical "Fratelli Tutti." They explain how Pope Francis in his third encyclical, built on "Lumen Fidei" (The Light of Faith) and Laudato Si (Praised Be You) through connecting environmental harm with global poverty and international conflict. Recently CPF co-sponsor a retreat based on Fratelli Tutti again using an Ignatian Examen format.

The Examen, a prayer technique developed by St. Ignatius, is used for personal prayerful reflection on the events of the day to discern God's presence and direction. In both the Fall and Spring retreats this format was used to pray and reflect with the words of Pope Francis on the global environmental crisis and larger societal issues however widening of perspectives from the personal to the communal. The Examen consists of five steps: Gratitude, Petition, Review, Forgiveness, and Resolution.

In the spring Fr. George led us through a reflection of gratitude for the divine gift of the natural world. We were asked to open our hearts to review our world, church and personal lives in the context of the global environmental crisis and its grave threat to the world's poorest. We prayed, shared, and committed ourselves to responding to the environmental crisis of 'Our Common Home'. At the end of this report one participant will share the beginning of a resolution to be part of an online conversation using the CPF's social media.

continued on page 3

Laudato Si - continued from page 2

The following are excerpts from the retreat; a pdf of the full text was uploaded to CPF's Facebook group page:

"... Laudato Si ... is a broad social document addressing not just degradation of the earth but also the related disregard for human culture, for human health and life. ...[while making] reference to the chemistry of carbon dioxide and its trapping of warmth in the earth's atmosphere, it is not a study of that science or of any of the creative scientific solutions. We must address the crisis of rapid degradation by addressing the dominant culture of profit and consumerism."

Saint Francis of Assisi " Patron Saint of Integral Ecology ... shows us the way to a healthy relationship between human societies and the natural environment."

"Kathleen R. Smythe ... Jesuit Xavier University in Cincinnati, ...[asks her] students to reflect on their experience and its context looking into both context and experience for guides to action and its evaluation. Her work applies the movements of the Examen: a movement of gratitude for contexts and experience, a movement of prayerful reflection to determine action, and always an evaluation on how such action manifests God's love. All of this requires us to be eager but humble before God's Spirit".

"... lest we not forget the essence of our journey to an integral ecology, let us begin a journey as Francis did, a journey seeking peace. Let us go with God to the places where earth and humanity are suffering pain from the works of greed and arrogance. And when we return, we will speak more about a worthy response to God's presence among us. (Option: Lectio Divina of Rom 8 14-25)"

"In November two devastating hurricanes gathered strength in the warming waters of the Caribbean Sea Hundreds of thousands lost their homes and livelihood. [images of] older poor on the streets and whole families living in a shelter set up at a school. ...the dream of immigrating to the United States presents itself not as a choice but a necessity."

"The whole of the continent of Africa is under great stress ... global warming now adds a greater measure of ecological stress. ... The warming of the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic makes it harder to catch fish and causes immense problems with cyclones and rainfall. Many countries struggle to feed their people."

"...God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love for all the creatures of this earth, Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live. The poor and the earth are crying out. O Lord, seize us with your power and light, help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of your Kingdom of justice, peace, love and beauty. Praise be to you! Amen."

One participant's reflection: My resolution is to pray through my personal environment saving actions to make them less compulsions and more prayer in action to transform while also expanding on them. In doing so I hope to share these potentially physical / spiritual exercises with others but certainly not to guilt anyone into saving water, electricity, or composting. Our individual actions can not alone prevent the ecological catastrophe. Our collective engagement with the body politic to transform political, economic, and cultural trajectories is the most critical in this regard. How can I / we do this seemingly impossible task? We will need to meditate on 'Hope' as Pope Francis suggested; not as a feeling but as something we do. In the coming months I hope to begin sharing these 'action contemplations' online through facebook.com/catholicpeacefellowship.phila.

"Fratelli Tutti" - Examen

CPF Retreats on Pope Francis Encyclicals - Part 2

In many ways, the papal encyclical 'Fratelli Tutti' (Sisters and Brothers All) is part two of Pope Francis's message in Laudato Si. Saving 'Our Common Home' goes hand in hand with all of humanity seeing each other as sisters and brothers. Saving the poor from the excesses of the powerful, environmental catastrophe and the resulting inevitable wars are actions which are inseparable. For this reason, CPF co-sponsored the retreat "Sisters and Brothers All" with St. Malachy's Anti-Racism Committee and the Jesus Caritas Group. This virtual and in person retreat was held at St. Malachy's on October 2, 2021, the day before the first anniversary of Pope Francis signing 'Fratelli Tutti' in Assisi, Italy.

continued on page 4

Fratelli - continued from page 3

The retreat team: Father Bur, a Jesuit priest for sixty years who has assisted retreatants to find God through the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises; Angie and Phil Berryman academics, authors, and activists who among many activities worked for the American Friends Service in Latin America. Additionally, Phil is the author of several books on both liberation theology and the Christian experience in Latin America and Angie Berryman and Ava Murray-Z. both serve on the St. Malachy's Parish Anti-Racism Committee.

The eight chapters of the Encyclical:

Dark Clouds
Stranger on the Road
Open World
A Heart Open to the Whole World
A Better Kind of Politics
Dialogue and Friendship in Society
Paths of Renewed Encounter
Religion at the Service of Community

The Examen consists of five steps:

Gratitude:	Recognize your blessings:
Petition (Ask):	Request the Holy Spirit for revelation
Review:	Replay the significant moments
Forgiveness (Response):	Repent of failures
Resolution (Ahead):	Resolve in concrete ways to do better

Ava Murray-Z. led us in praying with the Pope through the message of his Encyclical. As an opening prayer, Ava read the parable of the Good Samaritan and Fr. Bur led us through reflections of Pope Francis on compassion and hope, especially. "We thank God for all the past Graces of Hope fulfilled and beg for a renewed spirit of Hope in these trying times." Fr. Bur condense the typical five steps of the Ignatian Examen of Consciousness into three steps by combining Gratitude and Petition while Review and Response would be by Angie and Phil Berryman from their commentary and key quotes of the Pope of which the following are excerpts:

"Every war leaves our world worse than it was before," says Francis.

That is especially incisive when in the light of the twenty years of US occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq. In addition to the thousands of US troops killed and many thousands more permanently injured or psychologically damaged, hundreds of thousands have died in both countries, many more are injured, and millions have had to flee or been internally displaced, as the conflicts metastasized into further wars in the region. As Francis says:

In today's world there are no longer just isolated outbreaks of war in one country or another; instead we are experiencing a "world war fought piecemeal", since the destinies of countries are so closely interconnected on the global scene" (259)

The development of drones enabled the United States to attack, destroy, and kill from thousands of miles away. All of this brings home the Pope's words:

War is a failure of politics and of humanity, a shameful capitulation, a stinging defeat before the forces of Evil. Let us not remain mired in theoretical discussions, but touch the wounded flesh of the victims. Let us look once more at all those civilians whose killing was considered "collateral damage". . . . Let us think of the refugees and displaced, those who suffered the effects of atomic radiation or chemical attacks, the mothers who lost their children, and the boys and girls maimed or deprived of their childhood. Let us hear the true stories of these victims of violence, look at reality through their eyes, and listen with an open heart to the stories they tell. In this way we will be able to grasp the abyss of evil at the heart of war. Nor will it trouble us to be deemed naïve for choosing peace. (261).

From his visit to the island of Lampedusa at the outset of his papacy, Francis has drawn attention to refugees and migrants: millions fleeing Syria several years ago, Central Americans and Haitians fleeing through Mexico, Venezuelans fleeing to Colombia and other countries in Latin America, Rohingya people fleeing Myanmar, and now many Afghans fearful of what they might face from the Taliban.

continued on page 5

Fratelli - continued from page 4 People have the right not to migrate, that is, to be able to live in peace and dignity in their homeland. That applies to Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Salvadorans, who face extortion and gang violence, which the state is unable or unwilling to confront. Migration in host countries, Francis warns,

...causes fear and alarm, often fomented and exploited for political purposes. This can lead to a xenophobic mentality. . . . [B]y our decisions and the way we treat them, we can show that we consider [migrants] less worthy, less important, less human. For Christians, this way of thinking and acting is unacceptable, since it sets certain political preferences above deep convictions of our faith: the inalienable dignity of each human person regardless of origin, race or religion, and the supreme law of fraternal love.” [39].

Since he devoted an entire encyclical to the environment in Laudato Sí, Francis mentions the topic only occasionally, but he makes important connections:

To care for the world in which we live means to care for ourselves. Yet we need to think of ourselves more and more as a single family dwelling in a common home. . .

Sometimes those who defend the environment are silenced or ridiculed, using apparently reasonable arguments that are merely a screen for special interests.” Francis warns that *“once certain resources have been depleted, the scene will be set for new wars, albeit under the guise of noble claims.”* He is apparently envisioning future wars over water, land, minerals, or oil.

We are reminded that in the Christian tradition the earth is given to all of us.

“The world exists for everyone, because all of us were born with the same dignity.” (118) “As a community, we have an obligation to ensure that every person lives with dignity and has sufficient opportunities for his or her integral development.”

That principle is even more fundamental than our individual right to own and use goods. Development must not aim at the amassing of wealth by a few but must ensure “human rights – personal and social, economic and political, including the rights of nations and of peoples.”

We note that during the pandemic, while people around the world have lost their livelihoods, the holdings of the wealthiest individuals have risen in value, represented in billionaires competing in their own space races.

The right of some to free enterprise cannot supersede the rights of peoples and the dignity of the poor, or, for that matter, respect for the natural environment ... (122). . .

Business activity is essentially “a noble vocation, directed to producing wealth and improving our world.” . . . Business abilities, which are a gift from God, should always be clearly directed to the development of others and to eliminating poverty, especially through the creation of diversified work opportunities.

This is not so much a judgment on individuals as a reminder of priorities, concretely on display in the delays in producing vaccines for poorer nations and the resistance to accepting refugees fleeing violence, not only of war but of gangs.

If every human being possesses an inalienable dignity, if all people are my brothers and sisters, and if the world truly belongs to everyone, then it matters little whether my neighbor was born in my country or elsewhere.

In his dialogues with grassroots movements of poor people, Francis speaks of the right to “land housing and work.” In the US context that might be translated as affordable housing, a living wage, and food security, and into coalitions struggling for justice locally, regionally, and nationally.

Continued on page 6

Fratelli - continued from page 5

We can aspire to a world that provides land, housing and work for all. This is the true path of peace, not the senseless and myopic strategy of sowing fear and mistrust in the face of outside threats. (127)

Those last words seem especially relevant in the US context where invoking the “threat” of China seems to be a point on which our otherwise polarized politicians can reach agreement, even as they are incapable of addressing needs on their own merits.

For a real and lasting peace will only be possible “on the basis of a global ethic of solidarity and cooperation in the service of a future shaped by interdependence and shared responsibility in the whole human family. (127).

After noting how the poor practice solidarity, Francis says,

Solidarity means ... thinking and acting in terms of community. It means that the lives of all are prior to the appropriation of goods by a few. It also means combatting the structural causes of poverty, inequality, the lack of work, land and housing, the denial of social and labor rights. It means confronting the destructive effects of the empire of money ...

We are still far from a globalization of the most basic of human rights. That is why world politics needs to make the effective elimination of hunger one of its foremost and imperative goals. (189)

Last year Francis wrote a message to the US:

Dear brothers and sisters in the United States, I have witnessed with great concern the disturbing social unrest in your nation in these past days, following the tragic death of Mr. George Floyd. My friends, we cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life. Today I join the Church in Saint Paul and Minneapolis, and in the entire United States, in praying for the repose of the soul of George Floyd and of all those others who have lost their lives as a result of the sin of racism.

In Fratelli Tutti he says

Racism is a virus that quickly mutates and, instead of disappearing, goes into hiding and lurks in waiting. (97)

Francis devotes considerable attention to the “illusion of communication” in our world. “Digital connectivity is not enough to build bridges. It is not capable of uniting humanity.”

. . . many platforms work often ends up favoring encounter between persons who think alike, shielding them from debate. These closed circuits facilitate the spread of fake news and false information, fomenting prejudice and hate.”

In light of the Pope’s reflection on the parable of the Good Samaritan, Fr. Bur continued with the ‘response’ by sharing personal examples where he had been challenged and shared his regret by explaining the better approach he wished he had taken. He shared his ‘response’ as example for us in extended open sharing at the end. Before the final moment of silent reflection and open sharing, Angie concluded the formal presentation through reading the following reflection of St. Oscar Romero:

“It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view. The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision. We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.....We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future that is not our own. Amen.”

continued on page 7

Frattelli - continued from page 6

Pope Francis concluded 'Frattelli' by referencing Blessed Charles de Foucauld and after a period of open sharing, Lois Harris, a member of St. Malachy's Jesus Caritas Group concluded by reading Blessed Charles de Foucauld's 'The Prayer of Abandonment':

Father,
I abandon myself into your hands;
do with me what you will.
Whatever you may do, I thank you:
I am ready for all, I accept all.
Let only your will be done in me,
and in all your creatures.
I wish no more than this, O Lord.
Into your hands I commend my soul;
I offer it to you
with all the love of my heart,
for I love you, Lord,
and so need to give myself,
to surrender myself into your hands,
without reserve,
and with boundless confidence,
for you are my Father. Amen.

The following are links to material referenced in the retreat introduction:

<https://cafod.org.uk/Education/Fratelli-Tutti-for-schools>

<https://www.icmc.net/2020/10/06/reflections-on-papal-encyclical-fratelli-tutti/>

<https://www.usccb.org/resources/fratelli-tutti-infographics>

"Dreaming as a single family: A reflection on the Pope's Encyclical"

L'Osservatore Romano (Vatican newspaper) has published this very personal reflection on Pope Francis' encyclical 'Fratelli Tutti' by African feminist, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/07/dreaming-as-a-single-family-a-reflection-on-the-popes-encyclical/>

Chimamanda's TED Talk "The Danger of A Single Story" was also mentioned:

https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en

The entire retreat was recorded and can be viewed using the Link below, on www.CPFphila.com and CPF Facebook page:

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/W-ltvbKgbXWPkj9m-9a-Hxh2xKNW3Omr5aZ4PZfNyrXO2FE0d3Y6m7UgkY3sfZsj.mnk5omSR_cOtw1pC

The Decolonization of Palestine: Towards a One-State Solution

by Jeff Harper (Israeli peace activist). This abridged article originally published in The Link (a publication of Americans for Middle East Understanding).

"The times, they are a-changin", even when it comes to the interminable Israeli-Palestinian "conflict." On January 5, 2018, The New York Times ran a piece entitled: "As the 2-State Solution Loses Steam, a 1-State Solution Gains Traction." Mustafa Barghouti, a prominent Palestinian political figure, noted: "It's dominating the discussion." Even mainstream Zionists [if they are honest with themselves] see the writing on the wall. As Peter Beinart wrote recently, "I have begun to wonder, for the first time in my life, whether the price of a state that favors Jews over Palestinians is too high. The painful truth is that the project to which liberal Zionists like myself have devoted ourselves for decades – a state for Palestinians separated from a state for Jews – has failed. The traditional two-state solution no longer offers a compelling alternative to Israel's current path. It is time for Liberal Zionists to abandon the goal of a Jewish-Palestinian separation and embrace the goal of Jewish-Palestinian equality." Soon after, he published a piece in the New York Times [July 8, 2020] entitled: "I No Longer Believe in a Jewish State."

Jewish Voice for Peace, one of the largest Jewish organizations in the United States, issued an explicitly anti-Zionist position paper in 2019. Entitled "Our Approach to Zionism," it states: "Jewish Voice for Peace is guided by a vision of justice, equality and freedom for all people. We unequivocally oppose Zionism because it is counter to those ideals.... While it had many strains historically, the Zionism that took hold and stands today is a settler-colonial movement, establishing an apartheid state where Jews have more rights than others. Our own history teaches us how dangerous this can be."

The Israeli-Palestinian "conflict" continues to appear irresolvable. By making itself useful to the world's hegemony [especially the U.S.], forging alliances with the autocratic elites of the region, employing skillful lobbying, strategically manipulating the Holocaust and accusations of anti-Semitism to its purposes, and deploying massive financial resources to burnish its image, Israel has succeeded in normalizing its control over all of historic Palestine while politically marginalizing the Palestinians. But the "two-state solution" has always been merely a cynical tool of conflict management; it was never intended to genuinely resolve the "conflict." Indeed, it hides the

from 7 very reality that we are not dealing with a conflict at all, but with a case of settler colonialism that can only be solved through decolonialization. Recasting the “Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” as Zionist settler colonialism releases the power of decolonialization to get to a just post-colonial situation in a way that conflict resolution, negotiations and technical compromises cannot.....

Settler Colonialism: What We Need To Know

Driven by persecution and the rise of nationalism in Europe, it was European Jews with little knowledge of Palestine and its peoples who launched a movement of Jewish “return” to its ancestral homeland, the Land of Israel, after a national absence of 2000 years. In their newly minted nationalist ideology, they were returning natives. In their eyes, the Arabs of Palestine were mere background. They had no national claims or even a cultural identity of their own. Palestine was, as the famous Zionist phrase put it, “a land without people.” The European Zionists knew the land was peopled, of course. But to them the Arabs did not amount to “a people” in the national sense of the term. They were just a collection of natives – though not the Natives, a status the Jewish claimants reserved for themselves. They played no role in the Zionist story. Having no national existence or claims of their own, the Arabs were to be removed, or confined or eliminated so as to make way for the country’s “real” owners.

This form of conquest – for that is what it was – took the form of settler colonialism. Zionists felt a deep sense of historical, religious, and national connection to the Land of Israel. But in claiming Palestine for themselves alone and rejecting the society they found there, they chose to come as settlers - or more precisely, their choice of settler colonialism rested on formative elements in both Jewish and European societies, such as the notion of biblical “chosenness” and a Divinely sanctioned ownership of the Land.....

The upshot is that Zionists intended to displace the local population, not integrate into it as immigrants would. And displacement is by definition a violent process: Zionist ideology justifying the displacement of the indigenous population. The “logic” of settler colonialism worked itself through nationalist ideology. Early Zionist leaders presented the “conflict” as one ethno-religious nationalism against another so as to deflect attention from the settler colonialism, garner the support of Jewish people and stifle diasporic Jewish opposition. They also used arguments of self-defense to win support of non-Zionist Jews, especially allies in Britain and the U.S. As the only legitimate national group, the Zionists reduced “the Arabs” into faceless, dismissible enemy Other. Zionist ideologues like David - Ben Gurion and Golda Meir knowingly altered the framework from one of settler colonialism to that of conflict between an aggressive [and foreign] Arab “Goliath” and the peace-loving [native] Jewish “David.....

It’s true that settler colonialism generates conflict between the colonist usurpers and the indigenous population. No population is willingly displaced. But if a conflict involves two or more “sides” fighting over differing interests or agendas, then a colonial struggle is not a “conflict.” There is no symmetry of power or responsibility. The Natives did not choose the fight. They had no bone to pick with the settlers before they arrived. The indigenous were not organized or equipped for such a struggle, and they had little chance of winning, of pushing the settlers out of their country. The natives are the victims, not the other “side.” Nor, to be honest, are they a “side” at all in the eyes of their conquerors. At best they are irrelevant, a nuisance on the path of the settler’s seizure of their country, an expendable population, one that must be “eliminated,” if not physically then at least reduced to marginal presence in which they are unable to conduct a national life and thus threaten the settler enterprise. Such a process of unilateral, asymmetrical invasion that provokes resistance on the part of Native peoples threatened with displacement and worse can hardly be called a “conflict.” Rather than the “Israeli/Palestinian/Arab Conflict,” we must speak of Zionist settler colonialism.....

What is Settler Colonialism, and how can it be ended? In broad terms, settler colonialism is a form of colonialism in which foreign settlers arrive in a country with the intent of taking it over. Their “arrival” is actually an invasion. The settlers are not immigrants; they come with the intent of replacing the Native population, not integrating into their society. The invasion may be gradual and not even recognized as such by the indigenous. And in the case of Zionism, it is not necessarily violent, at least in the early stages. In the end, a new settler society arises on the ruins of the indigenous one.....The settlers validate their right to the land by inventing narrative, stories, that justify their claims to the territory. The Zionist settlers claimed to be the “real” natives, both because they are “returning” to their native land and because, given its barrenness, only they love and” develop” it. Settler narratives either ignore the indigenous population or cast them as undeserving, unassimilable, menacing, and unwanted. The indigenous cease challenging the normalcy of the settler society only after they disappear, remaining at best “exotic” specimens of bygone folklore.....Palestine/Israel resembles apartheid – era South Africa [and perhaps Tibet and Chechnya]. In these cases, the indigenous population was not rendered small and marginal, but remained major national groups who did not surrender their sovereignty to the settlers or their right to self-determination. As is the case of the Blacks in South Africa, the Palestinians demand the decolonialization of the Israeli settler state,

One-State Solution - continued from page 8

to be replaced by a completely new polity in which their national rights are restored. In short, the Zionist settlers and the indigenous Palestinians have arrived at a draw. The former have proven strong enough to establish a state of their own and temporarily marginalize the latter, but not strong enough to decisively defeat them. For their part, the Palestinians are strong enough to mount a major challenge to settler dominance, preventing the “triumph” the settler state realized over Fourth World peoples.

Even if they should succeed in overcoming the settler regime, the Palestinians are unable to expel the settler population, which is too large and embedded. Decolonialization in this case is only partly achieved by the rise of a new polity. The indigenous may achieve self-determination, but they must share their sovereignty with the settlers. An additional phase of decolonization is thereby called for. Together with an inclusive polity and civil society, and in tandem with a process of reckoning with the settler past, a new, shared political community must emerge that gives meaning to the new layer of national identity that “thickens” joint citizenship’.

The One Democratic State Campaign: A Plan of Decolonialization.....

For the full article in the January – March 2021 issue of The Link: www.ameu.org.

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Supersessionism Rejected—Judaism Affirmed

In his book, “Jesus Word Made Flesh”, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minn., [2008], Catholic Scripture Scholar Gerard Sloyan corrects a Christian misunderstanding of the relationship of the Old and New Testaments. The following are relevant passages:

“The distinction between two kinds of letters, one inscribed with a pen or stylus and the another enfleshed in the hearts of sender and receivers, leads Paul to create another contrast, still in figurative language. This one has in Christian memory been misunderstood almost as much as it has been understood. The faithful Jew Saul, ever ready to proclaim that God has done something new for Jews but also for gentiles, wishes to set two epochs one against the other: one of death, the other of life, one of a covenant renewed by the tablets of Torah, the other of a covenant further renewed of justice leading to glory.....The resistance to the Gospel he encounters from fellow Jews is almost certainly based on the belief of most Jews who are contemporaneous with Paul that the deliverance of the Law on Mount Sinai was God’s last word. How could there be anything new, they wondered? Hence their resistance to God’s deed in Christ as a new revelation updating the renewal of the Abrahamic covenant through the Lawgiver.

[According to Paul] “conformity to all the ritual precepts of the Law was not God’s final revelatory word. He says this in anger at the fellow Jews of his day who will not accept the possibility of a newer revelation. In making this case he distinguishes between the ‘old covenant.... [inscribed] in letters on stone-hard tablets’ and ‘an epistle of Christ administered by us written---by the Spirit of the living God.’ The Greek word for covenant in this passage [v.6] became testamentum in the Vulgate translation, hence ‘Old and New Testaments’ in Christian speech. Further, the words ‘gramma’ and ‘pneuma’, ‘letter’ and ‘spirit’ became a proverb about the letter and the spirit of Mosaic Law. The tragic Christian misunderstanding that came of this passage, because there is no word for ‘renew’ in Greek is that there was a new covenant in Christ offered by God to replace the old covenant on Sinai on tablets of baked clay. This erroneously conceived replacement of the one by the other is called supersessionism. Paul teaches no such thing nor does any proclamation of the Gospel in the apostolic age, although Hebrews comes perilously close.

“[Footnote: Heb 7:18, anopheles, ‘useless’ or ‘inoperative’ but often rendered ‘abrogated’; a variety of ritual precepts is meant, certainly not the whole Mosaic corpus].

“Unfortunately, the unbinding of new believers from paganism to Jewish ritual customs, and these rites being rendered a matter of free choice for ethnic Jews, has for centuries been taken by gentile Christians to mean that one revelatory act by God has been replaced by another.

“The fact that the Church from its origins accepted the Old Testament as its Scriptures, however, means that being a Christian involves believing in the religion of Israel. That it has been updated by God’s revelation in Jesus, Christ, and Lord, has done nothing to abrogate it.....

“That the Law is finished, over, done with—and, hence that the vocation of the Jewish people is finished as well—is an absurdity that some Christians have entertained even to today.”

Judaism Affirmed

By Frank McGinty, Catholic Peace Fellowship

For several years Fran and I joined other CPF folks Joe Bradley, Joanne Ennis, David Graham, Lee Hoinacki and Phyllis and Mary Lou Grady in small vigils, led by Cy and Lois Swartz, outside the downtown Israeli Consulate. We held signs, "Justice for Palestinians", "We Refuse to be Enemies", and "Blessed are the Peacemakers". Mary Lou Grady memorialized Cy and Lois when she wrote in our newsletter:

"This man of peace was one all of us would aspire to be. Cy and Lois started 'Bubbes and Zaydes [grandparents] for Peace in the Middle East'. Every Friday for years the group would meet in front of the Israeli Consulate to protest the treatment of Palestinians in Israel. Across the street counter-protestors would appear on time. Cy and Lois endured shouts and insults with grace and good humor. At the end of the vigil it was amazing how Cy would invite all to join in a prayer and share bread. Cy and Lois would join us at St. Malachy for Christmas and Easter Mass. They loved the music and found peace there. Cy's first love was Judaism. He loved teaching and would gladly come to Catholic Peace Fellowship meetings to enlighten us on the Old Testament. One of our best retreats was presented by Cy in 2014."

The best way to understand the Swartzes is in Cy's own words. Here are quotes from his writings in our CPF newsletter:

"It is wonderful to have Pope Francis, a living teacher of peace and love...With a sense of gratitude, I share the blessing that my tradition teaches us to say when we encounter a wise person: Blessed are you, eternal God, who has shared wisdom with flesh and blood [human beings]. [CPF Newsletter, July 2014].

"I was born into a second-generation American Jewish family that was loosely connected to tradition and synagogue. Unions and FDR and civil rights were dinner table topics in this multi-generational kosher household. Spring brought a large family seder and Fall included three days in synagogue. My parents and grandparents were scrupulously honest in all their personal and business dealings. Politics and religion blended in daily life in conscious and sometimes unconscious ways.

"My formal religious education began at age seven. The rabbis and the prayer book and the liberal traditions of the Institution that my parents affiliated with affirmed my home experiences. Every service ended with a prayer with a final line that envisioned a unified and perfected world where all people would affirm the unity of God and a world where all humanity would be at peace. The Torah portion that I read at my Bar Mitzvah included the verse that is inscribed on the Liberty Bell: 'Proclaim liberty throughout the land and to its inhabitants'. [Leviticus 25:10]

"Lois and I made a conscious decision to live as faithful members of a liberal Jewish community. For many years we observed kashut [dietary laws], attended synagogue every Saturday, observed holidays and home rituals. We bought a house in a racially integrated neighborhood, opposed the war in Vietnam, and participated actively in winning bargaining rights for Philadelphia teachers. And in the past fifty-four years we have lived and loved together in Faith in the possibility that we could be part of the process of helping to create a world in the image of the Kingdom of God." [CPF newsletter, 2/2014]

Father Sloyan's critique finds validation in the lives of Cy and Lois Swartz.

Is it anti-Semitic NOT to criticize the actions of the State of Israel?

by F. Zampetti - admirer of Lois and Cy Swartz

Before we consider the title, let us address the opposite for a moment, since this is often the accusation when Israeli actions are questioned. In the context of this past year's disproportionate violence between IDF and Hamas, I must confess (along with many of our Jewish friends) for thinking with all the Jewish people have been through over the millennia, how could they treat a disenfranchise native population poorly and even be directly responsible for their impoverished and oppressed condition? Why I know this thought is at best a misplaced micro aggression is because it wrongly equates the action of a State with a People. Lumping together the entities that rule nation-states with their subjects and victims of whatever ethnicity, is unfair, unjust, and dangerous.

Of course, there is a relationship between states and their peoples, but the history of states concerns the interplay of power relations not stemming from 'the People'. People can be deceived to believe their identity is tied to the State. States with their power relationships are not their people but are more complex than just their national military, bureaucracy, law and **continued on page 11**

continued from 10 enforcement and political parties. The complex interplay of power relations also includes economic forces, civil society in general, even religious organizations and NGOs. Consider, the 'State' as consisting of all institutions of power and influence in a society. These power relationships are often legitimized in peoples' minds with something referred to as 'the law' or 'tradition', what Antonio Gramsci called 'hegemony'. Nationalistic and patriotic sentiments are often fostered by organizations of influence to contribute to this legitimization. Propaganda and co-option of systems of thought through the public relations industry contribute to this process which Noam Chomsky addressed in 'Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media'.

But states (with all of their networks of power) and state-like entities (i.e., quasi state authorities, multinational corporations, gangster syndicates and terrorist organizations) are entities that are more like each other than the people they rule over. The relation between 'States' and their citizens is often more predatory than benevolent through a use of a combination of direct violence and seductive deception supported by hegemonic delusions all in the service of the consolidation of political and economic power.

Also 'States' themselves are a part of a web of power relations. Israel like France, New Jersey, South Korea, Uruguay and Zambia, as random examples, can be more accurately described as colonies of the financial markets than any claim they serve the will of their citizens. In my opinion, Israel, Hamas in Gaza, and the Palestinian Authority are also exploited markets for the International Military Industrial Complex and the oil price setting agenda of the petrochemical / carbon base energy syndicates. I suspect the real powers behind Israel are less interested in Zionism than creating a military outpost in the service to 'Western' power in the oil rich Middle East; Noam Chomsky has written on this subject. I further suspect the extraordinary profits of the Multinational Military Industrial Complex are seductive enough to tempt profiteers to insidious influence over the political machinery of the fore mentioned.

States are going to do what States do; is my takeaway from years of reading and listening to Howard Zinn, Noam Chomsky and tangentially Ivan Illich and Lee Hoinacki. The historical tendency of the forces behind State power is to expand and consolidate as much power as they are allowed and Israel with seemingly unlimited USA support is a perfect example.

So why is it anti-Semitic NOT to criticize the State of Israel? How can we be silent about the increased danger Jewish people around the world face due to pan-Arab resentment fueled by the oppressive actions of Israeli Government and Military? Also, even more numerically deadly is IDF aggression against the other Semitic people, the Palestinians, who languish under Israeli state power. Even Palestinian state-like entities which knowingly or otherwise seem to better serve the interests of international power relations and weapons sales due to these endless conflicts. Consider the allure for greedy Armament investors to secretly channel funds to Hamas militants and Israeli right wing anti-Arab political parties and or antagonistic Israeli settlers to insure exponential returns when conflicts ultimately occur. Silence is complicity (lesson from BLM) so we must raise our voice to this grave threat to these two Semitic peoples.

Muslim and Jewish folks are not alone in being systemically manipulated and propagandized into a con of mutual hatred to serve the power games of states. Think of how Hindus and Buddhist are incited by forces of power in Indian politics and the Myanmar military respectively. How in US politics, 'white' evangelicals in rural America are played as well as Catholics by so called Pro-life political movements for the purpose of electing politicians who will more strictly serve the interests of concentrated wealth. Other examples of this manipulation can be seen in how gun manufacturers, sellers, and the NRA have deformed USA politics. Eisenhower warned in his final speech as president that the Military Industrial Complex would involve itself in American political process to insure expanding weapons sales and profits. Every war since (hot or cold) has had behind it the not so 'invisible-hand' of this market.

Important to understand and teach others that conflicts between states can never justify harming ordinary people. We shouldn't be distracted from seeing the real forces that pull the strings across the globe as well as here in the USA. In our world, ordinary people, (whether they be Israeli, Palestinian, American or others), always suffer the consequences of unchecked 'State' power. Additionally, we can see how the same 'State / quasi-state' power processes used to curtail citizen action to confront the environmental crisis which threatens all of humanity.

We need to endeavor to rein in 'State' power; historian Howard Zinn reminded us of what ordinary people attempted through our history. We cannot remain silent on actions of our government, Israel, and other countries; especially when US power is indirectly and more often directly behind much of these conflicts. We need to demand an end to the blank check for Israel's aggressions. We must remind everyone that the nihilistic and self-destructive actions of terrorists are not the responsibility of a people; therefore, airstrikes of any kind on civilian population are never ever acceptable.

continued on page 12

Actions of the State - continued from page 11

We need to do our part to help Israeli and Palestinian people see how they are being played against each other for weapons profits. We need to confront accusations of anti-Semitism for opposing Israeli state aggression with the truth that Not opposing Israeli aggression is far more dangerously anti-Semitic.

Lois and Cy Swartz were peace activists who regularly protested Israeli state aggression.

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/inquirer/name/cy-swartz-obituary?pid=186540872>

<https://www.echovita.com/us/obituaries/pa/philadelphia/lois-swartz-8076855>

Thoughts from 2020 Part 1

by F. Zampetti, 'Sisters and Brothers All – Examen' retreatant

Part of Pope Francis's message is to confront racism and my 'resolution' from our recent retreat was to serve a more active role in the parish anti-racism committee. For me personally, the issues around race and how social construct of race distorts the psyche (like the climate crisis) needs to be fought with real information and critical history (sometimes refer to as 'Critical Race Theory'). The following is the first part of a series I hope to share from my facebook posts from last summer and fall on this and similar subjects. All of this began with a question from an extended family member about my nuclear family response to events of last summer and BLM. My first response was strongly influenced by recent revelations learned from the Netflix Documentary on mass incarceration "13th," by director Ava DuVernay. Afterwards, I considered sharing more on the unfolding of my understanding of the social construct of race which I did in follow up posts. In future issues of the newsletter (and CPF's social media), my hope is to edit and share more on how to confront the demonic tendency of racism (and anti-Semitism) to help us all root it out of our politics, economics, culture, church, and psyches.

Summer 2020: Thank you for your inquiry about our feelings toward BLM and all that is happening especially since I have been meaning to write about this subject. Please understand, for me to explain how we feel, I am compelled to share the historical context; at least how I remember through history learned in the past and recently. As you can imagine, recent events have been upsetting to my son, wife, and me. I am particularly horrified by how racist my country still is, and I must admit I was very naïve about the level of its racism. I thought I knew US history with all its glory and horror, but the horror I have learned recently confirms my being naïveté.

I knew slavery existed everywhere humans figured out how to oppress other humans to do their farm work. For example, my mom's mother's people from Poland along with the rest of the Eastern European Slavic peoples were so enslaved by the Germanic and Viking tribes, the Hun, the Kievan Rus, Byzantines, Ottoman Turks and Austrians that the English word 'slave' was drawn from the word Slavic. What I did not know was the form of 'commodified' racial chattel slavery imposed in the Confederate South was uniquely horrible in world history. Slavery in the ancient world (as horrible as slavery was), did not regularly sell husbands, wives, and children apart from each other as property and with mortgages or used them as collateral for loans. This system was so cruel it needed intense violence to be maintained and for it to be profitable depended on externalities.

In the early 1800s northern citizens were obligated to return any escaped 'property' (the word used in the Supreme Court ruling). This led to the formation of police forces in the North like the fugitive slave management systems in the South. As part of the build up to the Civil War, one can imagine how northern farmers would have resented paying taxes so their lazy countrymen could get rich through this horrible system of forced unpaid labor.

In the 13th Amendment which ended slavery, I did not realize there was a clause which allowed forced labor as a form of punishment. After the Civil War, the practice of arresting and convicting men and even teenage boys for anything and giving them long sentences so they could be made to work in chain gangs in cotton fields or on roads was commonplace. Of course, the sheriff's lazy drunkard cousin would get a light or no sentence so you can imagine the complexion of these chain gangs. Especially since Jim Crow made it impossible for some Americans to be truly tried by a jury of their peers.

I knew about lynching, rioting and looting done by Caucasian mobs across the South (later in the North) but I didn't know the details about Tulsa OK, New Orleans and Wilmington NC where these mobs killed African Americans, burned down their successful businesses and in NC removed African American elected officials from office at gun point while burning their neighborhoods and killing them.

continued on page 13

Thoughts - continued from 12

Other than exposing how much has been avoided in our history lessons, how does this new knowledge of this history affect what is going on in our country now and my understanding? Fast forward past the Jim Crow era, segregation, and systemic redlining to the 1980s, I remember firsthand when the Reagan administration and the one term Republican Congress in 1981 cut the taxes for businesses so that they could write off building factories in other countries. This resulted in laying off tens of thousands of American workers in places like the South Side of Chicago, Detroit, and Flint Michigan. Also, they attempted to reduce the size of government by slashing welfare benefits and then through a racist propaganda campaign of 'the welfare queen,' they diverted a significant portion of the remaining welfare budget to chase a negligible amount of fraud. While most Americans on welfare were and still are of European ancestry; the dog whistle was clear.

Loss of jobs and slashed welfare left millions in small town, urban and even rural America alike destitute and prone to drugs and crime. The extra money from tax cuts to the upper classes and the indulgent live style this excess wrought, would find its way into poor neighborhoods as the drug and prostitution trades. For many communities these were the only opportunities left. As the drug and AIDS epidemic in the 1980s started to tear through middle class families, then the 'war on drugs' (started under Nixon as a police pretense to harass peace, social justice and Black Power movements) was re-escalated.

During the Bush, Clinton and Bush Jr. administrations this was made worse with a systematic criminalization of poverty, until the USA with 4% of the world population had 25% of the world's imprisoned. The prison industrial complex, like the military industrial complex, grew into big business with lots of money and propaganda to secure elections and policies with the resulting high profits. Let's not forget about all the military gear sold to police forces and all the over-the-top kill focused training.

This ongoing economic and social disaster that tore through the urban poor has made its way throughout rural America. Once Obama was president and the owners of Fox News and other news sources controlling most of the news information outside of the large metro cities had to explain the suffering of these poor 'whites' and deflect the role of the billionaire class. The Klan and other alt-right groups return to support this distraction of the real reasons for economic insecurity and channel the blame toward Mexicans and other Americans instead. Like how wealthy slavers conned poor 'whites' into fighting a civil war which had no benefit for them, the 'Birth-er' nonsense and later Trump Campaign came forth.

To get back to the original question, of course Black Lives Matter. Blue souls matter too; a gun is a source of power and unchecked power will corrupt anyone. While it is sad to see any more black businesses burned by misguided angry actions, I certainly can begin to understand the sheer frustration. I also know the mentality behind justifying the horrific cruelty of forced labor is the same process very much alive today. Race does not exist in the biological sense; it was an invention to excuse a horrible system of human bondage and systemic rape to satisfy the insatiable greed and lust for power of a few. Today it serves a similar antichrist purpose.

Summer is Sundered

Summer is immolated in a fantastic flame of fall foliage. Autumnal temperatures prevail. Sweaters and jackets are the new norm to protect the summer-conditioned body from the chill. Ancient and venerable oaks, which offered umbrage to many generations of park goers, now disgorge themselves of their ripened burden of acorns. Squirrels scamper for this bounteous feast of feasts.

Migratory birds prepare themselves for the long, flight south, gorging themselves upon morsels of food, so as to store energy for the airborne journey. Soon, the sky will be punctuated by "V" formations of honking ducks, abandoning northern latitudes, and heading for a warmer climate.

The sun rises later and sets sooner, perhaps a signal to slow the pace of life a bit below the mad dash of summer. Porch sitting in a cardigan sweater again becomes fashionable, a high vantage point from which the armchair philosopher can observe the crude crush of humanity.

Summer is sundered and the subtle sadness of the season prevails. Soon, the frostbite of winter will be in the air, and the sharp love-death kiss of winter will transfix everything motionless until the spring thaw. Summer is sundered, but, like a phoenix, it shall rise again in splendor!

Robert A. Butler, 25 October 2021



St. Francis
by Robert McGovern

Dear Catholic Peace Fellowship Supporter,

We thank you all again for your interest and generosity. 'October - the Month of Francis' is the theme of our final issue of 2021 with reports of this year's retreats on the latest two encyclicals of Pope Francis; St. Francis, whose feast day is October 4, was an inspiration for these encyclicals. Another Francis we would like to acknowledge is Frank McGinty, long time member and contributor to the newsletter. We are grateful for Frank's tribute to our beloved Lois and Cy Swartz and his essay of Pope Francis's hope of a 'Culture of Encounter'. Frank also curated the works of Jeff Halper and Fr. Sloyan in this and earlier issues as well as of other authors.

Catholic Peace Fellowship Philadelphia meets every second Sunday of the month virtually at 11:30 am and typically also in person after the 10 am mass at St. Malachy's; please see our Facebook for virtual / in-person events status. If you are interested in attending, please email us at catholicpeacefellowship.phila@gmail.com. We hope we can take the legacy of CPF into the future and as such we are re-organizing the Newsletter and Editorial Board in the coming year with a different time frame for publication. If you would like to submit an article for inclusion in future issues (or be a subscriber), please send to CPFnewsletter@gmail.com. Articles should be limited to 1,000 words and please include a brief one-line bio. Photographs and/or graphics submissions can only be used with clear copyright compliant permission. Thank you, CPF Newsletter Committee and Catholic Peace Fellowship – Philadelphia.

CPF along with the CPF Newsletter Editorial Committee and CPF Media Committee are not formal organizations but rather a group of volunteers. CPF Media Committee, an independent group of volunteers from but in service to CPF and the Newsletter, has taken up the task to facilitate the CPF website (www.cpfphila.com) which hosts past issues of the newsletter. CPFphila.com along with all newsletter publications prior to 2020 were the efforts of beloved members who are no longer with us but in their memory all the CPF groups hope to continue the respected tradition they established. Thank you, CPF Media Committee.

A summary of Catholic Peace Fellowship, CPF Media and CPFNL expenditures: Membership in Pax Christi USA, website maintenance, meeting center / mailing address (St. Malachy's), event costs/ refreshments, honorariums and reimbursements for guest speakers in addition to the cost of newsletter USPS mailings to incarcerated and other subscribers who need this continued service. Reminders: donations are NOT tax deductible; copyright notice on website. Thank you, CPF.

To USPS mail: print double sided six sheets, fold in half and tape three side; add address and standard forever stamp on side below this line.

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**Door to the Path Taken
by Robert McGovern
tribute to
Blessed Franz Jagerstatter**

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