



Christian Life Communities

NEWSLETTER

Second Class Registration 8294

Summer, 1989

PEACE IS POSSIBLE

Everyone, both Israeli and Palestinian, with whom I spoke two weeks ago in the Holy Land, prays for PEACE.

As I set out to visit the Al Jalazon Refugee Camp for Palestinians, with a non-partisan volunteer vehicle, I was filled with fear that our vehicle might be stoned. It was not.

While visiting the camp, I saw children drawing pictures of guns, army jeeps, flying stones, tear-gas rising, and funeral processions. I met a family whose home had been bulldozed. On the rubble was a tent in which they were now living. I saw what remained of a 3 storey home which had been dynamited. I met a woman with a family of 14 who were now living in one room. Because 2 sons were in prison, rooms in her house were sealed off and could not be re-opened because they were under constant observation.

The next day I walked with an Israeli Jew through the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem to the Jaffa Gate. I was on my way to the Damascus Gate in the Moselm Quarter. He would not come further with me because of his fear of being stoned.

I wept with the Palestinians in Al Jalazon and I shared the Jewish fear of being stoned.

Peace requires dialogue. I means bringing the Palestinians and the Israelis to the bargaining table, as equals, now! If we, non-partisan volunteers, cannot visit Al Jalazon without fear, how can the Israelis ever hope to open the dialogue. If the Palestinian cannot live in the security of their own home, and their children cannot grow up dreaming and drawing about a peaceful future with roses and butterflies, rather than guns and funerals, how can peace come about?

Let us encourage both our Governments, the U.N., and other superpowers to bring the two sides together now.

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N.B. Susan visited the Holy Land last January. As a result of this visit and a Jesuit Ministries week-end she attended at Loyola House, in Guelph, she felt called to send the above article to many newspapers and U.P.'s.

REFLECTIONS ON MISSION

The following are excerpts on Mission from various sources. We present these here for reflection and discernment in preparation for this year's Assembly.

"Lay people, whose particular vocation places them in the midst of the world and in charge of the most varied temporal tasks, must for this very reason exercise a very special form of evangelisation. Their primary and immediate task is to put to use every Christian and evangelical possibility latent but already present and active in the affairs of the world. The more Gospel-inspired lay people there are engaged in these realities, clearly involved in them, competent to promote them and conscious that they must exercise to the full their Christian powers, which are often buried and suffocated, the more these realities will be at the service of the Kingdom of God and, therefore, of salvation in Jesus Christ, without in any way losing or sacrificing their human content, but rather pointing to a transcendent dimension which is often disregarded." (Evangelii Nuntiandi 70)

"Above all the Gospel must be proclaimed by witness. Take a Christian, or a handful of Christians, who in the midst of their own community show their capacity for understanding and acceptance, their sharing of life and destiny with other people, their solidarity with the efforts of all, for whatever is noble and good. Let us suppose that, in addition, they radiate in an altogether simple and unaffected way their faith in values that go beyond current values, and their hope in something that is not seen and that one would not dare to imagine. Through this wordless witness these Christians stir up irresistible questions in the hearts of those who see how they live. Why are they like this? Why do they live in this way? What or who is it that inspires them? Why are they in our midst? Such a witness is already a silent proclamation of the Good News and a very powerful and effective one. Here we have an initial act of evangelisation." (E.N. 21)

We have received, as the people of God, the mission of being witnesses to Christ by our attitudes, words, and actions before all people. We are convinced that in our Christian Life Communities we must consecrate ourselves first of all to the renewal and sanctification of the world. To accomplish this, we help each other give an apostolic sense even to the most humble realities of daily life. Through our spirituality, which makes possible personal and communal discernment, we become aware of what is most urgent and universal; we are moved to work for the reform of the structures of society, participating in efforts to liberate the victims of all forms of discrimination and especially to abolish differences between rich and poor within the Church. Our life finds its permanent inspiration in the Gospel of the poor and humble Christ so that we work in a spirit of service to establish justice and peace among all people. G.P.7

"You did not choose me. No, I chose you!" John 15:16