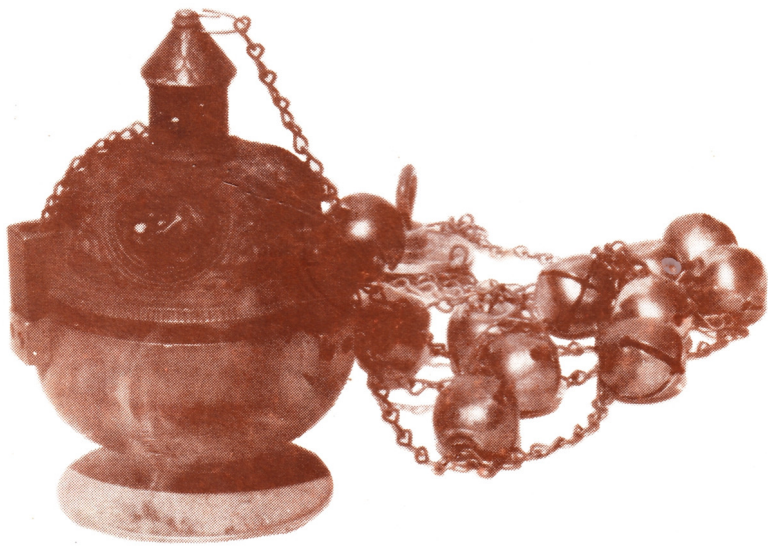


AUGUST 9

Emmanuel Charles McCarthy



The Censer

August 9, 1945 AD is a day that will live in infamy in the history of the Church. On that day at 11:03 a.m., a 1700-year tradition of justified Christian savagery toward Christians reached its satanic nadir. On that day, with the explicit blessings of its Catholic and Protestant chaplains, a Christian bomber crew released the inferno of an atomic bomb on the original, oldest, and largest Christian community in Japan—Nagasaki—using as one of its target markings the largest church in Japan, the Urakami-Nagasaki Cathedral.

A few weeks after the bombing, Fr. George Zabelka, a Catholic chaplain to the 509th Composite Group, i.e., the atomic bomb crews, walked through the ruins of the Cathedral. As a remembrance, he picked from the ashes a censer top that lay in the rubble of the now-desecrated House of God. That censer, which has had the sweet spiritual fragrance of incense—as well as the stench of the smoke of atomic death—pass through its magnificently sculptured openings, is the symbol of the July 1—August 9, Annual, Forty-Day Fast for the Truth of Christian Nonviolence.

Today, this censer serves as a reminder of past infidelities and as a symbol that pleads for the conversion of hearts. As a reminder, it calls all Christians—Catholics, Orthodox, Protestant, Reformed, Evangelical, Fundamentalist, etc.—**all** Christians—to reflect, in the light of the teachings and example of Jesus, on their seventeen-hundred-year history of satanic savagery towards each other. As a symbol of conversion, it places before the Churches—all Christian Churches—the seriousness of the need to require—and to teach—that admission to Baptism forever prohibits a Christian from engaging in homicide. Forever prohibits it because homicide committed by the brothers and sisters of Christ is not now, never has been, and never could be, in conformity with the heart, mind, will or spirit of Jesus.

Dedication

To two forgotten Christian women,
murdered by their fellow Christians.

ROSA STEIN

August 9, 1942

Auschwitz

MIDORI NAGAI

August 9, 1945

Nagasaki

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August 9

Some Opening Words

August 9, as a date, is only another day on the calendar, the two-hundredth and twenty-first in an ordinary year. As a Christian symbol, however, it is one of the clearest signs available to expose the truth—that a tragic and confusing mixture of the Spirit of Cain with the Spirit of Christ that has taken hold of and in the Church. In fact, it is a day when Christians have, without sorrow and contemptuously, betrayed their Lord and their fellow Christians. It is a symbol that discloses, for those who have eyes and wish to see, the long and pitiful history of the contorted justifications of this betrayal. It is also a day, however, that reveals what God can bring forth through Christians who trustfully stand firm with Jesus and His Way, and who reject the temptation to become co-conspirators with Cain along the road of homicide.

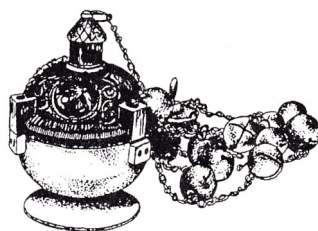
Read, think, pray through *August 9*. By the time you finish its final words you will know—if only as a distant murmur in some far-off galaxy of your Christian heart—that Jesus desires something from His Churches—Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Reformed, Evangelical, Fundamentalist, all of them—that for many centuries they have been unwilling to give. You will also realize that, as a friend and disciple of Jesus, as well as a member of one or another of these Churches, your silence on the deadly confusion of the Spirit of Cain with the Spirit of Christ is hurtful to Him who deserves no hurt.

(Picture-Chaplain Zabelka in 1945 Fr. George Zabelka in 1985)

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Tinian Island

In August of 1945, Fr. George Zabelka, a Catholic chaplain with the US Army Air Force, was stationed on Tinian Island in the South Pacific. He was assigned to serve the Catholic members of the 509th Composite Group, the Atomic Bomb Group. Father Zabelka served as a priest to those who dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. After twenty-two years as a military chaplain, he retired as a Lieutenant-Colonel.



Fr. McCarthy: Father Zabelka, what is your relationship to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August, 1945?

Fr. Zabelka: During the summer of 1945—July, August, and September—I was assigned as Catholic chaplain to the 509th Composite Group on Tinian Island. The 509th was the Atomic Bomb Group.

Q.: What were your duties to these men?

Zabelka: The usual. I said Mass on Sunday and during the week. Heard confessions. Talked with the boys, etc. Nothing significantly different from what any other chaplain did during the war.

Tinian Island

Q.: Did you know that the 509th was preparing to drop an atomic bomb?

Zabelka: No. We knew that they were preparing to drop a bomb substantially different from, and more powerful than, even the "blockbusters" used over Europe, but we never called it an atomic bomb and never really knew what it was before August 6, 1945. Before that time we just referred to it as the "gimmick" bomb.

Q.: So, since you did not know that an atomic bomb was going to be dropped you had no reason to counsel the men in private or preach in public about the morality of such a bombing?

Zabelka: Well, that is true enough; I never did speak against it, nor could I have spoken against it since I, like practically everyone else on Tinian, was ignorant of what was being prepared. And I guess I will go to my God with that as my defense. But on Judgment Day I think I am going to need to seek more mercy than justice in this matter.

Q.: Why? God certainly could not have expected you to act on ideas that had never entered your mind.

Zabelka: As a Catholic priest my task was to keep my people, wherever they were, close to the mind and heart of Christ. As a military chaplain, I was to try to see that the boys conducted themselves according to the teachings of the Catholic Church and Christ on war. When I look back I am not sure I did either of these things very well.

Q.: Why do you think that?

Zabelka: What I do not mean to say is that I feel myself to have been remiss in any duties that were expected of me as a chaplain. I saw that the Mass and the sacraments were available as best I could.

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I even went out and earned paratroop wings in order to do my job better. Nor did I fail to teach and preach what the Church expected me to teach and preach—and I don't mean by this that I just talked to the boys about their sexual lives. I and most chaplains were quite clear and outspoken on such matters as not killing and torturing prisoners. But there were other areas where things were not said quite so clearly.

Q.: For example?

Zabelka: The destruction of civilians in war was always forbidden by the Church and, if a soldier came to me and asked if he could put a bullet through a child's head, I would have told him absolutely not. That would be mortally sinful. But in 1945 Tinian Island was the largest airfield in the world. Three planes a minute would take off from it around the clock. Many of these planes went to Japan with the express purpose of killing—not one child or one civilian—but of slaughtering hundreds and thousands of children and civilians—and I said nothing.

Q.: Why not? You certainly knew civilians were being destroyed by the thousands in these raids, didn't you?

Zabelka: Oh, indeed I did know, and I knew with a clarity that few others could have had.

Q.: What do you mean?

Zabelka: As a chaplain, I often had to enter the world of the boys who were losing their minds because of something they did in war. I remember one young man who was engaged in the bombings of the cities of Japan. He was in the hospital on Tinian Island on the verge of a complete mental collapse.

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He told me that he had been on a low-level bombing mission, flying right down one of the main streets of the city, when straight ahead of him appeared a little boy, in the middle of the street, looking up at the plane in a childlike wonder. The man knew that in a few seconds the child would be burned to death by napalm which had already been released.

Yes, I knew civilians were being destroyed and knew it perhaps in a way others didn't. Yet I never preached a single sermon against killing civilians to men who were doing it.

Q.: Again, why not?

Zabelka: Because I was "brainwashed"! It never entered my mind to publicly protest the consequences of these massive air raids. I was told it was necessary; told openly by the military and told implicitly by my Church's leadership. To the best of my knowledge no American cardinals or bishops were opposing these mass air raids. Silence in such matters, especially by a public body like the American bishops, is a stamp of approval.

The whole structure of the secular, religious, and military society told me clearly that it was all right to "let the Japs have it." God was on the side of my country. The Japanese were the enemy, and I was absolutely certain of my country's and Church's teaching about enemies: no erudite theological text was necessary to tell me. The day-in-day-out operation of the state and the Church between 1940 and 1945 spoke more clearly about Christian attitudes towards enemies and war than St. Augustine or St. Thomas Aquinas ever could.

I was certain that this mass destruction was right, certain to the point that the question of its morality never seriously entered my mind. I was brainwashed—not by force or torture—but by my Church's silence and wholehearted cooperation, in thousands of

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little ways, with the country's war machine. Why, after I finished chaplaincy school at Harvard I had my military chalice officially blessed by the then Bishop Cushing of Boston. How much more clearly could the message be given? Indeed, I was brainwashed!

Q.: So, you feel that, because you did not protest the morality of the bombing of other cities and, by definition of their civilian populations, that somehow you are morally responsible for the dropping of the atomic bomb?

Zabelka: The facts are that seventy-five thousand people were burned to death in one evening of fire bombing over Tokyo. Hundreds of thousands were destroyed in Dresden, Hamburg, and Coventry by aerial bombing. The fact that forty-five thousand human beings were killed by one bomb over Nagasaki was new only to the extent that it was one bomb that did it.

To fail to speak to the utter moral corruption of the mass destruction of civilians was to fail as a Christian and a priest as I see it. Hiroshima and Nagasaki happened in and to a world and a Christian church that had asked for it—that had prepared the moral consciousness of humanity to do and to justify the unthinkable. I am sure there are church documents around someplace bemoaning civilian deaths in modern war, and I am sure those in power in the church will drag them out to show that it was giving moral leadership during World War II to its membership.

Well, I was there, and I'll tell you that the operational moral atmosphere in the church in relation to mass bombing of enemy civilians was totally indifferent, silent, and corrupt at best—at worst it was religiously supportive of these activities by blessing those who did them.

I say all this not to pass judgment on others, for I do not know their souls—then or now. I say all this as one who was part of the so-

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called Christian leadership of the time. So, you see, that is why I am not going to the day of judgment looking for justice in this matter. Mercy is my salvation.

Q.: You said the atomic bombing of Nagasaki happened to a church that "had asked for it." What do you mean by that?

Zabelka: For the first three centuries, the three centuries closest to Christ, the church was a pacifist church. With Constantine (see page 13, What is "Constantinian Christianity"?) the church accepted the pagan Roman ethic of a just war and slowly began to involve its membership in mass slaughter, first for the state and later for the faith.

Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants, whatever other differences they may have had on theological esoterica, all agreed that Jesus' clear and unambiguous teaching on the rejection of violence and on love of enemies was not to be taken seriously. And so, each of the major branches of Christianity, by different theological methods, modified our Lord's teaching in these matters until all three were able to do what Jesus rejected, that is, take an eye for an eye, slaughter, maim, torture.

It seems a sign to me that seventeen hundred years of Christian terror and slaughter should arrive at August 9, 1945 when Catholics dropped the A-Bomb on top of the largest and first Catholic city in Japan. One would have thought that I, as a Catholic priest, would have spoken out against the atomic bombing of nuns. (Three orders of Catholic sisters were destroyed in Nagasaki that day.) One would have thought that I would have suggested that as a minimal standard of Catholic morality, Catholics shouldn't bomb Catholic children. I didn't.

I, like that Catholic pilot of the Nagasaki plane, was heir to a Christianity that had for seventeen hundred years engaged in

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revenge, murder, torture, the pursuit of power, and prerogative, and violence, all in the name of our Lord.

I walked through the ruins of Nagasaki right after the war and visited the place where once stood the Uramaki Cathedral. I picked up a piece of a censer from the rubble. When I look at it today, I pray God forgives us for how we have distorted Christ's teaching and destroyed His world by the distortion of that teaching. I was the Catholic chaplain who was there when this grotesque process begun with Constantine reached its lowest point—so far.

Q: What do you mean by "so far"?

Zabelka: Briefly, what I mean is that I do not see that the moral climate in relation to war inside or outside the church has dramatically changed much since 1945. The mainline Christian churches still teach something that Christ never taught or even hinted at, namely the Just War Theory, a theory that to me has been completely discredited theologically, historically, and psychologically.

So, as I see it, until the various churches within Christianity repent and begin to proclaim by word and deed what Jesus proclaimed in relation to violence and enemies, there is no hope for anything other than ever-escalating violence and destruction.

Until membership in the church means that a Christian chooses not to engage in violence for any reason and instead chooses to love, pray for, help, and forgive all enemies; until membership in the church means that Christians may not be members of any military—American, Polish, Russian, English, Irish, et al; until membership in the church means that the Christian cannot pay taxes for others to kill others; and until the church says these things in a fashion which the simplest soul could understand—until that time, humanity can only look forward to more dark nights of slaughter on a scale

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unknown in history. Unless the church unswervingly and unambiguously teaches what Jesus teaches on this matter, it will not be the divine leaven in the human dough that it was meant to be.

"The choice is between nonviolence or nonexistence," as Martin Luther King, Jr. said, and he was not, and I am not, speaking figuratively. It is about time for the church and its leadership in all denominations to get down on its knees and repent of this misrepresentation of Christ's words.

Communion with Christ cannot be established on disobedience to His clearest teachings. Jesus authorized none of His followers to substitute violence for love; not me, not you, not Jimmy Carter, not the pope, not a Vatican Council, nor even an ecumenical council.

Q.: Father Zabelka, what kinds of immediate steps do you think the church should take in order to become the "divine leaven in the human dough"?

Zabelka: Step one should be that Christians the world over should be taught that Christ's teaching to love their enemies is not optional. I've been in many parishes in my life, and I have found none where the congregation explicitly is called upon regularly to pray for its enemies. I think this is essential.

I offer you step two at the risk of being considered hopelessly out of touch with reality. I would like to suggest that there is an immediate need to call an ecumenical council for the specific purpose of clearly declaring that war is totally incompatible with Jesus' teaching and that Christians cannot and will not engage in or pay for it from this point in history on. This would have the effect of putting all nations on this planet on notice that from now on they are going to have to conduct their mutual slaughter without Christian support—physical, financial, or spiritual.

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I am sure there are other issues which Catholics or Orthodox or Protestants would like to confront in an ecumenical council instead of facing up to the hard teachings of Christ in relationship to violence and enemies. But it seems to me that issues like the meaning of the primacy of Peter are nowhere near as pressing or as destructive of church credibility and God's world as is the problem of continued Christian participation in and justification of violence and slaughter. I think the Church's continued failure to speak clearly Jesus' teachings is daily undermining its credibility and authority in all other areas.

Q.: Do you think there is the slightest chance that the various branches of Christianity would come together in an ecumenical council for the purpose of declaring war and violence totally unacceptable activities for Christians under all circumstances?

Zabelka: Remember, I prefaced my suggestion of an ecumenical council by saying that I risked being considered hopelessly out of touch with reality. On the other hand, what is impossible for men and women is quite possible for God if people will only use their freedom to cooperate a little.

Who knows what could happen if the pope, the patriarch of Constantinople, and the president of the World Council of Churches called with one voice for such a council? One thing I am sure of is that our Lord would be very happy if His Church were again unequivocally teaching what He unequivocally taught on the subject of violence.

Q.: Fr. Zabelka, why after thirty-nine years did you decide to return to Japan and join in a peace pilgrimage that will culminate for you in Hiroshima on August 6 and in Nagasaki on August 9, 1984?

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Zabelka: I am old now. Soon I will go to meet my God. When the invitation came to join this peace pilgrimage, I felt that God had offered me "a great grace," as we used to say. So, I accepted.

Q.: What do you mean, God has offered you "a great grace" by an invitation to join a peace walk?

Zabelka: I do not mean to quibble about words but I did not experience the invitation as a request to join a peace walk. The invitation entered into my soul as "pilgrimage" not "walk." A pilgrimage is a journey one undertakes to holy places for holy reasons.

Q.: But what holy places are you going to visit in Japan? My understanding was that you were going to Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Zabelka: Calvary, the place where Christ suffered and died at the hands of the civil and religious politicians of His day, is the holiest shrine in Christianity. Hiroshima and Nagasaki are Calvaries. For here, Christ in the bodies of the "least" was again tortured and put to death hundreds of thousands of

times over, by exactly the same dark and deceitful spirit of organized lovelessness that roamed Jerusalem two thousand years ago.

Q.: But Calvary is where Christ suffered. He did not suffer in Hiroshima or Nagasaki.

Zabelka: God, Christ, lives in every human being. Our Lord tells us that what is done to the "least" is in fact now done to Him (Matt. 25). I believe that! That is the only kind of God that I could adore and love, a God who lives in human history and suffers with people. I detest and could only fear a god that sat as a depersonalized king

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above the anguish of humanity. This is part of what the Incarnation is all about.

Christ suffers and dies at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Therefore, to condone or support war is to condone or support the call to "Crucify Him." To kill in war is, in fact, to be a "Christ-killer."

I'm sorry: I can say nothing else—if Calvary is a holy place, Hiroshima and Nagasaki are holy places.

Q.: You said that a pilgrimage must not only be to a holy place but for holy reasons. What are your reasons?

Zabelka: Peace! Peace is the fruit of communion with God. It is obvious to me that I, as well as humanity in general, are not in full communion with God, that we need to be reconciled with God. Jesus tells us that the condition now for reconciliation with God is reconciliation of human beings with each other. The Christian is explicitly called to be an agent of reconciliation. The first step in the reconciliation process is repentance for one's sins, for what one has done to separate people from each other and thereby separate humanity from God. The reason I am going to Hiroshima and Nagasaki is to repent and to ask the forgiveness of those, living and dead, whom I have damaged by my failure to love Christically.

Q.: But you were not actually on the planes that dropped the atomic bombs on those cities, were you?

Zabelka: No, but that is irrelevant moral thinking in the twentieth century. Modern war and oppression are carried out by a long chain of individuals, each doing his or her job meticulously while simultaneously refusing to look at the end results of his or her work. There is no state or corporate evil that is not the result of personal sinfulness. In August of 1945, I, as a Christian and as a priest, served not as an agent of reconciliation but as an instrument of retaliation,

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revenge, and homicide. My explicit and tacit approval of what was being done on Tinian Island that summer was clearly visible for anyone to see. Beyond this, I was the last possible official spokesman for the Church before the fire of hell was let loose on Hiroshima on the Feast of the Transfiguration 1945—and I said *nothing*. I was the officially designated Catholic priest who, by silence, did his priestly patriotic duty and chose nationalism over Catholicism, Caesar over Christ, as the "Bockscar," manned by Christians in my care, took off to evaporate the oldest and largest Christian community in Japan—Nagasaki. No, the fact that I was not physically on the planes is morally irrelevant. I played an important and necessary role in this sacrilege—and I played it meticulously. I am as responsible as the soldier who stuck the spear in the side of Christ on Calvary. I come to Hiroshima and Nagasaki to repent and to ask forgiveness from the Japanese people, from my faith community at Nagasaki and from God.

Q.: Isn't it a bit of rhetorical exaggeration to say you were a priest who played a role in a sacrilege?

Zabelka: Not at all. I mean it literally. If someone walks into a church and destroys the altar and statues, etc., it is called a sacrilege. A sacrilege is the desecration of what is considered holy. But for the Christian, the ultimate place of the holy is the human person. We are the "temples of the Holy Spirit."

Therefore, every act of violence toward a human being is an act of desecration of the temple of God in this world. War for the Christian is always sacrilege. There is no such absurdity as a Christian ethic of justified sacrilege. I am a priest who played a role in a sacrilege and that must be said by me and

others like me without equivocation or else the future is a nightmare.

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Q.: What do you mean that the future is a nightmare unless you and others like you acknowledge your role in the sacrilege of war?

Zabelka: Look, I am a Catholic priest. In August of 1945, I did not say to the boys on Tinian, "You cannot follow Christ and drop those bombs." But this same failure on the part of priests, pastors, and bishops over the past 1700 years is, I believe, what is significantly responsible for Hiroshima and Nagasaki and for the seemingly unceasing "Christian" bloodletting around the globe. It seems to me that Christians have been slaughtering each other, as well as non-Christians, for the past 1700 years, in large part because their priests, pastors, and bishops have simply not told them that violence and homicide are incompatible with the teachings of Jesus. On the contrary, I would say that the average priest, pastor, and bishop communicates that violence and homicide can be compatible with Jesus. After all, a machine gun is no more lethal than a broomstick without the will to kill, and the fact is that we so-called Christian "leaders"—by commission and omission, for 1700 years—have been guilty of supplying a significant piece of the motivational apparatus necessary to execute the mass slaughter of war. Let's be honest: to justify an evil is to promote an evil. And let's face it: we priests, pastors, and bishops have been justifying the butchery of war in the name of Christ for a long time. I might also add here that where more is required priestly silence is sinful, because silence gives consent, and consent motivates toward the evil.

Q.: What do you think must be done to begin to address this situation, Father Zabelka?

Zabelka: Unless the legitimate successors to the apostles proclaim fearlessly what the apostles proclaimed fearlessly—that is, that Christ's teachings are teachings of nonviolent love and mercy—and unless they unequivocally repent of their failure and the failure of their predecessors to explicitly teach

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this, then a long night of high-tech terror, torture, and desolation is assured all humanity—first world, third world, East and West. What has to be done is that we Christian "leaders" have to admit openly that we have been engaged in propagating a bloody moral blunder for the last 1700 years: the Just War Theory.

Q.: Specifically, how does your pilgrimage respond to this need?

Zabelka: If my priestly silence spoke for the Church in 1945 to the fellows on Tinian, perhaps my priestly request for forgiveness at Hiroshima and Nagasaki can speak for the Church in 1984. You see, I want to expose the lie of "Christian" war. The lie I fell for and blessed. I want to expose the lie of killing as a Christian social method, the lie of disposable people, the lie of Christian liturgy in the service of the homicidal gods of nationalism and militarism, the lie of nuclear security. I want to expose it by looking into the faces of the hibaksha and saying, "Brother, forgive me for bringing you death instead of the fullness of life. Sister, pardon me for bringing you misery instead of mercy. I and my Church have sinned against you and God." It is hope in the power of that small moment of truth, repentance, and reconciliation that moves me to pilgrimage East by the grace of God.

What is “Constantinian Christianity”?

Originally, Christianity was a way of nonviolent love of friends and enemies. Homicidal violence was not part of the way taught by Jesus or by the early Church.

Christians paid a terrible price at the hands of both Jews and Romans for their refusal to engage in homicide. But the early Church saw a clear incompatibility between Jesus' new commandment to "love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12) and homicide, and therefore could do nothing other than it did.

In short, the Christian church closest to Jesus in history had no doubt that, when Christ disarmed Peter in the Garden of Gethsemane, He disarmed all Christians.

A single example of the early Christian community's commitment to Jesus' Way of nonviolent love of friends and enemies will have to suffice here. It is from the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus (c. 215 AD) which, outside the New Testament, is probably the most influential canonical collection of Christian writings of the first three centuries. It reads, in part:

The soldier (who becomes a Christian) ... shall not kill anyone. If ordered to do so he shall not carry out the order ... If he does not accept this let him be dismissed (from the Christian Community) ... the Catechumen or believer who wishes to become a soldier shall be dismissed (from the Christian Community).

What is "Constantinian Christianity"?

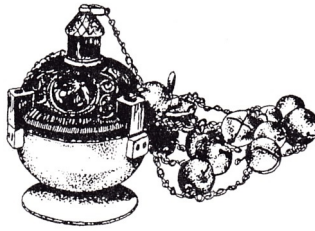
Over time, however, there was a gradual withering away of adherence to Jesus' teachings of nonviolence and love of enemies, and enmity and homicidal violence became part of the accepted Christian Way. This new form of homicide-justifying Christianity became known by the name "Constantinian Christianity" because of the tremendous push down this path given Christianity by the Emperor Constantine.

Yet it was not until decades after Constantine that the first Just War Theory entered the Church (c. 368 AD). It was not until hundreds of years after Constantine that Orthodox and Catholics began to kill each other. It was not until centuries after Constantine that the total extermination practices of the Crusades got under way. It was not until a millennium after Constantine that the six hundred-year history (1288-1826 AD) of burning Jews and heretics at the *Auto-da-Fé* (Act of Faith) began. It was not until 1200 years after Constantine that Protestants and Catholics started tearing each other's lives apart in Europe. It was not until 1600 years after Constantine that Christians began to justify participation in the indiscriminate, industrial homicide of twentieth-century war and the callous, high-tech homicide of abortion.

So, although Constantine was neither the originator nor the end of "Christian" homicide, historians designate as "Constantinian" the form of Christianity that justifies and relies on the power of homicidal violence. This is probably not unfair nor arbitrary since Constantine was the first person ever to use the cross as an ensign to lead human beings into a homicidal battle.

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The Martyrdom of Edith Stein



Thoughts by Edith Stein.

*We know not, and we should not ask before the time,
where our earthly way will lead us. We know only this,
that to those who love the Lord all things will work
together to the good, and further, that the ways by
which the Savior leads us point beyond this earth.*

The Mystery of Christmas

*I know myself held, and in this I have peace and
security—not the self-assured security of a man who
stands in his own strength on firm ground, but the
sweet and blissful security of the child which is carried
by a strong arm. Or would the child be reasonable
which lived in constant fear that its mother might drop
it? Hence in my being I meet another which is not
mine, but is the support and ground of my unsupported
and groundless being.*

Finite and Infinite [Eternal] Being

The Martyrdom of Edith Stein

Johannes Wieners was a German soldier. On August 7, 1942, he was standing in the railroad yard in Breslau, Germany, waiting for the train that was to take him to the Sixth Army in Russia. A freight train came in on the track next to him. When a guard opened one of the sliding doors, Wieners

could see people all penned up, listlessly squatting on the floor. There was a horrible stench coming from the car. A woman dressed like a nun appeared at the door, and, I guess because I looked sympathetic to her, she said to me, 'It's terrible. We don't even have containers to relieve ourselves.' After that, she looked into the distance at Breslau and said, 'This is my home; I'll never see it again.' I stared at her, wondering what she was talking about. She paused for a minute, then said, 'We are going to our death.' That really shook me. Some of my comrades saw us together and laughed at me for talking to a Jew. ... From the markings on the freight train it was clear that it came from Holland. ... I got back from internment in 1948. I read about Edith Stein in a magazine. The minute I saw the picture, I knew it was the Sister from August 7, 1942. August ninth was the date they had given for her death.

Who was this Jew, this Edith Stein, that Wieners' Christian comrades-in-arms (most of the German military were baptized members of either the Catholic or Lutheran church) so contemptuously dismissed, mocking Wiener for talking to her?

Year after year, for thousands of years, the holiest day of the Jewish year has been Yom Kippur—the Day of Atonement. It is a day of prayer and fasting and sacrifice (Leviticus 16). It is the day when, among other things, a ram is offered in a holocaust by the high priest in the Holy of Holies, and when a scapegoat, laden with the sins of God's people, is sent into the desert to die. On this day,

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God in His mercy reconciles his people to Himself despite their unfaithfulness. Among themselves and with God they are once again one—hence "at-one-ment." Edith Stein was born into an Orthodox Jewish family on October 12, 1891. In the year 1891, October 12 was Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

Edith Stein was the youngest of children. Her father died before she was two years old. By the age of four it was apparent that she was a most precocious child. She entered school early by her own choice and, once there, found learning as natural as breathing and as enjoyable as candy. With only a few slight detours—six months off to help care for her sister's children, a year off to be a nurse's aide in World War I—she proceeded by innate ability and a disciplined freedom to become one of the first women to receive a doctorate in the German university system, graduating *summa cum laude* in philosophy.

Along her academic way she met—and later became the assistant of—Edmund Husserl, the creator of the only original systematic philosophy of the twentieth century: phenomenology. As a philosopher therefore, she was a phenomenologist, but one who had enough independence of mind to part intellectual company with Husserl when she felt that her teacher had parted company with his own truth.

Long before any formal philosophical training, at about the age of 13, Edith reached the conclusion that God did not exist. She did, however, continue to go to the synagogue with her mother and celebrate the various Jewish feast days in order not to offend her family. There was neither despondency nor nobility in her atheism. It was just, she thought, a matter of logical fact. It was a "Euclidean" atheism.

Late in the first World War, a fellow philosopher friend, Adolf Reinach, was killed in Flanders. He was a Christian. The way his wife and family responded to the death forced her to logically admit the possibility of an eternal that manifested itself in this world of objects. In other words, she saw that Euclidean thinking on religion

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was reliable up to a point, but that there was evidence that reality existed *beyond* that point.

She began to listen more attentively to what other phenomenologists had to say about religion, particularly to Max Scheler, whose position was that religion alone makes the human being human. But nothing that was said convinced her that it was more than merely logically possible. Doctor Stein's fidelity to truth did not allow her the comfort of saying that God was more than a logical possibility when she did not know God to be more than that.

Then came the moment! The moment the Christian would call the moment of grace. The moment that all the human planning of all the best minds that ever existed could not have produced or even anticipated. The moment when years of patient, secret, unremitting fidelity to the best one has to work with in oneself explodes into a wholly new announcement of a wholly new reality. Without prior fidelity to the microscopic execution of one's old truth, the new truth could not be born. But when all the microscopic decisions are laid side-by-side, it is clear they are infinitely inadequate to give birth to the new truth. Something beyond, but not independent of human decision, must be at work.

In 1921, while on vacation, Edith went to visit for a few days her colleagues and friends, the Conrad-Martiuses, at their farm in Bergzabern. One evening during her stay, they were called away from their home unexpectedly. With an entire evening to fill and nothing of immediate importance to do, Edith began to browse through their library. After casually looking at a number of books, she almost at random withdrew from the bookshelf St. Teresa of Avila's *Autobiography*. After briefly glancing through it she decided to look at it more closely.

A light perusal of the *Autobiography* quickly turned into an intense and passionate immersion in the material. The hours passed: 8 p.m., 10 p.m., 1 a.m., 3 a.m. At a little after five in the morning, she finished the *Autobiography*, closed the book and said the words that

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would for all time and eternity change her life and death. She said, "This is the truth."

As when one finds a pearl of great price, one begins to sell all one has to purchase it, so Edith Stein that very morning bought a catechism and missal, and began immediately to enter into the process of encountering God through Jesus Christ and through His extension in time and space, the Church. "If a truth is believed today, then today is the day to begin to live that truth" was her understanding of what authentic life required.

On New Year's Day, 1922, Edith Stein was baptized. Soon after, she took a position in a Dominican Girls' School and Teacher Training College where she remained for almost a decade. During most of this time she wanted to become a Carmelite, but her spiritual director, Dom Raphael Walzer, Abbot of the Benedictine Monastery at Beuron, felt he could not consent to such a move because it was too soon after Baptism. He felt she had not had time to become acquainted with everyday church life. In addition, he felt that the church needed Edith Stein's intellect outside the cloister.

So, for ten years she taught, lived, and prayed as a laywoman in the German Catholic Church. Her contributions to it were substantial. On request, she undertook and completed the first translation of St. Thomas Aquinas' *Disputed Questions on Truth* from Latin into German. Also on request she undertook original translations of many of Cardinal Newman's works from English into German. (She knew eight languages: German, French, Latin, Greek, English, Spanish, Hebrew, and Dutch.)

Beyond teaching and translating, a significant amount of her time during this period was spent writing and lecturing on women's issues, especially Catholic women's issues. As had Dorothy Day, in Edith Stein's pre-Christian years she worked hard on behalf of women's suffrage. This concern for the role and the understanding of women in the world was not diminished by Baptism. And while she was not a religious orator of Hitler's caliber, the power and clarity of her disciplined intellect enabled her to recognize, analyze,

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and communicate insight into realities ignored by perhaps most of the Catholic population of her time—male or female.

For example, consider the following, written by Edith Stein on the issue of the ordination of women. Remember, it was written in the 1920s!

Here we touch the difficult and much-debated question of the priesthood for women. ... The early Church gave outlet for a manifold activity of women in the Christian communities ... even a consecrated ministerial office, the diaconate. ... Further historical developments take these offices from women and her juridical position is lowered. This seems to have come through ideas stemming from the Old Testament and Roman Law. Modern times show a change. There is an increasing call for women in ecclesial-social work and parish apostolate. On the part of women, there is a growing desire to restore the character of the consecrated office to their role and it could well be that this desire might one day be fulfilled. Whether this would only be a first step on the road that leads to the ordination of women, remains a question. It seems to me, doctrinally, that there are no obstacles to prevent the Church from introducing such an unheard-of novelty. But in practice there are many reasons for and against.

What cannot be overemphasized when recalling the years that Edith Stein was a laywoman in the Church is that, from the time of her Baptism she attended Mass daily and maintained a substantial and disciplined prayer life—even attending all Jewish feasts and synagogue services with her mother when she was at home in Breslau.

In 1931, Edith Stein left the Dominican School and, in 1932, she took a teaching position at the German Institute for Scientific Pedagogy in Munster. She was there for less than a year because

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growing anti-Semitism forced her resignation. Her family then offered her an opportunity to leave Germany for South America but she refused. Instead, on October 15, 1933, after an agonizing final farewell to her Orthodox Jewish mother, she entered the Cologne Carmel (convent) where, five years later, she took her final vows on April 21, 1938. Edith Stein was now Sister Teresia Benedicta of the Cross.

By December of 1938, patriotism-fueled hatred of Jews in Christian Germany had become both commonplace and violent. For the protection of the other Carmelites and for Edith Stein's own protection, she was ordered to go to the Carmel in Echt, Holland. While at Echt, Sister Teresia Benedicta was asked by the Carmelite Order to write an original study of the life and works of the great Carmelite Doctor of the Church, St. John of the Cross, whose four hundredth anniversary was approaching in 1942. It was to be the first reflection written about him from a phenomenological perspective. Titling her work *The Science of the Cross*, Sister Benedicta completed her task in July 1942.

In the late afternoon of August 2, 1942, the Gestapo pounded on the door of the Carmel at Echt and demanded that Edith Stein, and her blood sister Rosa, who had also become a Catholic and was living at Echt, be handed over to them. For a moment, there was confusion and terror in everyone's soul. Then Sister Benedicta gathered up a few things, prayed briefly in the chapel, said farewell to each Sister, took Rosa's hand and walked to the police car. The last words anyone at Echt heard her say were, "Come, Rosa. Let us go for our people."

"Human activity cannot help us, but only the Passion of Christ: it is my desire to share in it," wrote Sister Benedicta before her arrest. Edith Stein was now on her own *via dolorosa*. She was sent to Westerbork detention camp, where other Jews languished in boredom, depression, and meaningless misery. She was assigned the number 44074. Humiliation, filth, terror, and sadistic indignities were the common fare of each day. Then on August 6, 1942, an

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official notice of deportation was read. Edith, Rosa, and thousands of other anonymous, wretched children of God were marched into freight cars to begin a journey to a place unknown. On August 9, 1942, the train from Holland arrived at Auschwitz. The official record reads simply "No survivors."

So now we know *who* this was in the railroad yard at Breslau that the German soldiers had disparaged. She was one of them—a human being. She was one of them—a Christian. She was one of them—a German. She was a woman who could converse in eight languages. She was one of the most disciplined and accomplished minds in all of Europe. She was a nun, a Sister who loved her Sisters. She was a person who had voluntarily given up her whole secular life in order to pray, and to sacrifice ceaselessly for the world, in a cloistered Carmelite monastery. She was the beloved Jewish child of a Jewish mother who had refused to eat on the day of her child's birth because it was the holiest day of the year—Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

Julius Marean, a Jewish survivor of the camp in which Edith Stein was held, has left this final memory of her:

There was a spirit of indescribable misery in the camp; the new prisoners, especially, suffered from extreme anxiety. Edith Stein went among the women like an angel, comforting, helping, and consoling them. Many of the mothers were on the brink of insanity and had sat moaning for days, without giving any thought to their children. Edith Stein immediately set about taking care of these little ones. She washed them, combed their hair, and tried to make sure they were fed and cared for.

Mohandas Gandhi was called the Mahatma or "Great Soul." J.B.S. Haldane, the geneticist, called Albert Einstein "the greatest Jew since Jesus." I personally think that Edith Stein has a spiritual claim to both designations that is superior to either Gandhi's or Einstein's. But of course, it is folly for sinful, finite beings, to speculate among

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themselves about who is the greatest in the Kingdom of God. Therefore, let us just gratefully remember, ponder, the pilgrimage of this Servant of Yahweh, Prisoner No. 44074, from the Day of Atonement, 1891, to August 9, 1942. There is plainly more than tragic incomprehensibility here. For those who will see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their minds, there is here the living mystery of Christ, the Incarnation of Redemptive Nonviolent Holiness. For the Church, there is here a stark, yet gentle invitation to Truth—and a dreadful warning about the consequences of un-Truth.

"Requiescat in pace."

my friend,

*Sr. Maura Clark**

The holocaust continues.

*Sister Maura Clark is one of the Sisters who was raped and murdered by government soldiers in El Salvador.

Icon of Blessed Teresia Benedicta of the Cross

The Works of War or The Works of Mercy

This homily was delivered at the close of the Forty-Day Fast for the Truth of Christian Nonviolence, in Waterville, Maine, on August 9, 1986.

The mutiny against mercy must cease. Is it not clear to all of us that we are in the middle of an epidemic of un-mercy, a heinous epidemic of cruelty and indifference to human suffering?

In 1980, John Paul II, spiritual leader of 800 million Catholics in the world, issued one of the most profound documents that has ever been issued in this century by a pope. It is an extraordinary document, whose truth desperately needs to reach the Church, indeed, to reach all of the religions of the world. It is the encyclical, *Dives in Misericordia* (*Rich in Mercy*).

In it the Holy Father says, "It is God, who is rich in mercy, whom Jesus Christ has revealed to us as Father. Making the Father present as love and mercy is, in Christ's own consciousness, the fundamental touchstone of his mission as Messiah."

The entire document is a statement, my brothers and sisters in Christ, that you and I, by our baptism, have no business in this world but Christ-like mercy. Listen to your hearts, please, whether you are 7 or 77. Do you not know that whether you are rich or poor, black or white, male or female, Greek or Russian or Irish or Italian, in the end you are going to have but one cry on your lips: "Lord, have mercy"? This is to be your final prayer. "Lord, have mercy!" Listen to your own heart, because your heart is the heart of everyone else in this world. As breath begins to depart and pain begins to overcome, the cry will be, "God, help me! Lord, have

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mercy!" Do not all of us know this, regardless of how we present ourselves for public perception?

The Holy Father writes, "Christ, in revealing the love-mercy of God, at the same time demanded from people that they also should be guided in their lives by love and mercy. This requirement forms part of the very essence of the messianic message and constitutes the heart of the Gospel ethos."

Our Church is to be a Church of mercy. The multiple levels and dimensions of human anguish in this world are innumerable. There is nothing on this planet that can extinguish the furnace of agony in which humanity lives except the incarnational fidelity of the Christian and the Christian community to the person and teaching of Jesus Christ. If that group refuses to unreservedly commit to being a merciful community and to being merciful individuals in imitation of the model of Jesus Christ, then the question has to be asked, "What community will bring Divine Mercy into the world?"

John Paul II is unequivocal and uncompromising: "The more the human consciousness succumbs to secularization, loses its sense of the very meaning of the word mercy, moves away from God and distances itself from the mystery of mercy, the more the Church has the right and the duty to appeal to the God of mercy with loud cries."

Listen to this! Thirty-four million dollars a minute is spent in the United States on war. Two billion dollars a minute is spent in the world on war. What world? A world where one person dies every nine seconds of starvation. A world where one person dies every six seconds because he or she cannot get an inoculation that costs pennies. It costs a half a million dollars a day just to operate an aircraft carrier, a half a million a day! What could a half a million dollars a day do to relieve misery?

Listen to the Holy Father: "In human history, love must be revealed above all as mercy and must be actualized as mercy. Christ's messianic program, the program of mercy, becomes the program of his people, the program of the Church."

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It is extremely difficult, I know, to be willing to face the problem of how much of our time, mind and money are being used not for Christ-like mercy but as means of cruelty towards other human beings. But, if we are to be Christian, we must strive to be Christ-like, and to be Christ-like is to struggle to be a merciful people—to struggle in the parish, to struggle inside ourselves, to struggle with our families.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, this is no less a struggle for me than it is for you. It is *the* Christian struggle in a world of pain and indifference to pain—where many people do not care whether they cause pain to others as long as they make money from it or receive some other passing, temporal pleasure.

Ten years ago, Paul VI said, "The arms race is to be condemned, unreservedly. It is an act of aggression that amounts to a crime, for even if the arms are not used, by their cost alone armaments kill the poor, by causing them to starve."

Five years later the present Holy Father said in his encyclical, *Dives in Misericordia*, "The Church lives an authentic life when she professes and proclaims mercy, the most stupendous attribute of our Creator and Redeemer."

Brothers and sisters in Christ, let me conclude with a reflection on Dostoyevsky's famous story "The Lady of Little Faith" (from *The Brothers Karamazov*). In the story, a woman who is late middle age is afraid she is going to die and she is terrified of death. She goes to a holy monk, Fr. Zossima, and she says to him something like this, "Father, I don't know if God exists. I don't know if I'm immortal. I don't know if God loves me. My whole experience is the absence of God. Can you prove to me that God exists?"

Fr. Zossima says to her, "There is no proving it, though you can be convinced of it. Strive to love your neighbor actively and constantly. Insofar as you advance in love you will grow surer of the reality of God and of the immortality of your soul. This has been tried. This is certain."

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Participate in the life of God and you will know God! Please look around you. Do you see people who know God? Are you listening to people who know God? Do *you* know God? The surest way to God is through mercy, because mercy is God. Live mercy and know God. Live mercy and access the power and the wisdom to change the world—the world of self and the world of other-than-self.

Please, whether you are Catholic, or Orthodox, or Protestant, please do not be fooled by the powers of this world—the powers on the thrones or the powers behind the thrones. Please know in your heart and permit yourself to be certain of this reality: the works of war, in preparation and execution, are never, never the works of mercy, and the works of mercy are always the works of God. Turn from the works of war; turn to the works of mercy. Convert, repent, be saved by the Mercy of Jesus Christ. It is there for you. Take it! Grasp it! Go to the School of Christic Mercy and know God! For Christ is God, and God is Mercy!

August 9: A Call to Battle at Medjugorje

Following is the homily delivered at the close of the Forty-Day Fast for the Truth of Christian Nonviolence, in Medjugorje, Yugoslavia, on August 9, 1987.

My brothers and sisters in Christ-God: Today is August 9, 1987. August 9 in contemporary Church history appears to be a sign of a suffering mystery deep within the heart of God.

Fact: On August 9, 1942, in Auschwitz, Poland, Christians deceived by the Father of Lies, Satan, executed their sister in Christ, Edith Stein, (Blessed Teresia Benedicta), for being a Catholic religious and a Jew, and therefore an enemy.

Fact: On August 9, 1943, in Berlin, Germany, Christians deceived by the Father of Lies, Satan, executed their brother in Christ, Franz Jägerstätter for being, in the name of Jesus Christ, a conscientious objector to war and therefore an enemy.

Fact: On August 9, 1945, in Nagasaki, Japan, Christians deceived by the Father of Lies, Satan, executed 40,000 of their brothers and sisters in Christ—Nagasaki being the oldest and largest Christian community in Japan—by dropping an atomic bomb on them because they were Japanese men, women and children, and therefore the enemy.

Fact: At no time in any of the three instances just mentioned, nor in tens of millions of similar instances throughout history, did the fact that all parties concerned were baptized and therefore formally and publicly committed to living under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, interfere with their willingness to destroy their brothers and sisters in Christ at the command of one "little Caesar" or another

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who, in the pursuit of personal power and glory, but always under the name of the common good, had made a mess out of the world.

Fact: Such tragically unserious Christianity, such non-Apostolic Christianity, such non-Catholic Christianity must cease! I repeat, it must cease! For anyone who knows the history of Christian butchery of Christians in exactly this place on the planet—a savagery that matches in agony anything Christians have ever done to Christians in the name of Caesar's politics—will find it impossible not to see Mary's appearance here as anything other than the clearest of statements that fratricide and sororicide among Christians must cease. For on the "shadow" side of the hill on which the Queen of Peace first appeared is a cliff and a monument. The plaque on the monument reads: "Glory to those who died here. ... Summer of 1941. They were tortured and killed like animals and thrown over the cliff." Those who were heaved over that cliff were Orthodox Christians. Those enemies who destroyed them were Catholic Christians. It cannot be an accident that the Queen of Peace appeared exactly *forty* summers later on the "sun" side of that very hill with a call to peace, prayer, conversion, love of enemies, and reconciliation. It can only be the clearest of communications to the Christian community, locally and globally, to stop its violent and homicidal betrayal of the Lord.

Christians have only one Lord, one Master, one King—and that is Jesus Christ. Therefore, we have only one Way to live and that is the Way of holy, Christ-like, nonviolent love and peace. We cannot serve two masters where the Holy is concerned. The Holy summons our whole allegiance, whole heart, whole soul, whole mind, whole strength.

So, today, Sunday, August 9, 1987, here in St. James' Church in Medjugorje, Yugoslavia, we, by our participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, wholeheartedly proclaim along with a billion other Christians at every latitude and longitude of this planet:

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*One is Holy,
One is Lord
Jesus Christ
to the Glory of
God the Father.
Amen, Amen, Amen.*

Since Jesus Christ is Lord, it is in His way that the Church and the individual Christian are called to walk. But it is often forgotten that to walk in the Way of the Lord is to march with an army that does battle against the powers of evil and death—Satan and his legions.

But the Army of Jesus Christ differs from all other armies because the Army of Jesus Christ, doing battle for the Kingdom of God, the Community of Love, fights its battles on its knees, loving its enemies, giving them drink when they are thirsty and food when they are hungry, and praying always that God's "Will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

By marching in this Way, this army brings a peace to the human heart and a peace to the human community that no Caesar with all his armaments and legions could ever bring.

This Christian Army is an upside-down army, for whoever heard of an army marching on its knees, an army whose sole strategy was prayer and whose sole tactic was to love its enemies? But this upside-down Army of Christ is the only force that can turn the world right-side up.

With the words and works of war forever behind it, the Christian Army marches on its knees with the Cross—not the sword—on its shoulders, with the Gospel—and not the gun—in its hands. It marches either to rescue or to defend the City of Peace which can only be defended or rescued by the words and works of Christ-like peace and love. Having the Sermon on the Mount as its shield and unceasing prayer as its battle hymn, the Christian Army becomes a womb in which pious reverence toward God, and peace,

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goodwill and mercy toward all are nurtured, proclaimed, and enfleshed.

Now we hear it rightly and often said that peace does not mean merely the absence of violence and war. This is absolutely true. But what is equally true is that peace always includes the absence of violence and war. The heart at peace does not condone, or cooperate, with the thoughts, words, or deeds of violence or war, regardless of how noble these are trumpeted to be by one or another of the kingdoms of the world. In the Kingdom of God, the heart at peace through prayer and mercy knows only thoughts, words, and deeds of Christ-like peace and mercy. Since it is rendering to God what is due to God—whole heart, whole soul, whole mind, whole strength—it has nothing left to render to Caesar.

When, therefore, we see Christian communities or churches or individuals engaged in the preparation and execution of acts of violence or war, we know that something is terribly askew with their life of adoration and prayer. However, when we see Christian communities, or churches, or individuals thinking the thoughts, speaking the words, and doing the deeds of Christ-like peace and mercy, then we can be morally certain that their life of prayer is as it should be. The test of the sincerity of our prayer, says St. John Chrysostom, is "our willingness to labor for that which we pray." One might add for clarity: labor in thought and in word, as well as in deed.

The Caesars or would-be Caesars of this world will never accept Christ's plan for peace. To them, the Christian Army is folly. Since the dawn of recorded history, they have made a life's project of telling generation after misled generation, that peace is the fruit of hearts that are always ready for violence and war. Our Lord tells us peace is the fruit of hearts continually adoring the one true God whose name is Love, and continually loving all humanity as Christ—God loves all humanity, even if this means healing the ear of an enemy soldier who is committed to taking one to his or her death. Simply said, a heart not converted to Christ-like love of enemies, as

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well as friends, is a heart that is not at peace but at war, and hence in danger of becoming the motor that moves a body to war.

Here at Medjugorje, Our Lady directs us to pray five minutes a day to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to her immaculate and sorrowful Heart for the grace to love our enemies so that her Son will bestow this divine power on us. Mary does not lie!

But are we willing to pay the price for peace? Perhaps the most accurate test of whether an individual Christian or parish or diocese or Church truly wants peace is whether it is willing to commit five minutes a day to pray for the grace to love its enemies.

If "August 9" represents nothing else in the history of the contemporary Church, it represents a failure on the part of the historical Church to universally and daily pray for the grace to love one's enemies as Christ loves His enemies.

But as Christians we are a people of faith and hope. So let us leave this Sunday, August 9, from St. James' Church in Medjugorje not just with a remembrance of past Christian failures, but with a consciousness of present Christian graces—most especially these awe-inspiring apparitions of the Queen of Peace, who comes in an unprecedented way into our violence-crucified and war-plagued world, and not only reiterates her Son's ancient message—peace, prayer, fasting, repentance, love of enemies, reconciliation—but tells us with signs and wonders, perhaps unparalleled since New Testament times, that the power to create a new heart, a new life, a new world exists.

Those dark and dreadful deeds of August Ninths long past need never be again. We can turn the world upside-down, and therefore right-side up, if we listen to Jesus and Mary and reject the hearts, minds, and methods of the kingdoms of this world and seek instead the Kingdom of God (Matt. 6:24-34).

Therefore, let us be all that we can be and enlist in the nonviolent Army of the Lamb of God and thereby become "little Christs," not "little Caesars." And let us then with confidence and without compromise march with, and serve, the Master of masters,

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the King of kings, the Lord of lords—for the ultimate truth and reality of history is

*One is Holy,
One is Lord
Jesus Christ
to the Glory of
God the Father.
Amen, Amen, Amen.*



Shrine of the Lamb, Knock, Ireland (Photo by Paul Cowan/CC BY-SA 2.0)

Behold the Nonviolent Lamb of God

Following is the homily delivered at the close of the Forty-Day Fast for the Truth of Christian Nonviolence at the Shrine of the Lamb, in Knock, Ireland, on August 9, 1988.

In August of 1879, at the rear of St. John the Baptist Church in Knock, Ireland, three human figures in white appeared. The apparition lasted for about two hours from 7 to 9 p.m. Everyone in the village who came saw the apparition. The figures in the white light and the white robes were understood by those who saw them to be Joseph, Mary, and John the Evangelist. During the entire two hours, they spoke not a word.

St. Joseph appeared in a position of silent adoration—most appropriate since he never speaks in the Gospel. Mary appeared in a posture of intercessory prayer—most appropriate since it was at her request that Jesus worked the first of His miracles, at Cana. St. John the Evangelist appeared in the stance of a bishop proclaiming the Word—most appropriate since he is both apostle and author of one of the four gospels.

But the visual, symbolic, theological, and spiritual focus of this apparition was not any of these three great New Testament figures. It was rather a fourth and final figure—a lamb standing on an altar, surrounded by angels. This is as it must be, since every saint and all that the Church does must point unambiguously to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

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Hence, to fathom the meaning of this Irish Icon, it is necessary to ponder the meaning of the Lamb—for it is the Lamb that Joseph is adoring, that Mary is petitioning, and that John is proclaiming.

Hebrew Scripture

The lamb is an unequivocal and universal symbol of gentleness, nonviolence, meekness, and innocence. "As gentle as a lamb" and "as innocent as a lamb" are clichés common to innumerable cultures, yesterday and today. Hundreds of years before Jesus, in another part of the world, Greece, the legendary storyteller, Aesop, wrote this: "The lamb prays to the Lord in the time of creation: Lord do not give me any weapons of defense, because if I have the means to hurt I shall wish to do so." Beyond this, in ancient ages sheep and lambs were the "money," the currency, the medium of exchange that was used to pay the price for what was desired. The Latin word "*petunia*," which means money, is derived from the Greek word "*pecus*" which means sheep.

Among the Jewish people of Old Testament times, the lamb was the animal to be sacrificed to God for the benefit of the people. When the Father of Faith, Abraham, was taking his son, Isaac, up the mountain to sacrifice him, Isaac asked, "Where is the lamb?" Abraham answered in faith, "God will provide."

When God told Moses that, on a certain night, an angel of judgment would take the first-born in Egypt, God also told him that every Jewish household should kill and eat a lamb and put its blood on the doorposts and, if this were done, the angel would pass over that house and the Jewish people would be saved from death and freed from Pharaoh. Hence, the Passover Feast that stands at the very heart of Jewish religion as a remembrance of God's saving, delivering, and rescuing power requires the sacrifice of a lamb for the meal.

By extension, the lamb became the offering at other major Jewish Feasts, as well as the offering of those who wished to make atonement for personal sin. It was the lamb that was the twice-daily

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sacrifice (morning and evening) in the Temple until it was destroyed in 70 AD.

Finally, in the Old Testament there is that mysterious figure of the Book of Isaiah, the Servant of Yahweh or the Suffering Servant. He is the Mount Everest of nonviolent love in the Hebrew Scriptures. He is gentle, does not raise his voice in the street, a man of sorrows, afflicted and thought guilty by others:

*Yet, ours were the sufferings he was bearing
ours the sorrows he was carrying,
while we thought of him as someone being punished,
and struck with affliction by God
whereas he was being wounded for our rebellion,
crushed because of our guilt;
the punishment reconciling us fell on him,
and we have been healed by his wounds.
We had all gone astray like sheep
each taking his own way
and Yahweh brought the acts of rebellion
of all of us to bear on him.
III treated and afflicted,
he never opened his mouth,
like a lamb led to slaughter*

Isaiah 53:4-7

No one with even a slight familiarity with lambs, and no one with even a superficial acquaintance with Old Testament could fail to grasp the characteristics of person that were intended when the first Christians named Jesus by the symbol of the lamb: nonviolence, meekness, innocence, sacrificial love.

New Testament

In the New Testament, the Last Supper and the Crucifixion take place at the time of the Pass-over. The symbolism of the Last Supper as the new Passover Meal and of Jesus as the new Passover Lamb is obvious. Indeed, in the Gospel of John, Jesus is crucified at the very

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hour when the lambs for the Passover are being slaughtered in the
Temple by the priests.

The Jesus of the New Testament is the new Passover Lamb whose blood saves, delivers, and rescues not just from the evils of Pharaoh-like political and economic oppression, but from all the satanic powers of evil and death. As St. Paul explicitly says, "Christ our paschal (Passover) lamb has been sacrificed" (1 Cor 5:7). As St. Peter explicitly says, "You know you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as gold or silver, but by the precious blood of Christ the unblemished lamb" (1 Pet 1:10).

Baptism

It is in the Gospel of John, the Evangelist, that John, the Baptist, first speaks those words which billions of Christians over the centuries have heard just prior to Holy Communion: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). Then John says, "I saw the Spirit come down (on Jesus) like a dove from the sky."

In the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, when John baptizes Jesus, the Spirit descends on Him as a dove, and a voice, a revelation from heaven, says, "This is my beloved son upon whom my favor rests." It is universally understood in scripture scholarship that this sentence directly refers to the opening lines of the Hymn of the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 42:1). At His baptism, at the beginning of His public ministry, the identity which Jesus receives and accepts is as the Suffering Servant, the gentle, nonviolent "lamb led to slaughter" for the good of others.

In the Gospel of John, when John the Baptist proclaims, "Behold the Lamb of God," the same truth, that Jesus is the Suffering Servant, is being communicated. The words, "Behold the Lamb of God" in Aramaic, the native language of Jesus and John, are exactly the same words in Aramaic as "Behold the Servant of Yahweh (the Suffering Servant)."

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Therefore Christians, when they "Behold the Lamb of God", are not only looking upon Christ, the new Passover Lamb, they are equally gazing upon Christ, the Suffering Servant, the nonviolent "lamb led to slaughter" into Whom they are baptized.

It is critical to struggle to comprehend the fact that to be baptized into Christ is to accept to be baptized into the baptism into which He was baptized—and no other. That baptism, as had been said, is explicitly connected by all four gospels to the nonviolent, gentle, sacrificial lamb of Isaiah's Hymn of the Suffering Servant. The Greek word baptism means "immersion." At Christian Baptism one is totally immersed into the new Lamb-like life of the Suffering Servant Messiah (Christ). St. Paul explains this by saying that "as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal 3:27). To put on Christ is to put on the Lamb of God. Indeed, theologically and spiritually, personally and communally, it makes no sense to receive the Lamb of God in the Eucharist until one has put on the Lamb of God in baptism and thereby united oneself with the Lamb and with one's fellow Christians in the Community of the Lamb, the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:1).

Eucharist

The Eucharist is the celebration of the Community committed to the Lamb of God. The Passover Meal in the Old Testament is not bread, but the Passover lamb; the Passover Lamb of the New Christian Passover is the bread which becomes the Lamb of God, the Body of Christ. In the ancient sister Churches of the East, Catholic and Orthodox, the consecrated bread is called The Lamb. Immediately prior to Holy Communion in the Western Church, the community prays, "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world have mercy on us ... grant us peace." The priest then raises the Sacred Host for the people to see and exclaims, "This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to His Supper." This dramatic moment in the Mass goes back at least to the seventh century in the Western Church. The designation of the sanctified bread as the Lamb goes

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back well beyond that in the Eastern Church's liturgy. The Lamb is and has been the Church's Eucharistic symbol par excellence because the Eucharist is the celebration of the Community of the Lamb.

Now when the Christian beholds and consumes the Lamb in Communion, it should be in order to deepen and/or sustain the new life of the Lamb within him or her and within the Community. St. Augustine, commenting on the worthy reception of Communion, states, "If you receive well, you are what you receive ... (therefore) be what you see and receive what you are." Each worthy reception of Communion should draw the Christian ever more profoundly into the Life of the Lamb. Every Eucharist that is what it is supposed to be should build up the Community of the Lamb through Communion with the Lamb.

Church

The Church is composed of Christians who choose to follow the Lamb, who is "meek and humble of heart." The Church is set apart by God as the privileged place where Jesus Christ can be recognized. The Lamb of God is revealed in time and space by those who follow the way of the Lamb. The Church follows this way because She believes that the values, attitudes, beliefs, and powers symbolized and effected by the Lamb are the axis on which the Church and history must be ordered. She believes that the Lamb has conquered (Rev. 17:14) and therefore that the Heart of the Lamb is the Heart of the Universe and is the Heart of the Way of Jesus.

Three times Jesus asks Peter, "Do you love me?" Three times, after Peter replies in the affirmative, Jesus says "Feed my lambs." The Church is the "little flock" of Jesus that is given a new commandment (John 15:12) that all should love one another as the Lamb of God loves them, and thereby renew the face of the earth.

Social Responsibility

It is in the Holy Eucharist that the Church primarily feeds Jesus' lambs, and it is in the Holy Eucharist that the Church makes its

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greatest contribution to the creation of a truly human society. For if the Eucharist is allowed to be what it is supposed to be, then, through the communicants' Lamb-like lives, the Eucharistic Lamb of God becomes the divine leaven in the human dough. The legitimate fruits of Communion with the Lamb are deeds of Lamb-like Love that release the power of God in history.

The time has certainly come for the Irish Christian Churches and all Christian Churches to repent and to stop using the Gospel and the Eucharist as means of justifying, indeed as means of promoting, the Christian absurdity of baptized lambs in wolves' clothing. The time has certainly come to cast as discerning an eye on the fruits of the Eucharist as has been cast on the metaphysics of the Eucharist in order to determine if the Church is about what She is commanded to be about Eucharistically. The time has certainly come for Irish Christians and all Christians to honestly struggle to be what we consume, to consume what we are.

I am certain that this totally biblical Irish icon at Knock is given by the Holy Spirit to the Irish Christian Community, which for centuries has been devastated by its own un-Lamb-like behavior, in order to call it back to its right Christian mind and thereby bring healing, unity, and peace where there has been sickness, division, and war. I am also certain that if the Irish Christian Community responds to the cry of the Lamb for its love and allows the Lamb to be its Lord in deed, as well as in word and sacrament, it will be the beginning of the universal church's exodus from its 1700 years of enslavement to the evils of Pharaoh's violence and war.

Let all Irish Christians work out the details for creating a society under the rule of the Lamb; let all Irish Christians work out the details of disarming the heart, the mind, the body, the society; let all Irish Christians learn war and violence no more and thereby become faithful witnesses to Jesus' way of overcoming evil, and Knock will need an international airport to accommodate the numbers from around the world who will come to The Lamb's Shrine of Reconciliation, Healing, and Peace! For there is no holier

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ground on earth than that place where ancient enemies have been
reconciled—and where the Holy is, the miraculous is. Our Lamb has
conquered; Him let us consume and follow daily.



Church of Dominus Flevit, Mt. of Olives, Jerusalem (public domain)

The Nonviolent Emmanuel

Following is the homily delivered at the close of the Forty-Day Fast for the Truth of Christian Nonviolence, at the Church of Dominus Flevit, on the Mount of Olives, in Jerusalem, on August 9, 1989.

“*Gott mit uns*” was the inscription stamped on the belt buckles of the soldiers of Hitler’s army. It was thought proper that these words be about the waist of Hitler’s legions because, for the majority of German Christians, World War II was not only a fight for the Fuhrer and the Fatherland, it was also a fight for God’s cause. Bishops in Germany, Catholic and Lutheran, were quite insistent that it was one’s Christian duty to join Hitler’s military machine. Hence, “*Gott mit uns*” was a precise expression of the majority German religious mind under Hitler. “*Gott mit uns*” means “God with us.”

A Catholic layman, Franz Jägerstätter, stood firm and told Hitler, the German military, the German Church and the German society that what they were about was not of God and that God was not approvingly with them in their homicide. Because of his Christian faith, other Christians executed him, forty-six years ago today, on August 9, 1943.

“*Gott mit uns*” was the insignia strapped around the waist of the German soldiers who loaded Edith Stein, Sister Teresia Benedicta of the Cross, onto a train for a concentration camp. “*Gott mit uns*” was what girded the German military who took her off that

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train at Auschwitz. "*Gott mit uns*" was what made it psychologically and spiritually possible for her fellow Christians to exterminate her forty-seven years ago today, August 9, 1942.

"*Gott mit uns!*" "The whole structure of secular, religious and military society told me clearly that it was all right to 'let the Japs have it.' God was on the side of my country." So spoke Fr. George Zabelka, Catholic Chaplain to the entirely Christian Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Crew that evaporated the oldest, largest, and original Christian city in Japan forty-four years ago today, August 9, 1945.

As they rush to battle to tear the skin, to burn the flesh and to torture the minds of their fellow human beings, the Christians self-assuredly proclaim "*Gott mit uns*"; the Hindus self-assuredly proclaim "*Gott mit uns*"; the Jews self-assuredly proclaim "*Gott mit uns*"; the Muslims self-assuredly proclaim "*Gott mit uns*" etc., etc. In practically every war fought in known history, the battle cry has included "*Gott mit uns*." But is it so? Is it true?

If Jesus is correct, "*Gott mit uns*" is an untruth, the work of the "Father of lies who is a murderer from the beginning." If Jesus knows what he is talking about, the Divine Presence never resides in the barrel of a gun. If Jesus understands the nature of God and the nature of the human being, then the spirit that plunges the dagger into the bowels or squeezes the trigger of the machine gun is never the Spirit of the Holy.

Only a minuscule number of spiritual leaders in the history of the world have agreed with Jesus. Since leaders by definition lead, only a minuscule number of people in any of the world's spiritual traditions have agreed with Jesus. The overwhelming majority of major and minor religious personages and their followers, regardless of continent, century or cult, have taught and do teach "*Gott mit uns*"—divinely endorsed homicide.

Now as it happens in this year, 1989, August 9 is not only the day of remembrance of the destruction of Edith Stein, Franz Jägerstätter and the people of Nagasaki, but it is also the most sorrowful day in the Jewish liturgical year—Tisha b'Av. Av is the

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Jewish month that overlaps July and August in various ways depending on the year. Tisha, the ninth, of Av is a full day of prayer and of complete fasting, sunset to sunset, in remembrance of the destruction of the First Temple (587 BC) and the Second Temple (70 AD) which took place on this day.

Jewish sages say this is a day that was designated for affliction. All Jews are mourners on the 9 of Av. No pleasure is to be taken in anything. Even the last meal before sunset on the 8 of Av (the Jewish day extends from sunset to sunset) is to be only cold boiled eggs and bread, with some of the bread dipped in ashes. Upon entering the Synagogue at sunset, all lamps are extinguished except those dimly necessary to chant the Book of Lamentations and the *kinot* (dirges). The people sit on the floor or low stool. Nothing that gives happiness is permitted on the day appointed for the tragic, on the day of eternal weeping—the 9 of Av.

One need look no further than the Scripture that is pondered this day, the Book of Lamentations, to see that what is being anguished over is not simply the destruction of the Temple twice over. The agony of the day is that the Temple is where the Shekinah, the Divine Presence, dwelt, and with the destruction of the Temple, the Shekinah departed. At the remains of the ancient western wall of the Temple Mount, it is the absence of this Presence that is bewailed on the 9 of Av.

The destruction of the Temple, however, was but the visible expression of what had already taken place: the Spirit of the Holy no longer abided among the people. As the Liturgy of the 9 of Av makes clear, the Shekinah did not arbitrarily leave. The Divine Presence departed the Temple because the Divine Presence had ceased to be brought to the world by the deeds of the people who came to the Temple to worship in that Presence.

It is an incontrovertible spiritual truth that even the Holy Temple is degraded and becomes but an example of ostentatious architecture when godliness is no longer in the deeds of the people who pray there. The misdeeds of a nation are the seeds from which

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its enemies grow. The more godless the misdeeds, the more godless the means necessary to keep growing enemies at bay. The longer repentance and reconciliation are ignored, the weaker the presence of the Holy in the land—although cult and theology could be at an all-time high. Jewish spiritual masters teach not only that the Shekinah left the Temple before the enemies destroyed it, but that the Temple could only be destroyed because the Shekinah departed from it. It is a self-evident truth that the world's most powerful army is but a basket of toy soldiers to the Holy One.

*If Yahweh does not build a house
in vain do its builders toil.
If Yahweh does not guard a city
in vain does its guard keep watch.*

Psalm 127

The Holy builds and guards by deeds in conformity with the Holy.

The spiritual power of the 9 of Av is threefold: it is brokenhearted over what it is proper to be broken-hearted over; it makes no excuses; it explicitly recognizes the supremacy and mercy of God. In the morning service, the people pray, "O return in mercy to Jerusalem Thy city and dwell therein." The most repeated refrain of the day is "Restore us to thee, O Lord, that we may be restored! Renew our days as of old." The recognition is that while repentant sorrow is real and essential, only God in Mercy can restore—but God *can* restore.

In fact, faith in God's supremacy and mercy on this, the most sorrowful day of the year, reaches galactic proportions, for Jewish tradition believes that it is on the 9 of Av that the Messiah will be born or come.

The spiritual reasoning behind this is that mediocrity is not dangerous to evil. Evil seeks where there is the greatest potential for

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good and latches on to it with the full fiendish fury of hell. Evil knows the goodness ordained for the 9 of Av and therefore wildly orchestrates its resources to shred it to pieces, to cause loss of hope, to sow untruth. But in Jewish spiritual tradition, behind all the lamentations and dirges, there is a ceaseless silent note of confidence in God that sings of the 9 of Av as one day being the most joyful feast of Israel, when the Messiah will come, bringing back the Shekinah and with it Shalom.

In the old city of Jerusalem on the 9 of Av, Jewish women wash walls, scrub floors, and anoint themselves with fragrant oils, thereby making all ready for the arrival of the Messiah through the Gate of Mercy, the Golden Gate in the Wall of Jerusalem (presently physically cemented shut) through which the Shekinah left, when deed no longer matched prayer, when prayer became the justification for misdeed. The washing, scrubbing, and anointing are the simple, yet sublime, faith efforts that symbolize what must be done for the Messiah to bring the Shekinah and Shalom back through the open Gate of Mercy.

How the 9 of Av spiritually coordinates with the 9 of August is as clear as the waters of Baptism. In the New Testament, Jesus shows profound respect for the Temple and calls it "His Father's house" (Jn 2:16) and "a house of prayer for all people" (Mk 11:17). But He goes beyond this and identifies His Body with the Temple (Jn 2:16). His Body, in turn, is identified with the Church, which is seen as the new Temple (1 Cor 3:9, 16; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:19). By baptism into the Body of Christ, the Church, the person becomes the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19).

Therefore, what in reality happened on August 9, 1942 was that the Temple of God, Edith Stein, was desecrated. On August 9, 1943, the Temple of God, Franz Jägerstätter, was desecrated. On August 9, 1945, the Temple of God, the Church of Nagasaki and her people, was desecrated.

Yet, the 9 of August is not a day of mourning in the Church for the premeditated destruction of these precious Temples of God.

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Unlike the 9 of Av, there are mountain ranges of excuses offered for the 9 of August. Unlike the 9 of Av, there is no sense of the loss of the presence of the Holy among the people because of these Temple desecrations. Unlike the 9 of Av, there is no broken-hearted plea to God to “restore us” and to untie knots of enmity-generating nationalism and militarism in which so much of the Body of Christ remains comfortably strait-jacketed. Unlike the 9 of Av, there is no washing and scrubbing for the Messiah on the 9 of August. In short, this indifference of the Church to the destruction of its own, by its own, on this day is clear, convincing, and convicting evidence that homicide in the Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Churches is no longer experienced as a primeval desecration.

By all this I *do not mean* to imply that Christianity has been any worse than the other major religions of the world when it has decided to take up the sword. Homicidal “*Gott mit uns*” is the universal idolatry, blasphemy, and sacrilege of the world's religions. The record of all of them deserves unequivocal condemnation.

But by all this I *do mean* to single out Christianity for special attention because, unlike so many of the other religions of the world, it was explicitly told by its Founder to keep “hands off” the instruments of homicide. It was Christianity's Founder who first singled out His followers, saying, “You have not chosen me, but rather I have chosen you” (Jn 15:16) and, in no uncertain terms, he commissioned them to baptize and to “teach them to obey all that I have commanded you” (Mt 28:20). Among the things that He designated that were to be taught and obeyed were “Love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 15:12); “Love your enemies” (Lk 6:27); “Do good to those who hate you” (Lk 6:28); “Turn your other cheek” (Mt 5:39); “Forgive seventy times seven times” (Mt 18:22); and “Put up your sword” (Mt 26:51).

Christianity must therefore be pinpointed for specific attention because it is in radical conflict with a basic dynamic of the moral universe. No one can be expected to teach or to live other than his or her truth. But everyone is expected to teach and to try to live his or

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her truth. Nonviolence is not what Vishnu, Moses, Mohammed, or many other spiritual leaders taught. Nonviolence is what Jesus taught, and Christians believe Jesus to be not only an infallible moral teacher, but also the incarnation of the Shekinah, Emmanuel, "God with us."

Failure on the part of the Church to teach and to struggle to live that truth entrusted to it by the Holy One is an abdication of responsibility before God and before humanity. Truth given must be lived and taught so that it may enter, as God wants it to enter, into the mystery of the history of salvation. What is neither taught nor lives has no place in history. If it is a person's or group's God-ordained mission to place a truth in history and they do not do it, then who will do it? And when will they do it? And how much devastation in untruth will occur before compensation can be made for such a person's or group's historic irresponsibility?

It is Christianity that has the commission from God in history of "asking" by word and by deed the other religions of the world—all nations—if "*Gott mit uns*" is the truth. But Christianity has paralyzed its ability to ask this critical spiritual question by its own unrepentant history of "*Gott mit uns*." Therefore, the hard question is not put in history and "*Gott mit uns*" goes on unimpeded to the next eruption of unholy homicide.

So on this August 9 and on this Tisha b'Av here at the Church of Dominus Flevit on the Mount of Olives, where the Lord wept over Jerusalem and the coming destruction of the Temple, and where he lamented, "If you had only recognized on this day the way to peace" (Lk 19:41), let us offer a twofold prayer:

That God in Mercy will do something to restore the Christian Church so that She may again be true to Her God, true to Herself and true to Her mission to humanity and proclaim by word and deed that "*Gott mit uns*" is not the correct understanding of the nature or the will of God, but that Jesus' way of nonviolence is the way of the Holy, let us pray to the Lord;

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That God in Mercy will do something to open the eyes and the minds and the hearts of all, especially the religious leaders of the world, so that all may understand the meaning and the spiritual, moral, social, and economic requirements of the words, "The Lord is one" (Dt 6:4), "Father of all, over all, through all and within all" (Eph 4:7), let us pray to the Lord.

Nine Pines, Garabandal, Spain (picture)

Think About the Passion of Jesus

Following is the homily delivered at the close of the Forty-Day Fast for the Truth of Christian Nonviolence at the celebration of the Holy Eucharist at the Nine Pines of Garabandal, Spain, on August 9, 1991.

In humble acceptance of the Gospel Wisdom emphasized by Our Lady of Mt. Carmel at Garabandal, let us as individual Christians and let us as Church meditate on the last words of her last message: "Think about the Passion of Jesus."

Think about the Passion of Jesus. Jesus does not die of a heart attack. He does not die after a long illness. If one thinks about the Passion of Jesus, it is self-evident that He dies explicitly as a consequence of people choosing homicidal violence in order to foster a cause and to achieve an end which they feel requires it. Every drop of Christ's precious blood is spilt as the result of violence directed towards Him. In His Passion, however, Jesus does not take one drop of any human being's blood in retaliation, revenge, or defense against that violence. To think about the Passion of Jesus is to remember violence and homicide—violence and homicide justified by all parties involved in it, except one, the Victim.

Think about the Passion of Jesus. This Victim, who by all standards of culturally nurtured consciousness had every right to strike back, did not. He did not try to out-Pilate Pilate. He trustfully lived to the end what He taught as God's Will from the beginning, namely, the nonviolent love of friends and enemies. Every one of His five wounds was the direct and immediate result of violence. Yet, He did not pay back wound for wound, He did not savage those who savaged Him. Instead, from the wounds of this Victim came the light of love for the enemies, prayer for the persecutors, forgiveness, reconciliation —the opposite of what the world of politics and personal devils would have brought from them. In actual historical reality, it is through Jesus' nonviolent response to violence and homicide that the salvific power of God, who is Love, is able to definitely enter history.

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Think about the Passion of Jesus. It is the greatest manifestation of nonviolent love the world has ever seen. From the Mount of Olives to Mount Calvary, the way of the cross is the way of staggering nonviolence. Think about the Passion of Jesus. It is the greatest sermon on nonviolent love the world has ever heard. From Gethsemane to Golgotha, hostile, clever, brutal, and petty violence receives the reply of non-retaliatory love.

Think about the Passion of Jesus! The only Jesus there ever was or ever will be is the Jesus who had His life torn apart by religiously endorsed, rationally justified and governmentally executed violence to which He explicitly responded by rejecting it as His way. Nothing in the Passion of Jesus is more obvious than this—and nothing is more universally ignored.

Think about the Passion of Jesus. Before creating metaphysical, metaphorical and mythical interpretations and spiritualization of Jesus' Passion, how necessary is it that the event be fully accepted in its concrete historical and moral facticity? In fact, is it not a certainty that if the most obvious historical and moral realities in the Passion are bypassed, because they are not thought to be "deep" enough or "spiritual" enough, the risk is run of forever being off the track in understanding what God is about, what God is trying to communicate for the good of humanity in the Passion of Jesus.

Consider this. In the Old Testament there is a massive presence of homicidal violence. The theme of God's bloody vengeance occurs in approximately 1,000 passages. Beyond this, over 600 passages explicitly talk about nations, kings, politicians, or individuals attacking, destroying, or killing others. In over one hundred passages, God is said to expressly give the command for human slaughter. And, of course, as an ultimate expression of the incomprehensible depths of the diabolical that humanity is ensnared in by homicidal violence, Sacred Scripture exposes homicide as the first sin outside the Garden of Eden. This original sin of non-Edenic history is, moreover, committed by the first-born of Adam and Eve, Cain. Did God, in designing the salvation of the

Destined to be a Holocaust world through Jesus arbitrarily allow death by homicidal violence? Did Jesus, at the cost of everything, answer this violence with nonviolence, this cruelty with compassion, this hate with love because He had no other alternatives or could not think of anything else to do? Is it really theologically, spiritually, or humanly permissible to dismiss as an insignificant or "unspiritual" detail the stark, searing, body-breaking confrontation between homicidal violence and nonviolent love that occurs in the Passion of Jesus? Think about the Passion of Jesus. Is it really accidental or of so little importance that at three o'clock in the afternoon on Good Friday, 33 AD, Jesus is destroyed by the same sin that destroyed Abel in the earliest moment of humanity's sinful history outside paradise?

If a peaceful death in bed were sufficient for the salvation of the world that began in Jesus Christ, then that would be the Gospel Story. If mere animal pain were all that was required for the salvation of the world, then an infinite number of gruesomely painful human experiences are available. But in actual fact, in the Passion of Jesus, God definitively conquers evil and opens the door for the salvation of the world by having Jesus nonviolently walk into the humanly manufactured furnace of homicidal violence armed only with truth, trust, forgiveness, and love. The Passion of Jesus explicitly and intentionally pits the weapons of the Spirit against the weapons of Cain. The individual Christian and the Church that bypasses this foundational reality in the Passion, this primal fact of Divine authorship and of human history, in order to get to deeper spiritual and theological matters, will never get there! To know the way of Jesus one must walk in the way of Jesus. The humility to fully accept the way God gives as revelation in Jesus is step one in any authentically Christian pilgrimage.

Now, think about the Passion of Jesus in the light of August 9 in contemporary Church History. It is on this day in 1942 that Christians at Auschwitz destroyed the extraordinary Carmelite, Sister Teresia Benedicta of the Cross, known in secular life as Edith Stein. It is on this day in 1943 that Christians in Berlin beheaded the

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Austrian peasant, Franz Jägerstätter, because he refused to kill for Hitler's military. It is on this day in 1945 when an entirely Christian crew dropped the atomic bomb on the oldest and largest Catholic city in all Japan, Nagasaki. Think about August 9 in light of the Passion of Christ.

The mystery of August 9 lies not in the uniqueness of what it symbolizes but in its ability to horrifyingly illuminate the normality of homicidal violence in Christian life—Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant—for the last 1700 years. Lest it be thought that this is an exaggeration and since on this August 9, we are in Spain, let me offer but one piece of evidence from local history to support this truth. (Literally millions of pieces of similar evidence are incontestably available.)

About the time of the Spanish Inquisition and the Conquistadors' exploits in the Americas, Spanish imperial troops attacked Rome. Sebastian Schertlin, their commander, proudly left this record: "In the year 1527, on 6 May, we took Rome by storm, put over 6,000 men to the sword, seized all that we could find in the Churches and elsewhere burnt down a great part of the city." From the other side of the Christian sword an Italian, Luigi Guicciardini, writing on the same homicidal event says, "Many were suspended for hours by their arm by the Spaniards, many were cruelly bound by their private parts, many were suspended high above the road, or over water while their tormentors threatened to cut the cord; others were nailed up in casks; now a few were cut all over their person by red-hot irons. Some were tortured by extreme thirst; many were cruelly tortured by having their good teeth drawn. Others again were forced to eat their own ears or nose or their roasted testicles ..." A handwritten note comes down to us of this glorious homicidal victory of one group of Christians over another from a man named Giovanni Barozzi. It cries out, "I am a prisoner of the Spaniards. For the love of God and the Blessed Virgin, help me." Think of the Passion of Jesus.

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I am of, course, in no way trying to isolate Spanish Christianity as a particularly mutant strain of Christianity. American, English, French, Russian, German, Serbian, Croatian, etc., Christianity all have the same history of glorious homicidal victories with "Christ on their side." I am only concerned here with the Passion of Jesus. When the violent, brutal, self-righteous, indeed homicidal, Saul encounters the Resurrected One on the road to Damascus he is asked "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" His response to the question is a question "Who are you Lord?" To his inquiry comes the direct and terrifying answer, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." How could it be more clearly communicated? In a mystical, hidden, but real way, "whatever is done to the least" is somehow done to Jesus. Jesus could have said "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting my people?" But, that is not what is said in the blinding light on the Damascus road. Think about the Passion of Jesus.

In the depth of reality what are Christians doing when they maim, torment, and kill one another or support and endorse these activities? Jesus' post-Resurrection words to Saul indicate there is more to the Passion of Jesus than most Christians in the last 1700 years have been willing to think about. Is there such a thing as a Christian Christ-killer? Is there such a thing as a Christian tormentor of Jesus? Is there such a thing as a Christian Church that endorses, justifies, and nurtures the persecution of Jesus? The violent Saul thought about the pain of Jesus, repented, and became the nonviolent Paul. Fundamentally, Christianity is about an existing Person and our relationship to Him.

There is overwhelming evidence that the Church of original Christianity understood itself as a community that existed for quenching the thirst of Jesus, for binding His wounds, for feeding His hunger, for clothing His nakedness, etc. Its self-identity was as a nonviolent people of peace expressly called out from the various homicidal and warring nations, cultures, tribes and classes in order to be a people of mercy. So committed was the early Church in

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trying to be faithful to Jesus' "New Commandment —to love one another as I have loved you"—that it elicited from pagan Romans the now famous comment: "See how these Christians love one another."

For the last seventeen centuries, however, Christians have been saying, "We will follow Jesus and reject homicidal violence as soon as non-Christians follow Jesus and reject homicidal violence." How much of this brilliant fool's gold theology is enough? Some generation of Christian leadership is going to have to take all the necessary steps to return the Church to being a nonviolent people of peace amidst the warring and hostile nations, cultures, tribes, and classes. Some generation of Christian leadership will have to face the task of taking the Church out of homicidal violence. Some generation of Christian leadership is going to have to respond to the pain of Jesus and bring the Church back from being a remorseless persecutor of Him who asks, "Why are you persecuting me?" I would respectfully ask, why should it not be this generation?

Think about the Passion of Jesus. It is not myth. It is fact—the most important fact in all of history. It is present reality—whether we think about it, or whether we ignore it. There truly is a difference—a difference as wide as the abyss that separates heaven from hell—between suffering as Jesus suffered and causing Jesus to suffer by causing those whom He loves to suffer. The first is participation in the Passion of Jesus with all its redemptive power. The second is hell reigning on earth. Some age of Christian leadership is going to have to restore the Community to its right mind on this. Some era Christianity is going to have to put an end to that form of Christianity that justifies the persecution of Jesus—whom it simultaneously professes to love and to adore. Again I ask, why should it not be our age, our era?

Destined to be a Holocaust

Following is the homily delivered at the close of the Forty-Day Fast for the Truth of Christian Nonviolence at the Carmelite Convent at Auschwitz, Poland, on August 9, 1992.

If you believe in God, make your actions consistent with your belief.

Edith Stein

It seems to me that a woman who chose the anonymity of a hidden life in a cloistered Carmelite monastery would have no interest in human praise. So, I come here today, August 9, 1992, on the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Edith Stein, not to praise her but to continue her mission, which is actually Jesus' mission—peace. That this was part of her mission can be seen from the fact that on Passion Sunday, 1938, with the consent of her Carmelite superiors, Sr. Teresia Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein) formally offered her life to God for "world peace." However, that peace for which she sacrificed herself is no closer today than it was fifty years ago today. The need to ask, "Why?" is self-evident.

It is a truism of Christian existence that if the Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed in all its fullness except as it relates to the great spiritual failures of one's own time, then the Gospel has not been proclaimed. Failure to speak and act in a Christ-like fashion in relation to the diabolical operations of one's own age can even make Christianity an accomplice in evil.

Silence or its sophisticated equivalent—open-ended ambiguous moral statement capable of an indefinite number of interpretations—gives consent. The Church knows this. Hence, at different periods over Her two thousand-year history, She has taken a red pencil and underlined with maximal authority certain words of the Gospel that people inside and outside the Church at a particular time were in dire need of facing and accepting. The cost for this underlining was often substantial. Yet fidelity to Jesus' Great Commission to the Church allowed for nothing less: "Go you, therefore, and baptize all nations in the name of the Father and of

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the Son and of the Holy Spirit, *teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you*" (Mt 28:19-20). So, again this year, from Japan to Ireland, Christian people have undertaken *The Annual Forty-Day Fast for the Truth of Christian Nonviolence* (July 1-August 9), which we conclude here at Auschwitz today, in order to intercede with Christ-God for grace for the Church to take out Her red pencil and underline, for Her own people and for all people on this blood-soaked planet, Jesus' teaching on the satanic activity of homicidal violence and enmity.

The most obvious reality about Auschwitz is that Auschwitz is about homicide. Whatever else one wants to say about Edith Stein's death, it is, like Jesus' death, a homicide. As the twentieth century winds down, one hundred million corpses of people who have been killed at the hands of other human beings bear witness to nine decades of homicidal savagery unmatched in previous centuries. This death toll is more than all the centuries of recorded history combined and, as of today, we are still counting. If the moral moment has not now come for the Church to take out Her red pencil and underline Jesus' teaching on enmity and homicidal violence, and to inform Her own people that they must stop their participation in the state sponsored tournaments of homicide called war, then it is hard to see what level of homicidal satanism would have to be reached for the Church to remove Her people from these spirits and apparatuses of human destruction which are so contrary to all that Jesus was and taught.

There is no such thing as a Christian military solution to the evil of homicidal violence. A Christ-like war is a lie. It is obviously not a Christ-like solution if, instead of my child or friend being destroyed, someone else's child or friend is destroyed. National military solutions—without exception—are willing to throw someone else's child or friend into the flames and therefore cannot be in line with the teaching of Jesus, who would throw no one into the flames. Yet, the historical record is beyond dispute. Since the time of Constantine to this time of global radiation, Christians have been

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killing each other, as well as non-Christians, and have been blessed for doing so by other Christians. The Christian allegiance to the spirit and behavioral demands of state-endorsed homicide has been nothing short of idolatrous.

Over and over and over again, the Church—Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant—has permitted Her sacramental, catechetical, and educational systems, to become part of the Pantheon of "myths men kill by." The following excerpt from an address by Bishop Franz Josef Rarkowski, the Catholic Bishop for the German Military, who was directly responsible for the moral and spiritual guidance of German Catholics in World War II is illustrative and utterly normal in Church history:

Each of you knows what is at stake for our Volk in these stormy days; and, in whatever is asked of you, each sees before him the shining example of a true warrior, our Fuhrer and Supreme Commander, the first and most valiant soldier of the Greater German Reich, who is even now with you at the battlefield. We will never forget that first day of September when he issued his formal call to arms to the entire Volk. You, too, were somewhere out there. ... Your ears and hearts were witness to that historic moment when the Fuhrer stepped before the whole Volk in his old military cloak of army gray. You heard his words and sensed in them your Supreme Commander's love and concern. ... Thus, the example of the Fuhrer stands before you in brilliant glory.

This kind of anti-Gospel catechesis and rhetoric in support of homicide and enmity can be found in the mouths of Christian pastors wherever on this globe the Church—Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant—has been established since the fourth century. Again, if the time is not here for the Church to pick up Her red pencil and put an "X" through all of this sham Christianity, while simultaneously

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underlining in red Jesus' teachings that reject enmity and homicide, when will the time be here for Her to sever her alliance in homicide with the state?

The flames of Auschwitz in which Edith Stein was incinerated were the bitter fruit of an ecumenical Christian effort. At least 90 percent of the people responsible for the immediate operation of Auschwitz, and for the civilian bureaucratic support system that was absolutely necessary for its existence, were baptized Christians. However, if Edith Stein's life had taken a different course and she had stayed in her Carmel at Cologne rather than going to Echt, Holland, and being arrested and sent to Auschwitz, her fate would nevertheless have been the same. On October 30, 1944, the British conducted one of their infamous obliteration bombings over Cologne using incendiary bombs. The Carmel at Cologne became an inferno. If Sr. Teresia Benedicta of the Cross had stayed, she would have been incinerated—as was Sr. Johanna of the Cross who was in the Carmel at the time.

This year, 1992, a statue was unveiled in England with all due pomp in honor of Arthur Harris. Arthur Harris was a Christian and the head of Bomber Command, the almost entirely Christian group responsible for the firebombing of the civilian populations of Dresden, Cologne, etc.

Are the contradictions not now blatantly grotesque? Has not Christianity become the leading witness in history against its own Truth? Has not the hour arrived for the Church to say, "Jesus, I trust in You," "Jesus, I trust in your Way of Peace," "Jesus, I trust in Your teaching," "Jesus, I trust you would not lie to us," "Jesus, I trust You know the will of God," and then to take out Her red pencil and underline with maximal solemnity and authority those Gospel passages that irrefutably proclaim that homicidal violence and enmity cannot be the Christian Way, because homicidal violence and enmity are not the Way of Jesus? Admittedly, this would mean separating Christianity *en masse* and forever from any form of state homicide. Would that be bad? Would that make the Church a less

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authentic witness of the Gospel in the world, a less credible reality
to humanity, a less powerful channel of God's grace in history?
Would that peace for the world for which Edith Stein offered her
life on Passion Sunday, 1938, and for which she gave her life fifty
years ago today here at Auschwitz be hindered or advanced by such
a permanent separation?

If you love God, trust Him.

Edith Stein

August 9, 1992 -Auschwitz

(Picture-location of the gas chamber where Edith Stein died
August 9, 1942)

Franz Jägerstätter: The Man Who Chose To See

Following is the homily delivered at the close of the Forty-Day Fast for the Truth of Christian Nonviolence at St. Radegund's Church, in St.

Radegund, Austria, on August 9, 1993.

The life of Franz Jägerstätter was a simple one. An Austrian peasant from the village of St. Radegund, he was a devout Catholic, a daily communicant who said the rosary while doing farm chores. Sexton of his parish church, he married and had three children. On August 9, 1943, fifty years ago today, Franz Jägerstätter was killed by the German military for refusing to kill for the German military.

At the hour of his death, few people knew him and no one who knew him supported him in his refusal to kill for the Fuhrer. Legions of Christians told him to do his duty and go to war like the other men. His bishop, pastor, and spiritual advisors endeavored to persuade him that his conscientious objection was a wrong and futile course. So it can be said with certitude that, when the blade of the guillotine fell at Brandenburg Prison in Berlin at 4 p.m. on August 9, 1943, Franz Jägerstätter was totally alone, almost totally unknown, and destined to be totally forgotten.

However, as a manifestation of how the mystery and power of God's plan of redemption in Jesus Christ unconquerably advances in history, today on August 9, 1993, throughout the world millions of people will stop, think about, and be touched by the witness of this man. They may disagree among themselves about historical details of his life, but no one will doubt that the finger of God was operative here—and operative not just for the salvation of Franz Jägerstätter but also for the good of the Church, and through the Church for the good of all people.

The story of how Franz Jägerstätter went from being a criminal murdered by a government for declining to partake in a state's war, to being a person discussed at the Second Vatican Council, to being a figure known at every point of the compass deserves to be pondered by those who believe that simple fidelity to the Word of God revealed in Jesus is not enough, as well as by those who believe that Christianity must proclaim a "realistic gospel" of compromise with evil if it is to be effective in this world. But on this fiftieth

Franz Jägerstätter: The Man Who Chose To See anniversary, I do not want to focus on the story of Franz Jägerstätter after his death. Instead, I wish to raise to visibility the prophetic purpose and meaning of his life and death. I desire to illuminate the salvific communication from God for which he was the chosen instrument.

A few years ago, I watched a public service advertisement on a television. Produced by an alcoholic rehabilitation organization, it was intended to awaken people whose families had become dysfunctional because they were denying a self-evident fact; namely, that someone in the family was an alcoholic and that the unwillingness to acknowledge it was distorting, indeed ravaging, domestic life.

In the ad, a family is relaxing in the living room. The father reclines in an easy chair perusing the newspaper. The mother sits on the couch sewing. A little girl watches TV. All of a sudden, an elephant enters the living room and begins to upset things with almost every move. By the time the ad concludes, the family's world has been turned upside-down. The father's easy chair is tipped over, he is sprawled on the floor. His glasses are broken, but he continues to try to read the newspaper. The mother lies on the couch underneath a busted lamp struggling to re-thread a needle, and the little girl peeks around the elephant in order to watch a now-crushed television set. However, in spite of this shattering breakdown in community life, no one is capable of speaking the plain truth: "There is an elephant in the room and it is ruining everything."

All continue to ignore the obvious. Like people myopically concerned with properly rearranging the deck chairs on the *Titanic*, everyone's attention is entirely absorbed by incidental tasks, which would be proper and right except for one terrible fact: there is an elephant in the room. This fact transforms these otherwise acceptable activities into dead-end escape routes from truth and reality. Said spiritually, good loses its goodness when it is permitted

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to become the agency by which evil is left unnamed and hence is allowed to engulf an ever-greater area of life.

It is not exaggeration to assert that the greatest scandal and distortion of Christianity—Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant—for the last 1,700 years has been its enormous participation in and justifications of homicidal violence as consistent with the following of Jesus and His Way. Yet it is a scandal and a distortion that almost no Christian or Church will publicly admit exists. Decade after decade, century after century for 1,700 years the Churches' ecclesiastical structures, sacramental systems, and theological faculties have been handed over to nationalisms, ethnoisms, and militarisms for supporting the evil of war. The astronomical amounts of "Jesus-approved" misery and cruelty that Christians have wreaked upon each other, as well as upon non-Christians, are beyond human computation or comprehension. But somehow, generation after generation, a leadership arises in the Churches, and a laity is nurtured through the Churches, that does not perceive the ecclesiological, spiritual, or theological problem of receiving Holy Communion at a pre-battle Eucharist at 9 a.m. in preparation for savaging another human being at 11 a.m.

Regardless of how blatant the inconsistency has become between the reality of war and Jesus' teachings, few Christians have stood up and said, "There is an elephant in the Church and it is ruining everything." Consider this verbatim excerpt, as recorded in an on-site documentary film, of a Marine Sergeant instructing his trainees:

Sergeant: What is a mine? A mine is no more or less than an explosive or chemical substance that is designed or made to destroy and kill the enemy. You want to rip out his eyeballs. You want to tear apart his lung machine. You want to destroy him, privates. You don't want nothin' left of him. You want to send him

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home in a trash bag to his mommy. Trainees in unison
scream: Yeah! Yeah!

This is not abnormal talk in the world of military training. The normal in that world, all over the world, is vulgarity and un-Christ-likeness in the extreme. Yet leadership and laity of all the Christian Churches—minus a tiny number of denominations whose members believe that Jesus cannot be followed by engaging in human slaughter—have, to-date, been blind to the contradiction and have been indifferent to the gutting that is being done to individual souls and to the Church by participation in this flagrantly un-Christ-like activity.

Why Churches—leadership and laity—resolutely refuse to look at the Himalayan discordance between what Jesus taught and what they are chronically justifying in His name is an enigma demanding investigation. Seen from the perspective of social psychology, it appears to be a process whereby a group persuades itself, contrary to overwhelming evidence, to believe what it knows is not the truth. It is a people convincing itself by tragic rationalizations that black is white, that the heinous is Christ-like, e.g., "We do not know for certain what Jesus would have done with an atom bomb or machine gun since he did not live in our time and never spoke directly to the complex issues raised by these modern weapons." It is individuals with group encouragement telling each other that there is nothing to be seen, morally and spiritually, when they know very well there is something unbearably distressing to be seen morally and spiritually. It is the alcoholic and his or her family dogmatically denying there is any real problem to be faced, tenaciously avoiding the unwanted truth: "There is an elephant in the room and it is ruining everything."

Franz Jägerstätter's schooling ended when he was fourteen. He could not articulate a formal theology of Christian nonviolence, nor could he articulate a formal just war theology. How could he possibly be expected to, when even today most Christians are

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taught little or nothing about either? Yet after two periods of military training, he permanently turned away from the only war and military operation he ever encountered; one which had the enthusiastic endorsement of his fellow Austrian and German Christians. He made this decision on the basis that participation would be a betrayal of his Lord and could seriously jeopardize his eternal destiny.

While prelates of distinction and theologians of renown were ceaselessly repeating, "*Heil Hitler*," Jägerstätter was literally saying, "*Pfui Hitler*." While self-designated Christian realists were expounding their theories on why it was necessary to cooperate with evil in order to save the Church, Jägerstätter was observing:

Are we Christians today perhaps wiser than Christ Himself? Does anyone really think that this massive bloodletting can possibly save European Christianity from defeat—or bring it to a new flowering? Did our good Saviour, whom we should always try to imitate, go forth with His apostles against the heathens as German Christians are doing today?

While sophisticated religious propagandists for the government and military were telling people that St. Paul teaches in Romans 13 that Christians are "to obey authorities," Jägerstätter was responding "but only to the extent that they do not order anything evil, for we must obey God rather than men." In short, almost alone among the Christians of Austria and Germany, he pointed out that there was an elephant in the Church!

The actual movements of mind and heart that empowered Franz Jägerstätter to see the obvious can never be known with certainty this side of eternity. As would be expected, his consciousness and conscience evolved as the crisis intensified and as the imperative to choose became more pressing. While there is hearsay and circumstantial evidence of various degrees of credibility concerning his internal religious development, as well as much sheer speculation, he in fact left only a few

Franz Jägerstätter: The Man Who Chose To See letters and reflections. However, from these we can catch a glimpse of what was going on inside of him and of where he had arrived by the end of his *via dolorosa*. For example, in his prison statement, composed shortly before he was to die, he wrote:

Just as those who believe in National Socialism tell themselves that their struggle is for survival, so must we, too, convince ourselves that our struggle is for the eternal Kingdom. But with this difference: we need no rifles or pistols for our battle, but instead, spiritual weapons—and the foremost among these is prayer.

He concludes this prison statement with these most soul-revealing words.

Let us love our enemies, bless those who curse us, pray for those who persecute us. For love will conquer and will endure for all eternity. And happy are they who live and die in God's love.

All Austrians, of course, would have heard the same Gospel that Jägerstätter heard, but it seems from what his neighbors report that he read it and re-read it, pondered it and prayed over it as none of them did (he was occasionally referred to as a religious fanatic). By this grace-saturated process, the culturally created blinders dropped from his eyes and the elephant of evil became so visible that he was compelled to speak the truth and follow Jesus to a criminal's death, if necessary, rather than continue to make believe that the diabolical was compatible with the Way of Divinity Incarnate.

Franz Jägerstätter then is not just a martyr for the faith; he is also a chosen prophet of the true God. The Hebrew prophets are not people with witch-like visions that predict the future, nor are they persons who simply speak their own minds and dreams. They explicitly speak the Word of God to concrete situations. By God's grace, they vividly see the rebellion against this Word in the here-

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and-now and therefore realize the inevitable and disastrous outcome if present choice patterns remain unaltered. They warn those who have eyes but will not perceive, who have ears but will not hear, who have minds but will not understand that it is an absolute necessity to see, name, and turn away from an evil that is being marketed in pseudo-divine packaging. In short, they are the ones sent by God to declare to those who adamantly refuse to look, "There is an elephant in the room and it is ruining everything."

For Israel, the Church, or the world, the consequence for dismissing a prophet is cataclysm beyond imagination, where the prayer of people becomes "Lord, let the mountains fall on us." The fruit, however, of heeding the prophet is life in a fullness that cannot be conceived beforehand.

The critical question then is this: Is Franz Jägerstätter a true prophet or is he a false prophet? The only method of discerning this matter would be to prayerfully ponder three things: Jägerstätter's life (e.g., in Gordon Zahn's book), *In Solitary Witness*; the reality of military activity; and the Gospel of Jesus. It might also be helpful to reflect on what the biblical scholar, the late Fr. John L. McKenzie, presents as the criteria by which one distinguishes the true from the false prophet:

The false prophet may be sincere, but, he is nonetheless false. Because he lacks the prophetic insight into the moral will of Yahweh and the reality of sin, the false prophet sees no evil where it is ... (H)e has no conception of the sweeping and rigorous justice with which Yahweh governs. He speaks less than the truth and perverts sound religious belief to merely national and personal good.

For my part, I accept Jägerstätter as authentic. Like the prophet John the Baptist, he is beheaded for not giving evil a license to masquerade as good. But is he a prophet only to the village of St. Radegund or to Austria during World War II? Or is God speaking

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to the entire Church—Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant—through
Franz Jägerstätter?

It is incontestable that the elephant of homicidal violence has become permanently lodged in the Houses of God—in the First World, Second World, Third World, and Fourth World. It is equally incontrovertible that, despite its monstrous, incongruous, crude, and polluting presence within the Churches of Christianity, it remains all but invisible to eyes clouded by the deceits of nationalisms, ethnoisms, militarisms, or the delusions of power, prestige, and prerogative. Franz Jägerstätter's witness and martyrdom are then a continuing prophetic communication from God to all of Christianity because, over the last fifty years, leadership and laity have chosen to embrace the self-deceptions and denial of the last 1700 years rather than face the Truth and see by His Light that there is an elephant in the Church and it is ruining everything.

(Picture-Emmanuel McCarthy with Mrs. Franz Jägerstätter. St. Radegund, Austria.)

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Urakami Cathedral, Nagasaki, Japan -August 9, 1945 (United States National Archives/Public Domain)

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Nagasaki: The Love of Power or The Power of Love

Following is the homily delivered at the close of the Forty-Day Fast for the Truth of Christian Nonviolence at the Urakami Cathedral, in Nagasaki, Japan, on August 9, 1995.

What most would like to do is kill the truth in order to preserve the status quo with all its delusions.

Ortega y Gasset

*"If Jesus is the Redeemer," the Rabbi gently asked,
"Why after all these centuries does the world not look
more redeemed?"*

The prophet Ezekiel is given a vision by Yahweh (Ezek 37:1-14). In it he is "set down in the middle of a valley, a valley full of bones." He is then directed "to walk up and down among them." Ezekiel tells us "there were vast quantities of these bones on the ground the whole length of the valley; and they were quite dried up." Yahweh informs His prophet that the "bones are the whole House of Israel."

Today, August 9, 1995, here in Nagasaki, on the fiftieth anniversary of its incineration by an atomic bomb, the words of the prophet travel across twenty-five centuries to reach our ears as we literally stand in another valley of dry bones. Except today these

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words are addressed to all "who form the Israel of God" (Gal 6:16), that is, to the entire Christian Community.

The Church of Nagasaki is the one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church "writ small." Its history of faith and suffering, hope and mercy is comparable to that of any Church in Christianity. Indeed, its record of martyrdom and a two hundred-year history of catacomb-like existence deems it worthy of particular honor and respect by all Christians.

However, on August 9, 1945, it was the polar opposite of Christian honor and respect that Christians from other Churches brought to this Christian Community. At 11:03 a.m., using the Urakami Cathedral as a target marker, a Christian bomb crew led by a Catholic man from the Church of Boston dropped an atomic bomb on the historic center of Japanese Christianity: Nagasaki, the oldest and largest Christian community in all of Japan. In nine seconds, Christians from other Churches halfway around the world did to the Nagasaki Christian community what two hundred years of persecution could not do. They evaporated it!

Christians, of course, have been engaged in such homicidal activity against their fellow Christians since the fourth century. For approximately the last 1700 years, justifying the Christian butchery of Christians and others has been a major theological and pastoral preoccupation of practically all of the Churches. The destruction of the Church of Nagasaki by enemy Christians is unique only because of the technology of slaughter that was employed. Nagasaki is not a bizarre blip on the screen of Church history; it is part of an unbroken line of so-called, justified Christian homicide that moves steadily upward over a 1700-year period, with no indication of decline to this very hour.

The religious community to whom Ezekiel is speaking is a community that is in exile in Babylonia, a community that has been all but stamped out as a viable entity. It is a community of dry bones. It is a community enslaved and dispirited by its own disobedience to God.

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Is this not a portrait of the state of soul of the homicide justifying Church? The exile that the Christian Community lives is not geographical. It is spiritual. It is exile into a maze of irrelevancy and impotency that has resulted from the Church, at approximately the time of Constantine the Great, becoming bedazzled by the pomp and power and effectiveness of the kingdoms of this world and as a consequence succumbing to the temptation to de-prioritize Jesus' command to, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness" (Mt 6:33).

The temptation to grab for levers of governmental power in order to accomplish God's work, in order to foster His Kingdom, has always been a major temptation for Christians. It was a severe temptation for the Church of the early fourth century and its leadership, and it is a severe temptation for the Church and its leadership today. So magnetic is its allure that Jesus Himself had to overcome it:

Then leading him to a height, the devil showed him in a moment of time all the kingdoms of the world and said to him, "I will give you all this power and the glory of these kingdoms, for it has been committed to me and I give it to anyone I choose. Worship me, then, and it shall all be yours." But Jesus answered him, "Scripture says: You must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone" (Lk 4:5-8; Mt 4:8-10).

Here Jesus is offered, by Satan, power over the kingdoms of the world, that is, political power. Political power, i.e., the power of government or the power of the kingdoms of the world is, by definition, the power of violence, i.e., the power to impose—by threat of suffering and death—the will of some people upon other people. Every kingdom of the world possesses an organization trained in homicidal violence that, upon command, does the bidding of the kingdom's leader, whether that leader be an idiot king or a Rhodes Scholar. Jesus rejects the offer of this type of power

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by quoting Deuteronomy 6:13, in which it is commanded to worship Yahweh alone. This is a strange basis for rejection, unless there is some intimate connection between acquiring political power and turning one's life over to those spirits that are inimical to the spirit of God. The renowned Biblical scholar, the late John L. McKenzie, succinctly sums up the truth that is at stake here:

Certainly the story means that secular power is not to be acquired at the price of the worship of Satan; but do we grasp the import of the story fully if we think that the only thing wrong with the offer of secular power is that it came from Satan? In the New Testament "the world" in the pejorative sense is the realm of the power and the authority of Satan; the reign of God is opposed to this power, and the struggle between the two reigns is constant and deadly. St. Ignatius Loyola made this the theme of the "Meditation on Two Standards" in the Spiritual Exercises. Like most Christian interpreters from early times, St. Ignatius did not question the implicit assertion in the temptation narrative that secular power is Satan's to give. The offer is not rejected because Satan is unable to deliver what he promises; it is rejected because secular power is altogether inept for the mission of Jesus, indeed because the use of secular power is hostile to his mission.

To say that Jesus is not a political Messiah is to state a Gospel truism so obvious that it has become a cliché. Jesus self-evidently did not seek to become the ruler of Israel or Rome. Yet what is equally obvious is that, since the time of Constantine 1700 years ago, the Christian community, its leadership and its membership, has ceaselessly sought, overtly and covertly, to get its hands on as much of the power of the kingdoms of the world as it could.

It is hard to fathom how this is following Jesus. It appears to be yielding to the very temptation Jesus emphatically rejected. Anyone

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who thinks he or she can follow the teaching of Jesus and engage in the pursuit, acquisition, and exercise of the power of the kingdoms of the world either does not know what the teaching of Jesus is or does not know what the power of the kingdoms of this world is. I am reminded at this point of the opening sentence of the concluding paragraph of the book, *The Pathology of Politics*, written by Carl J. Friedrich, Eaton Professor of the Science of Government at Harvard University: "*Our analysis has, I hope, shown that politics need all these dubious practices; it cannot be managed without violence, betrayal, corruption, secrecy and propaganda.*" (Emphasis added.) Anyone who disagrees with Friedrich would bear the impossible burden of showing a single instance in history where a kingdom of this world has conducted its affairs without these elements. No such kingdom is known to me and I would be happy to hear of one. Nor is any such kingdom known to Jesus, which is why He rejected a governmental political messiahship and taught instead that His disciples should, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness," by way of a nonviolent love of friends and enemies—a way that no kingdom of this world has as its method of operation.

Bishop Fulton J. Sheen once wrote this:

Those who live in sin hardly understand the horror of sin. The one peculiar and terrifying thing about sin is, the more experience you have with it, the less you know about it. You become so identified with it, that you know neither the depths to which you have sunk nor the heights from which you have fallen.

Exile in the labyrinth of dry bones, irrelevancy and impotency in which Christianity finds Herself is the outcome of the Church not conquering, as Jesus conquers, the temptation to resort to the power of the kingdoms of this world—the power of homicidal violence. Seventeen hundred years ago, She began to morally approve, under

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various euphemisms, "the lust for power" as being consonant with following Jesus. This ultimately results in the Church, again under various euphemisms, ennobling "violence, betrayal, corruption, secrecy, and propaganda" when they are employed by one or the other of the kingdoms of the world that is dominated by Christians or that serves Christian interests. It also results in the Church spending an exorbitant amount of time and talent pursuing and procuring powers that are antagonistic to the mission Jesus committed to Her. (Mt 28:19-20) Yet few in the Church see any problem. Most Christians seem to feel that the Church's relevance in the world and power to affect history are tied to Her political clout.

In the temptation narrative, the choice Jesus sees is between the Power of Love, which is the energy of the Kingdom of God, and the love of power, which is the energy that runs the kingdoms of the world. Donald Gelpi, S.J. in his book, *Discerning the Spirit*, discloses the starkness of alternatives that confront Jesus and by extension that confront those, regardless of station in life, who wish to be His disciples:

(This) temptation is the most direct of all: It is the temptation to abdicate utterly the way of service and to choose in its place the way of temporal power and dominion. Thus of the three temptations, (this) one is perhaps the most crucial for a Christian understanding of the meaning of service. In it Jesus is presented with two clear options: either to continue upon the way of service, which he has begun with a clear understanding of the risks and sufferings involved therein or to seek instead the way of political and temporal power. The two ways are incompatible: To choose one is to abdicate the other; and Jesus' resolution of the option is pointedly clear and unambiguous: He must abdicate the way of temporal power. For to do otherwise, to choose the path of power over the way of service would be

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nothing else than to place himself under the dominion of those very forces of evil and chaos which he had come out to the desert to conquer. What Jesus saw clearly in this final temptation, then, is that the renunciation of coercive power over men and women is inseparable from the sense of purpose which motivated him in his temporal mission as Son and Messiah. That is to say, as the wisdom of God incarnate, he was aware that were he to yield to this final temptation and choose the path of power as a means of accomplishing his messianic mission, he would be effectively abdicating his very sonship, denying the divine reality he was conscious of being and in effect abandoning the salvific mission he had received from his heavenly Father.

The Church of dry bones is the "Israel of God" in spiritual exile because it will not choose to reject the power that Jesus chose to reject and to live by the power that Jesus chose to live by. This is the Church, some of whose members thought it theologically, spiritually and morally acceptable to release an atomic bomb into the midst of other members in Nagasaki. This is the Church whose congregations are slaughtering each other in Rwanda. This is the Church whose faithful are tearing each other apart in Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia. This is the Church, who has millions of communicants in the United States, France, Russia, and England earning their living by spending eight hours a day making instruments of human destruction for sale to the Third World. In brief, this is a Church that, despite its wealth and political power and membership, is dried up spiritually and "knows neither the depths to which it has sunk nor the heights from which it has fallen" because it refuses to part permanently with the power of Caesar in order to align itself forever and only with the power of Christ.

Mainline Churches, televangelist ministries, Pentecostals, house churches, etc., must begin to completely disabuse themselves and

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their flocks of the notion that there is a spiritual and moral compatibility between Christ and Caesar, and that therefore only slight compromises are required here and there for Christians to do the work of Caesar. The truth is that a spiritual and moral abyss separates Caesar on his throne from Christ on His cross. Both Christ and Caesar know that human beings are easily killable. Caesar takes this fact of life and makes it the centerpiece of his *modus operandi* by organizing a killing operation, the military, to preserve him and to support him in everything he does or wants to do. Christ takes this same fact of life and makes it the heart of His Gospel, teaching by word and deed that those who wish to follow Him are to reject armed force and if necessary accept death in a spirit of forgiveness rather than kill: "For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it (Mk 8:35; Mt 16:25; Lk 9:24; Jn 12:25). This is what creates the chasm between the throne and the cross—yesterday and today. Caesar can no more become Christ-like and remain Caesar than Christ can become Caesar-like and remain Christ.

Each human being has but one life to live. He or she cannot expend it on behalf of every spirit, every power, every possible image of God. Human beings must choose. A person cannot have two primary allegiances, serve two masters. Christ says, "If you love me you will keep my commandments." "Love your enemies," "Love as I have loved," "Put up your sword," etc., are His commandments. Caesar says, "If you wish to serve me you will obey my orders." Caesar's orders always include killing one's enemies, living in ways contrary to the way Christ loved, taking up the sword, etc. Christ or Caesar? Cross or crown? This is the choice all who encounter Jesus Christ must make.

The world is not lacking for people who desire to rule. There are billions lined up to gain access to a piece of the power of the kingdoms of the world. Humanity for the foreseeable future will never be at a loss for men or women who crave to be little Caesars.

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But, how many want to be little Christs? Which way is really worth using up one's life for? A choice is offered. But, in order to even see it, Christians must have the perceptual, intellectual, and spiritual courage to reject the Constantinian deception of pretending that one is being a little Christ by being a little Caesar, that one is participating in the spirit of Christ by participating in the spirit of Caesar, that one is doing the work of Christ by doing the work of Caesar.

The atomic bombing of Christians by Christians here at Nagasaki is but another tragic manifestation of Caesarian Christianity. Seventeen hundred years of Churches ceaselessly participating in war, 1700 years of Churches tortuously justifying homicidal violence, 1700 years of Churches cavalierly ignoring Jesus' teaching of love of enemies, 1700 years of Churches pandering to the kingdoms of this world, 1700 years of Churches all but equating the means, methods, and mission of one or the other of the kingdoms of the world with the means, methods, and mission of Jesus, 1700 years of Churches participating in militaristic and nationalistic propaganda for "God and Country"—this is the source of 11:03 a.m. August 9, 1945, in Nagasaki.

The poet Whittier wrote the lines:

*For of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these: "It might have been!"*

What would the world be today if 1700 years ago the Church had continued to stand firm and "Seek first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness," trusting that all else would be given unto Her. No one knows of course. All that is known is that fidelity to the teachings of Jesus at the beginning of the Constantinian era would have resulted in an entirely different world from what has been or is. Would it be a better world? Faith responds with an unreserved, "Yes!" For what is more capable of making this world a better place than loyalty to the will of God as revealed by the incarnation of God, Jesus Christ?

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But, alas, there has been little fidelity to the nonviolent apostolic tradition during the last 1700 years by Catholics, Orthodox, or Protestants. Bishops began to wear the crowns of kings. Spiritual leaders began to divide their time between the Gospel and the illusions and intrigues of power politics. Christian just war theories began to sprout. Intentional homicide rather than martyrdom in imitation of Christ became Christianity's "last resort." Ruling became synonymous with serving. Coercion became synonymous with conversion. Domination became synonymous with love. Eventually, the well-being of the Church was experienced as depending on the survival of the empire, state, or tribe. Once this level of obfuscation was achieved, all things homicidal became theologically and morally feasible. No abomination, regardless of how grotesque, was now outside the possibility of being reconciled with following Christ. Nagasaki became inevitable; so did Bosnia and all the other ecclesiastically justified and sacramentally supported internecine campaigns of the last 1700 years. But what might have been? And what can be?

The future of Christianity does not have to be a clone of the past and the present of Christianity. Christians 1700 years from now, even one hundred years from now, need not ponder with sadness "what might have been" if Christians at the very end of the twentieth century had only returned to fidelity. Fidelity can be embarked upon today. Because of the faculty of free will, every Church in Christianity and each Christian can undertake to do an about-face and walk away from the squalid power of the kingdoms of the world and toward the Kingdom of God. Since Jesus is the One, the only one, who knows with absolute certainty the Way to "the Kingdom of God and its righteousness," the single most significant step that must be taken in order to part company forever with the 1700-year un-Christ-like history of homicidal Christianity, is to commit one's self and one's Church to following Jesus in His Way of nonviolent love of friends and enemies.

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In other words, repentance is the proper Christian response to the physical and spiritual horror that Nagasaki represents. But repentance never means simply mere remorse and then a return to the old ways. Genuine repentance demands a firm resolve to turn away from the evil and from all that brought it about, e.g. military training. Sincere repentance here specifically means the willingness to perseveringly labor in the Spirit and Way of the Nonviolent Christ, to bring about that for which we pray when we say: "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

However, if Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Churches truly repent they can take infinite comfort from what God promises in that vision to the Prophet Ezekiel as he walks through the valley of dry bones. "Can these bones live?" the Holy One asks the Prophet. The human answer to this question is "No. What is dead is dead." But God says to Ezekiel:

Prophesy over these bones. Say, "Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. The Lord Yahweh says this to these bones: I am now going to make breath enter you, and you will live. I shall put sinews on you, I shall make flesh grow on you, I shall cover you with skin and give you breath, and you will live ... I am now going to open your graves; I mean to raise you from your graves, my people, and lead you back to the soil of Israel.

To the extent that individual Christians, Pastors, and Churches will say, "No" to the brutal delusions of the Christian status quo, will say, "Yes" to Jesus' Way of nonviolent love of friends and enemies, they will be brought out of the valley of dry bones where they have exiled themselves by killing the Truth they were chosen to en flesh. They will receive the Spirit of God. They will live as instruments of that Power and Wisdom (1 Cor 1:24) that can not only make the world "look more redeemed" but that can also literally "renew the face of the earth." The seeds of unforeseen miracles lie in the soil of repentance. If individual Christians,

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Pastors, and Churches will permit the enormity of the betrayal of
Baptism that Nagasaki symbolizes to penetrate their consciences
and then will humbly pray, "mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima
culpa" for their part in the 1700-year history of justifying homicide
and enmity in the name of Christ, then the Golgotha of Thursday,
August 9, 1945 can become the catalyst for an Easter Sunday for the
Body of Christ, the "Israel of God."

(Picture-Incensing of the altar of the Urakami-Nagasaki Cathedral
during a Eucharistic Celebration on August 9, 1995 with the censer that is
the central symbol of this book.)

Ave Crux, Spes Unica

Following is the homily delivered at the close of the Forty-Day Fast for the Truth of Christian Nonviolence at St. Patrick's Cathedral, in New York City, on August 9, 1997.

I left the service (Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament) with the inner conviction that I had been heard, but uncertain as ever as to what "carrying the Cross" would mean for me.

Edith Stein, before entering the Carmelite Order.

One thing I should tell you: when I entered, I had already chosen the religious name I wanted and I received it exactly as I had asked for it. "Of the cross" ... I know a little more now than I did then what it means to be betrothed to the Lord in the sign of the Cross. But it's not something that can ever be understood. It is a mystery.

Edith Stein, after entering the Carmelite Order.

For as long as people will remember, discuss, and ponder the life and death of Edith Stein, Sr. Teresia Benedicta of the Cross, they will have to remember, discuss, and ponder the Cross. No religious symbol was more prominent in her life than the Cross. It was her freely chosen spiritual North Star. "Human activity cannot help us," she wrote, "Only the suffering of Christ can. To share in that suffering is my desire."

Note that in the preceding statement Edith not only says that she wants to share in Christ's suffering, but she also proclaims that it is only the suffering of Christ that can be of any help. "In the sign of the Cross," she says, "we will be victorious; that is, we will live our lives fully—with or without success—as a blessing for our environment, our people, and our Church." Victory, fullness of life, and blessings for all is what follows from living by the truth of the Cross, she believes. Her decision to order her life in conformity to the "Sermon of the Cross" makes it clear that the Cross for her is not

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simply a holy representation but is, as she says, a “sign that demands discernment and decision.” In other words, as long as people remember, discuss or ponder Edith Stein, they will have to face the fact that the Cross is a call from God to His chosen ones to act in history as Jesus chose to act in history. It is precisely here that God is using Edith Stein to inspire, to motivate, and to command a major course correction in the direction the Churches—Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant—are heading.

Crosses—in the form of crucifixions—are commonplace at the time of Jesus. Crosses are the instruments by which horrendous pain and ultimately death are inflicted on one member of the human species by other members. There is nothing holy or salvific or worthwhile in being executed by crucifixion. It is the total, absolute, final defeat of the person. It is evil increasing itself in the human situation under the deception that it is being decreased by destroying the supposed evil one. Therefore, without Jesus, the cross is a symbol of the brutal, the ugly, the murderous, the satanic in human life. Without Jesus it is a paradigmatic symbol of pain, powerlessness, defeat, and death in the human psyche.

However, over the last fifteen hundred years no symbol has been more employed by the various Churches than the Cross of Jesus Christ. Yet, despite this fact, what has gone almost unproclaimed in most of these Churches is that, in its historical context, the Cross of Jesus is a Cross of nonviolent love of friends and enemies. So unacknowledged has this historical fact been that the Cross has regularly been employed over the last 1700 years as an ensign to lead human beings into the mass slaughter of war. This disassociation of the Cross of Jesus from its historical reality has resulted in the Cross becoming everything from a magical artifact to a motivating logo used to encourage and justify homicidal violence, oppression, brutality, enmity, and the lust for power—all polar opposites of its meaning in the Gospels.

This is not to say that Christians can never grow into new understandings of the Cross. On the contrary, if the Cross points

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directly to Jesus and Jesus points directly to God, we can expect that it will be ceaselessly revealing new dimensions of its wisdom and power to humanity, since God is of infinite depth. However, any new understanding of the Cross must be consistent with and complementary to the original historical truth left to us in the Gospels. Any interpretation of the Cross of Jesus that would subvert, supplement, distort, or bypass the historical reality of the Cross on Calvary two thousand years ago would be erroneous. In other words, all mystical, theological, and spiritual reflections on the Cross of Jesus Christ must be reflections grounded in the facticity of the historical Cross in order to be true. There are not two crosses—the Cross of faith and the Cross of history. The Cross of history is the Cross of faith. This is so because as John Paul II states in his Encyclical, *Redemptoris Missio*, (1990)

One cannot separate Jesus from the Christ or speak of a "Jesus of history" who would differ from the "Christ of faith" ... Christ is none other than Jesus of Nazareth.

Since the Jesus of history goes to His death on the Cross rejecting violence, loving His enemies, and praying for those who are persecuting Him, this means that all authentic Crosses of faith must include responding to evil as Jesus responded to evil. "It is good to venerate the crucifix," says Edith Stein, "but even better than images of word or stone are living images, souls formed in the image of Christ."

The Cross then is not a symbol of mere animal pain as a means of saving people. God is Father. God is love. It is love that saves. Identification with Jesus suffering is identification with Jesus loving. The Cross is the ultimate expression of Divine Love made visible in a history drenched in evil. In such a history, more often than not, it costs, and it sometimes costs dearly, to love. Pain, the Cross, is the price one has to pay on many occasions in order to love Christically. But it is love that is the choice, not pain.

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“Everything depends on love because in the end we will be judged according to love,” writes Sr. Teresia Benedicta of the Cross. The Cross for her is a Cross of love. Is it a Cross of pain? Yes. Is it a Cross of death? Yes. Is it a Cross of total worldly defeat? Yes. Is it a Cross of victory? Yes. But it is the victory of nonviolent Christ-like, sacrificial love on behalf of others. “One cannot believe in Christ without at the same time following Him,” Edith says. But to “Follow Me” means to “Love one another as I have loved you,” and this love is definitely made manifest by the Cross of nonviolent love that the Gospels reveal. “Put up the sword”; “Father forgive them for they know not what they do”; “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who persecute you”—these are all verbal presentations of the Cross of Christ, of the Cross of Divine Love, of the Cross that Sr. Teresia Benedicta of the Cross embraced without reservation. In essence, Edith Stein choosing to commit herself to the Cross is Edith Stein choosing to commit herself to a life of Christ-like love.

When Sr. Teresia Benedicta of the Cross was being held in the detention camp at Westerbork, on her way to Auschwitz, two men came to visit her with some supplies from the Carmelite convent in Echt. They gave this statement of their brief meeting:

We had both been smoking as she spoke, and after she finished, in the hope of relieving the tension a little, we jokingly offered her a cigarette. That made her laugh. She told us that back in her days as a university student she had done her share of smoking, and dancing too. ... In the camp, they had heard that either that night or the one following they would be transported back to their native Silesia to work in the mines. Wherever they were headed, they told us, whatever work they were assigned, prayer would remain their first obligation. She hoped she could offer her suffering ... for the Nazi persecutors ...

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"The crucified Lord demands," says Edith, "that every human being follow after Him; that we allow ourselves to be formed in the image of the Bearer of the cross, the Crucified One."

Edith Stein is God's prophetic instrument to inspire, to motivate, and to command a major course correction in the direction the Church Universal is headed, because most Churches have reinterpreted following Jesus in such a way that His historically based Cross of nonviolent love of friends and enemies is dismissed as irrelevant and totally ignored. The reason these Churches disassociate the Cross of history from the Cross of faith is that they find the weakness and the vulnerability of the Cross of history undesirable and "unrealistic." Mainline and Evangelical Church leaders and their congregations do not want to live without the power of homicidal violence. The weakness of the Cross—by this world's standards—frightens them. These Churches find it intolerable to live exclusively by the protection that Jesus lived by, exclusively. They are simply afraid to risk living by the power of the Cross alone. In this type of spiritual thinking, the Cross is taken up only after the gun has been unable to deliver victory—then we will bear our Cross! The corollary of this spiritual mind set is "If you have enough swords, who needs Crosses!" or, even more blasphemous "Picking up the gun is a way of picking up the Cross!" Sr. Teresia Benedicta of the Cross is Jesus' prophetic gift to His Churches because she voluntarily gives up all the accouterments of worldly power and wholeheartedly embraces the "powerless," unrealistic, vulnerable Cross of Christ-like love. She says, "*Ave Crux*," "Welcome Cross," not out of ignorance of alternatives, nor out of defeatism. She exclaims with open arms, "*Ave Crux*" because she knows it is "*spes unica*," "our only hope"—the only power that can help, that can save. "[I] have said with all my heart: '*Ave Crux, spes unica*,'" writes Edith Stein.

Mainline and Evangelical Churches, to the contrary, have morally neutralized the Cross so that the Way of nonviolent love of friends and enemies that Jesus taught by His blood, sweat, pain,

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tears, anguish, death, and love from the Cross has been all but expunged from the consciousness of their congregations. Today, as it has been for many, many yesterdays, most Christian Churches are committed to some other understanding of power than that which is proclaimed by Jesus from His Cross of nonviolent love on Good Friday and from His empty tomb on Easter Sunday. "*Ave Crux, spes unica*" is far removed from what the leadership and laity of the Christian Churches daily desire or pursue. Edith Stein's life, death, and upcoming canonization are for those Christians and Churches, "who have eyes and will see, who have ears and will hear," a prophetic summons to follow the Way of the Nonviolent One who is covered with His own blood and to abandon all allegiance to those philosophies, mythologies, and leaders who are covered with the blood of others. By the same power that raised Christ from the dead, Edith Stein's life, death, and upcoming canonization now stand before the Church Universal as a plea, written in her own blood, for the Churches of Christianity to come together and recommit themselves, without reserve, to "The Power and The Wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:17-24) by saying with one heart and one mind, "*Ave Crux, spes unica*."

Edith Stein believed in the Cross of Christ and its power. She believed that unmerited suffering, responded to in a Christ-like way, is redemptive. And she knew that a Christian cannot demand freedom from the Cross of Christ-like love when it is precisely the Christian who is chosen for the Cross of Christ-like love. So, on this August 9, 1997, the fifty-fifth anniversary of her death at Auschwitz, let us allow this martyr of Christic love to speak the last word to the Churches and to our souls:

Do you see the eyes of the Crucified looking at you with a searching gaze? They are asking you a question: Are you, in all seriousness, ready to enter once again into a covenant with the Crucified? What are you going to answer?

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Following is the homily delivered at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy at the close of the Forty-Day Fast for the Truth of Gospel Nonviolence, in Huntsville, Texas, on August 9, 2000.

"It is God, who is rich in mercy, whom Jesus Christ has revealed as Father." With these words Pope John Paul II begins what I believe to be the most eternally significant event of his pontificate, namely, the publication of his Encyclical, *Dives in Misericordia, Rich in Mercy*. Towards the end of this encyclical, the Successor of Peter proclaims that "mercy (is) the most stupendous attribute of the Creator and the Redeemer." Therefore the true God, as opposed to idols conjured up in the human psyche, is a God of holy, infinite, and everlasting mercy. This is good, good, good news for every human being. In fact, it is the best news any human being could hope for or imagine.

Mercy, of course, need only be given where mercy is needed. Someone consuming a \$135 lunch at the Waldorf Astoria is in no need of the mercy of food, although he or she may be in need of some other corporal manifestation of Divine Mercy. It is the one person who dies every nine seconds from starvation in this world, the undernourished child whose brain is being irrevocably damaged *in utero and extra utero*, the elderly person reduced to eating dog food—it is they who are in need of the mercy of bread. Likewise the only people who require the mercy of forgiveness are those who need forgiveness, that is, those who have intentionally harmed others. If someone gives us a two-week, all-expenses paid vacation we do not say, "I forgive you." Either we mercifully forgive those who have hurt us or we do not forgive at all.

Amidst all the bombastic Christian oratory heard from the pulpit, the radio, the television, and the internet, amidst all the high and low Christian theologizing it is possible for the straightforward commands of Jesus to get lost. Jesus' explicit commission to His disciples in the last paragraph of the Gospel of Matthew could not be clearer: "Go you therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teach them to obey all that I have commanded you"

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(Mt 28:19-20). The explicit conversion command that Jesus teaches also could not be clearer: "I want mercy, not sacrifice" (Mt 9:13).

Simple-minded and sophisticated obfuscations and distortions can be concocted to ensure that the obvious will never be seen or to ensure that what is of primary concern for Jesus is reduced to incidental concern for the billions to whom He has given the gift of faith. But "I want mercy, not sacrifice" will forever stand in judgment on such intellectual and political maneuvers and will remain as His words long after even "heaven and earth have passed away."

Those gifted with faith in Jesus can discount, ignore, modify, or rationalize away His teaching in order to advance their earthly interests, but His words will forever be there, inviting them back to the truth taught by Truth Incarnate.

What else could be the truth of Jesus but mercy? If Jesus is, as St. Paul says he is, "the visible image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15), if the God Jesus proclaims is "rich in mercy" (Eph 2:4), if "the Father and I are one" (Jn 10:30), if "he who sees Me sees the Father" (Jn 14:9), then what else could Jesus command other than "I want mercy, not sacrifice," "Be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful" (Lk 6:35). Union with the Father who is rich in mercy, and communion with Jesus who is the visible image of the invisible God could only be union and communion through, with, by, and in Mercy- made-flesh.

Mercilessness, regardless of the quality of logic or the cleverness of euphemism by which it perpetuates itself, is never of God and is never a part of the economy of salvation. It is mercy that initiates and consummates the process of salvation in Christ. This is why John Paul II writes in *Dives in Misericordia*, "Christ's messianic program, the program of mercy, becomes the program of His people, the program of the Church." This means that Christ-like mercy must be the program of each baptized person without exception and without any "time-outs." "The Church lives an authentic life when she professes and proclaims mercy," proclaims

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the Pope in the same Encyclical. Hence, the individual Christian, of whatever Church, lives an authentic life when he or she professes and proclaims—by thought, word, and deed—mercy. The Advocate, the Paraclete, the Public Defender that God sends to this world to act on behalf of human beings, is the Holy Spirit of the Father who is rich in mercy, is the Holy Spirit of the Son who is one with the Father, is the Spirit of the Holy, the Spirit of Mercy. The word Satan, literally means “the Accuser, the Adversary. "Satan is the Adversary of God and hence is the Adversary of mercy. He is a merciless spirit who deceives people into believing that God is merciless like him, and that humanity, made in the image and likeness of God, should also be merciless like him and in the false image of God with which he deceives people.

All mercilessness in all its manifestations is from hell. Indeed, hell is a perpetual state of being merciless: "I was hungry and you did not give me to eat, I was thirsty and you did not give me to drink, I was naked and you did not clothe me. I was in prison and you did not visit me" (Mt 25:31-46). This teaching of Jesus is the standard of judgment at the end of time. Mercy or mercilessness? It does not require a doctorate from Harvard Divinity School to understand how it directs that time—given to us by God, who is rich in mercy—should be used. There is something in both the acts of mercy and the acts of mercilessness in time that have radically different consequences in eternity.

Forget the anthropomorphic imagery of devils with pitchforks, etc. Focusing on human images to describe what is beyond individual and communal human experience just serves to undermine the seriousness of an eternal life-and-death problem and mystery—the relationship between merciless acts in time and one's own eternity. Because of truths we can only glimpse through the revelation of Jesus, we know that mercilessness is radical evil (Mt 25:46). We also know by this same revelation that responding to the relievable suffering of another human being, that is, doing mercy, results in entrance into an eternally graced union through Jesus

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with God, i.e., entrance into "the Kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world" (Mt 25:34).

Providing a person first has faith in Jesus as his/her Lord, God, and Savior, this makes sense. Jesus reveals to us that God is a Father/Mother/Parent who is rich in mercy. Reason may be able to tell us that God exists, but only revelation can tell us that God is a Parent rich in mercy. John Paul II in his encyclical says, "Making the Father present as love and mercy is, in Christ's own consciousness, the fundamental touchstone of His mission as the Messiah." Faith in the self-revelation of God in Jesus is pre-eminent because until one knows what kind of God God is, one cannot know what that God expects of those He/She created. A God who is rich in mercy expects of those who wish to be in union with the Divine that they too be rich in mercy. A God is who Father/Mother/Parent of each person expects human beings to relate to each other not as capitalists to communists, not as Americans to Iraqis, not as haves to have-nots, not as Croats to Serbs, not as the self-righteous to sinners, not as Pilate to Jesus, but as brothers and sisters endeavoring to assist each other in being merciful as Christ is merciful, in being merciful as their Father in heaven is merciful, in being helpers of one another on the Way of Mercy that leads to eternal life for one and all.

In *Dives in Misericordia* the Pope says that, "Mercy constitutes the fundamental content of the messianic message of Christ and the constitutive power of His mission." Now if mercy is the essential power of Jesus' mission, if mercy is His conversion demand, if mercy is the standard of judgment at the end of the world, if mercy is the most stupendous attribute of the Creator and Redeemer, is it possible that a Christian, someone who truly has faith in Jesus as their Lord, God and Savior, would set aside mercy even if he or she could gain the whole world or some paltry piece thereof? Would it not be irrational in the extreme for a believer in Christ to even entertain such a thought? Would it not be tragic un-seriousness to engage in un-Christ-like mercilessness and then to pacify one's soul by renaming mercilessness "mercy," by renaming the Satanic the

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Christic? "If our hopes in Christ are limited to this life only, we are the most pitiable of people," says St. Paul (1 Cor 15:19). For the Christian to live in time as if eternity does not exist is, intrinsically, absurd. For a Christian to choose mercilessness rather than mercy, in order to gain the totally perishable, is spiritual insanity.

Fifty-eight years ago today, on August 9, 1942, in total conformity with all the laws of the German government at the time, Christians gassed St. Edith Stein to death at Auschwitz. Fifty-seven years ago today, on August 9, 1943, at Brandenburg Prison, in total conformity with the laws of the German government at the time, Christians on behalf of the state beheaded Franz Jägerstätter, the only Austrian layman who was a conscientious objector to being conscripted into Hitler's army. Fifty-five years ago today, on August 9, 1945, in total conformity with the laws of the United States government at the time, an entirely Christian bomb crew, on behalf of the State, dropped the atomic bomb on Nagasaki—the oldest, the original, and the largest Christian community in all of Japan.

And today, August 9, 2000, in total conformity with the laws of the United States Government, Christians on behalf of the State of Texas poisoned to death two of their brothers in Christ—Oliver Cruz and Brian Roberson.

The state laws under which Christians destroyed each of these Christians can be accredited or discredited, depending on one's use of reason. What reason builds up, reason can tear down. But what cannot be denied is the overt Christian mercilessness in each situation. What cannot be denied is that the spirit that entered history through Cain and did its most horrific work on Calvary is the same spirit that killed Edith Stein, Franz Jägerstätter, the people of Nagasaki, Oliver Cruz, and Brian Roberson. Is it the same spirit that acted through Mr. Cruz and Mr. Roberson if they killed other human beings? You bet it is! Is it the spirit that is the Adversary of mercy? You bet it is! It is the perverted and perverting spirit of mercilessness, manifest as homicidal violence, that is at the root of all this destruction.

"He Does Not Break the Bruised Reed"

God is a Father/Mother/Parent rich in mercy. God forgives. God forgives seventy times seven times, which is why the disciples of Jesus are told to be mercifully forgiving seventy times seven times. How total, how complete is God's forgiving mercy? The Publican is so spiritually distraught that he cannot even raise his eyes in the back of the synagogue. All he can do is look down and strike his breast and pray, "O God be merciful to me a sinner" (Lk 18:13). Jesus says of him, "I assure you, that man goes away justified" (Lk 18:14). How total, how complete is God's forgiving mercy? The thief on the cross next to Jesus is so full of self-hate that he thinks he deserves death. Then, for the only time in the Gospels, Jesus is addressed directly by his proper name, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom" (Lk 23:42). Jesus, the incarnation of the true God, the God who is rich in mercy, bestows on this so-called "no-gooder"—someone the politically and religiously powerful of this world feel this world would be better off without—mercy on a scale unknown in prior human history: "I assure you: this day you will be with me in paradise" (Lk 23:43). We could go on with the Prodigal Son and with "Father forgive them for they know not what they do," but the point is self-evident, God's mercy, the mercy Christians are called to imitate, is a superabundant mercy. It is never begrudging or stingy. It never proceeds from obligation. It always issues from generosity. It is always gift. John Paul II wrote in his encyclical that "the genuine face of mercy has to be ever revealed anew." Was the Face of God, the Face of Mercy, revealed today, August 9, 2000, at Huntsville Prison? At Auschwitz on August 9, 1942? At Brandenburg Prison on August 9, 1943? At Nagasaki on August 9, 1945? (Or, was Christianity, in each case, used as a mask to hide the face of the diabolical?)

The blood on Jesus' hands is His own. Capital punishment is not what Jesus taught; it is what Jesus suffered. Crucifying, gassing, beheading, hanging, shooting, electrocuting, and poisoning people are not the works of mercy. The God who is rich in mercy is never glorified by homicidal violence. "Praise the Lord and pass the

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ammunition," or "Praise the Lord and fire up Wee Sparky," or "Praise the Lord and turn on the gas," or "Praise the Lord and release the poison" are blasphemy and falsehood. Their source is the "Father of lies who is a murderer from the beginning" and not the "Father who is rich in mercy." These are the works and words of the Adversary of mercy, the Adversary of Christ.

If Jesus is only a philosopher, then rejecting the risks of mercy in favor of power, pleasure, nationalism, religionists, comfort, etc. is a rational option. But if Jesus is the definitive revelation of God and God's will to humanity, then rejecting the risks of mercy is spiritual suicide.

No one is sinless, but all are sacred. No one is going to come to his or her last breath saying, "God have justice on me!" But if it is mercy we want in eternity, is it not mercy we should give in time? "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us" is either meaningless babble into infinite emptiness or it is a request that God judges us as we have judged others. Jesus says, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Mt 5:7). And what does He say the fruits of mercilessness will be (Mt 25:45-46; Lk 16:19)? RESPONSE?

Christians must cease endorsing and participating in capital punishment, because it is incontestably incompatible with following the Nonviolent Jesus of the Gospels and His Way of nonviolent love of friends and enemies. Christians must cease advocating and justifying capital punishment, because it is in direct violation of that commandment of Jesus, which the *New Catechism of the Catholic Church* (§1970) says contains the entire law of the Gospel: "I gave you a new commandment, love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 13:34; Jn 15:12). As Jesus cannot be pictured burning witches at the stake, He equally cannot be pictured gassing, shooting, guillotining, electrocuting, poisoning, or crucifying human beings. What Christians cannot picture Christ doing, they are forbidden to do. Christians must cease all active support of capital punishment because, by their support, they bear false witness to other Christians

“He Does Not Break the Bruised Reed”

and to non-Christians and thereby become obstacles to people coming to Jesus and knowing the true God. By bearing false witness, such Christians, who were chosen to be agents of the healing power of Jesus Christ, become instead major hindrances to Jesus healing the pandemic of organized mercilessness that is spreading throughout the world. Finally, Christians, regardless of rank, status, class, or occupation must abandon capital punishment because they were created from Mercy, for Mercy, and in Jesus they have been granted the gift of knowing that the way to Mercy Eternal is by the Way of Mercy in time.

Let us leave with a final thought from an August 9 victim of capital punishment, St. Edith Stein: "It is mercy that makes us one with God."

Let us pray.

Mary, Mother of Jesus, Mother of a Victim of the merciless spirit of homicidal violence and Mother of Mercy, intercede with your violated Jesus for the victims of violence. Intercede with your victimized Son for deep peace for the loved ones of the victims of violence, and intercede with your forgiving Son who, on the cross, prayed, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" for the executioners of violence. In your compassion, Mary, pray to your fair Child, the Suffering Servant, that all His disciples learn from Him how to live without breaking "the bruised reed" (Is 42: 3). Amen.

Some Closing Words: Rev. John L. McKenzie and Rev. Bernard Häring

There are people in the Catholic Church who have earned the right to be taken seriously by the Church when they speak seriously to the Church. They have earned this right by decades of scholarship of the highest order within the Catholic community. Their authority rests not in titles nor office but rather in their exquisite grasp of their particular theological disciplines—grasp that the most distinguished and discriminating of their intellectual peers, inside and outside the Church, affirm without reservation.

Two such people are Fr. Bernard Häring, C.Ss.R. and Fr. John L. McKenzie. No history of Catholic moral or biblical theology in the twentieth century can be written without considerable reference to these two men of the Church. Both are not just fine scholars. They are scholars' scholars.

For nearly three decades, practically every Catholic seminary in the world has used Father Häring's moral theology texts. When Father McKenzie was elected president of that most prestigious society of biblical scholars and scholarship, The Society of Biblical Literature (founded 1880), he was the first Catholic ever to hold that position.

The numerous tributes and honors that have been bestowed on both men, as well as the hundreds upon hundreds of articles and books they have written, attest to the quality of mind and discipline with which each has served the Church.

It therefore should be a matter of importance to all Catholics, and especially to those in leadership roles, when these two priests—scholars representing two different theological disciplines—individually publish a final book at the end of their Catholic Christian lives, and independently come to the same conclusion: Jesus and his teachings are nonviolent, and the Church must begin to proclaim this unequivocally by word and deed in order to be faithful to the mission Christ committed to Her.

The following reflections are from Father Häring's *The Healing Power of Peace and Nonviolence* (Paulist Press, 1986) and from Father

McKenzie's *The Civilization of Christianity* (Thomas More Press, 1986). Please meditate on these in relation to the dire Christian reality that August 9 has come to symbolize. Please consider the quality of intellect speaking, and the fact that each author knows that this is probably his last word to the Church in which he gave his life. Please: Honestly ask yourself what you must do, what your parish must do, what your diocese must do, what your Church must do.

Fr. Häring: The good news of peace and nonviolence plays a central role in Jesus' proclamation of salvation. ... Redemption can no longer be treated without particular attention to the therapeutic and liberating power of nonviolence, as embodied and revealed by Christ.

Fr. McKenzie: All the Gospels agree that Jesus refused armed defense. Whether he said what Matthew quoted is really irrelevant ("He who lives by the sword perishes by the sword."). It is a nice quotation but we do not need it to establish that Jesus was totally opposed to the use of violence for any purpose.

Fr. Häring: By his (Jesus) very nonviolence he fully restores the honor of the Father, revealing the Father's true image. ... Jesus is nonviolent because God is nonviolent.

Fr. McKenzie: I believe that all I think I know about God is derived from what Jesus was, said and did. I believe the little that we have left of what he said and did tells us more about how we can now in our world realize the possibilities of human existence than all the wisdom of past and present. ... (But) we find whenever Jesus says something which runs directly counter to conventional assumptions, that reasons are found to question the "authenticity" of the saying or the meaning of the words.

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Fr. Häring: The goal (of the Church) cannot be a perpetuated (ethical) pluralism but a solitary option for nonviolent defense. ... Considerable part of the increasing peace movement all over the world remain in narrow circles of protest against nuclear armament instead of giving full attention to the gospel of peace and nonviolence.

Fr. McKenzie: Like all my contemporaries on the seminary faculties, I had been reared on the ethics of the just war. We were all taught the traditional Catholic morality that while killing a person is morally neutral, bedding him or her is intrinsically evil. We may find reasons for doing away with a person, but we can never find a moral justification for bedding the person, except marriage. ... There is something fallacious about the thinking which finds illicit sexual relations intrinsically evil but killing people morally neutral: all you need is a sufficiently good reason. Why that does not work for sexual intercourse I do not know. ... (But) I never thought I would live long enough to see carnal intercourse become as morally neutral as killing. Modern science and philosophy have made of carnal intercourse a "meaningful interpersonal relation." To me the "meaningful interpersonal relation" is just as phony a piece of morality as the just war theory. I call them both phony.

Fr. Häring: We can now discover and admire the development of divine revelation which perhaps on no other point is more astonishing or important than in the increasing unmasking of violence and all the lies and ideologies surrounding it. The final result is a clear orientation toward nonviolence. ... The nonviolent acceptance of death by the prophets, and especially *the* prophet, Jesus Christ, and his martyrs is the healing and liberating reverse of the murderous reign of hatred, violence and lies. We can truly grasp this vision of biblical nonviolence only in light of Jesus Christ who is our peace and assures us that "I am the Truth."

Fr. McKenzie: The statement of the renunciation of violence as a means of dealing with others is clear enough; Christians have never questioned either that Jesus said it or that it admits no qualification. Christians have simply decided they do not wish to live according to these sayings.

Fr. Häring: At this juncture in history, to neglect the message and practice of nonviolence could easily make the Church and her teaching seem irrelevant. The real question is faithfulness to Christ, knowing Christ in his nonviolent, long suffering love. ... Nonviolence belongs to the mystery of the Redeemer and redemption. The test is whether one shares in that mystery. Christ has shown that nonviolence is strength. The effectiveness of nonviolence is ultimately the open tomb.

Fr. McKenzie: Whatever one may think about the orthodoxy of these Churches (Friends, Mennonites, Church of the Brethren) concerning such doctrines as the number and nature of the sacraments, etc., even conservative Roman Catholics must grant that these Churches have grasped the true meaning of what Jesus said about violence better than Catholics or any mainline Church. If the Roman Catholic Church were to decide to join the Mennonites in refusing violence, I doubt whether our harmonious relations with the government would endure the day after the decision. Yet we Catholics know the Mennonites are right.

Fr. Häring: Let us try to understand the death of Christ as the hour of birth of a new nonviolent society of the people of God in the New Covenant. On principle a nonviolent society will give attention first to socially weaker groups. ... I am convinced that many preoccupations shown by the Church authorities would be more easily dissipated if the theology of liberation had already fully integrated the perspective of nonviolence.

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Fr. McKenzie: A reason for rejecting liberation theology is its ambiguity about the use of violence. As far as I can see they have bought the ethics of the just war or just revolution. It takes very little skill in speech or writing to say clearly that one rejects violence whether it is committed by the oppressor or the oppressed, and no theological education to see that Jesus with a machine gun does not come off as an authentic figure. ... Jesus taught us much about how to die; he taught and showed us nothing about how to kill.

Fr. Häring: One who lives on an eye-for-eye basis is blind and blinds others. Nonviolence, healing love of enemies opens eyes which are closed. ... The pro-life movement is weakened to the extent that any of its members will not free themselves radically from complicity with the system of (violent) deterrence and all the evils it implies and from all forms of pseudo-innocence.

Fr. McKenzie: Here in the U.S. we were doing it (genocide) to Native Americans before anyone ever heard of Hitler.

Fr. Häring: Karl Marx does not know the healing power of nonviolence. His disastrous error is to consider violence a necessary law of history. The exploiters and the powerful who believe in violence in order to prevent social justice are much closer to Marx than they imagine. They reject redemption from sin and violence just as much as the Marxists do. We as Christians beg all to get out of the vicious circle by conversion to justice, peace and nonviolence.

Fr. McKenzie: I believe that both here and elsewhere the Church can avoid persecutions by surviving as it has so far, that is by being the lackey of the establishment of wealth and power, that is, by not being the Church. ... The simple see at once the "way" of Jesus is very hard to do, but easy to understand. It takes real cleverness and sophisticated intelligence to find ways to evade and distort the clear meaning of what Jesus said and to find reasons why his words are

not applicable to a more advanced and more sophisticated culture.
... Complexity is the last refuge of scoundrels.

Fr. Häring: Even more shocking than the stubborn resistance of the ruling religious class to Christ's message and witness of nonviolence and peace is that the hardness of heart on this central and indicative point seeps through even among Christ's chosen disciples.

Fr. McKenzie: Pope and Bishops must proclaim the entire reality of Jesus Christ. They must proclaim that Western men and women will escape the ultimate horror only by attending to the person and words of Jesus Christ. Like Paul, that is all they have to say; so for Christ's sake let us say it.

Fr. Häring: Refusal of the way of nonviolence in the process of healing and love of enemies is existential heresy of the worst kind.
... It is not possible to speak of Christ's sacrifice while ignoring the role of nonviolence. ... Jesus is Nonviolence Incarnate.

What more can be said with words?

An invitation to participate in an ANNUAL FORTY-DAY FAST For the Truth of Gospel Nonviolence July 1—August 9

This is the kind (of unclean spirit) that can be driven out only by prayer and fasting.

Mk 9:29

Jesus Christ is the incarnation of the only true God, who is Abba, Agape, Unconditional Love, Unending Forgiveness, and Everlasting Mercy. The person who accurately sees Jesus sees God, for Jesus and God are One. It is the Spirit of this God that is life-giving. It is this God in whose image and likeness we are formed. There is no other God. All that is not of the only true God is death.

The God of the New Testament, the God who dwells fully in Jesus Christ, the only true God, is not a warrior God who will lead people in historical victories over enemies. The way of Jesus is not the way of violence, retaliation, and enmity. The way of Jesus is the way of nonviolent love. What Jesus taught by word and deed during times of common affairs and times of crisis is nonviolence, non-retaliation, love of enemy, forgiveness seventy times seven, return of good for evil—mercy.

Since God is love and Christ is God, to live in the life of God is to obey Jesus' command "to love as I have loved." This means that the Christian—the one who says he or she desires to follow Jesus—commits herself or himself wholeheartedly to following Jesus, who did not use violence and who did not threaten the use of violence, but chose instead to be meek and humble of heart. Jesus Christ is the truth of God and nonviolent love is the truth of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, it must be said clearly, and again and again, that violence is not the Christian way, that violence is not the Catholic way, that violence is not the way of Jesus. It must be said clearly, and again and again, that this does not mean that only nuclear violence and retaliation are contrary to the way of Jesus—but that *all*

violence and retaliation, even culturally condoned violence, are contrary to the way of Jesus. Therefore, what cannot be conducted or achieved without violence cannot be conducted or achieved by the followers of Jesus.

The mutiny against mercy must cease. Jesus' teaching is clear. Christ authorized no one to substitute violence for love. As the renowned biblical scholar, Fr. John L. McKenzie concludes, "If we cannot know from the New Testament that Christ totally rejects violence, then we can know nothing of His person or message. It is the clearest of teachings." The god of war is not the God of mercy. All the ways of God are mercy. In the Incarnation of Mercy, God's being, outside of time and beyond the world, unfolds itself in time and before the world. Mercy is what God is. Mercy is why we are. Mercy is what we need. Mercy is what God wants. The Way of Mercy is the path of our pilgrimage to the Absolute.

However, since the third century, most Christians have *not* proclaimed that violence is not the Christian way, that violence is not the Catholic way, that violence is not the way of Jesus. In fact, during the last 1700 years, at one time or another, Christians have justified as consistent with the way of Jesus the execution of such activities as war; capital punishment; torture; the burning of heretics, witches, and homosexuals; colonialism; violent, enmity-creating nationalism; abortion; genocide; and much more.

The spiritually symbolic low point of this anti-proclamation occurs on August 9 in the years of Our Lord during World War II. On that day of Our Lord in 1942, Christians in Auschwitz, Poland, destroyed Edith Stein, Sister Teresia Benedicta of the Cross. On that day of Our Lord in 1943, Christians in Berlin, Germany beheaded Franz Jägerstätter. On that day of Our Lord in 1945, Christians from the United States evaporated Nagasaki, the original, the oldest, and the largest Christian community in Japan.

Today, as for most of the last 1700 years, most Christians continue to justify as consistent with the spirit of Christ those energies, understandings, and emotions which lead inevitably to

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August 9. Today, most Christians still do not unequivocally teach what Jesus unequivocally taught on the subject of violence. Today, most Christians still refuse to proclaim that violence is not the Christian way, that violence is not the Apostolic way, that violence is not the way of Jesus.

It is because of this tragic and sorrowful fact that this forty-day fast is again undertaken this year.

This fast is a call to the individual Christian to repent and to return to the truth that violence is not the Christian way, that violence is not the Apostolic way, that violence is not the way of Jesus.

This fast is a prayer that the Universal Church will gather in Ecumenical Council on some August 9 in the not-too-distant future and declare—once and for all—that violence is not the Christian way, that violence is not the Apostolic way, that violence is not the way of Jesus, and thereby disassociate Herself forever from the tribal gods and politics of homicide. It is a prayer that the Church will become, for all humanity, the extension in time and space of Jesus Christ, the only true God who is Abba, Agape, Unconditional Love, Unending Forgiveness, and Everlasting Mercy.

Prayer of Petition

Submitted for your personal and merciful meditation in Christ-God, amidst the anguish and absurdity of a world being mercilessly crucified by violence.

Let us pray:

Abba, in the name of Jesus we ask you to send the Holy Spirit to gather the Universal Church in Ecumenical Council in order to proclaim Jesus' way of Nonviolent Love and in order to teach that

violence is not the Christian way,
violence is not the holy way,
violence is not the catholic way,
violence is not the apostolic way,
and thereby set Christians free forever from bondage to the unholy, uncatholic, unapostolic, un-Christ-like ways of the tribal gods and philosophies of homicide and violence.

We plead this grace so that the Nonviolent Lamb may be our Lord in deed, as well as in word and sacrament.
We request this gift so that the Christian Community may be, for afflicted humanity, a faithful witness to Jesus' way of overcoming evil.

We implore this healing so that the Church may be an authentic extension in time and space of the way of the Lamb of God, of the way of the Nonviolent Jesus, which is the way to renew the face of the earth. Amen.

Our Lamb has conquered; let us follow.

Mary,
Suffering Mother of the Suffering Christ,
assist your people who have fallen,
yet strive to rise again!

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August 9, 1985

An excerpt from the homily delivered at the close of the Forty-Day Fast for Christian Nonviolence, at St. Elias Byzantine Ukrainian Church, in Brampton, Ontario.

Why continue this fast year after year when so little seems to be happening, when Christians the world round are slaughtering each other as they have been for the last 1700 years? There is only one answer—because $1 + 1 = 2$. The Truth is the Truth is the Truth. Jesus Christ taught a teaching of Nonviolent Love of friends and enemies.

Some of these articles have previously appeared in *Sojourners*, the *Church World*, and the *Jesus Journal* and *Vocations and Prayer*.

About the Author

Emmanuel Charles McCarthy, is a priest of the Eastern Rite (Byzantine) of the Catholic Church. Formerly a lawyer and university educator, he is founder and former director of the Program for the Study and Practice of Christian Nonviolence at the University of Notre Dame and a co-founder of Pax Christi USA. For over a quarter of a century, the proclamation of the centrality of the nonviolent Jesus and His Way of Nonviolent Love of friends and enemies as the authentic understanding of the Gospel has been his vocation. In 1992, he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his life's work in this area.

Some of his other publications include *Epistle to the Church of the Twentieth Century: Christian Nonviolence: the Great Failure, the Only Hope; The Nonviolent Eucharist; The Stations of the Cross of Nonviolent Love; and Who is Your King, Who is Your God?: A Meditation on the Meaning of the Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Tens of thousands of people throughout the world have participated in retreats he has led on Gospel Nonviolence. Three of these retreats are now available on audio and video tape: *Boldly Like God, Go Against the Swords; Behold the Lamb; and The Kingdom of the Lamb.* For further information contact:

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