

Pacem in Terris Celebration in Cincinnati April 2013

The Vision of Hope and Companions on a Journey CLCs played a critical role in defining, planning, coordinating and running a celebration of the 50th Anniversary of *Pacem in Terris*, or *Peace on Earth*, the encyclical issued by Blessed Pope John XXIII.

Our story started back in April 2011, when four members met with Tony Stieritz, the Director of Catholic Social Action in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. We presented the following quote from *Pacem in Terris*:

Today the universal common good presents us with problems which are world-wide in their dimensions; problems, therefore, which cannot be solved except by a public authority with power, organization and means coextensive with these problems, and with a worldwide sphere of activity. Consequently the moral order itself demands the establishment of some such general form of public authority. (# 137)

We also presented supportive quotes from the Vatican II document “The Church in the Modern World,” from Popes Paul VI and Benedict XVI, as well as the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) document “The Challenge of Peace” calling for the need of a world-wide public authority to address the problems of the world. The group requested that Tony approach the USCCB and ask that they put some time and resources working against this goal.

Tony did speak with his contact in the Department of Peace, Justice and Human Development at the USCCB to share our request, but the response was NO, that this was the responsibility of the Vatican. Tony suggested to us perhaps we could invite the Vatican Observer to the UN to visit Cincinnati to address this topic. We came up with the plan to ask our Archbishop, Dennis Schnurr, to extend this invitation as part of a celebration of the 50th anniversary of *Pacem in Terris* which was 2 years away, April 2013.

Our first step was to create a team of people to work with us. Using personal connections and stating the goal of inviting the Vatican Observer to the UN to Cincinnati to celebrate the 50th anniversary of *Pacem in Terris*, we created a team of 11 high school teachers, 2 representatives from Cincinnati area colleges, Tony from the Catholic Social Action Office and 3 members of our CLCs. At our first meeting in October, 2011 the team decided to call itself the “Educating for Peace Coalition” and established a goal of sponsoring a year long program of educating Catholics about *Pacem in Terris*. The Coalition decided to include in our scope High School students, college students and other adults. Donna Park, member of Companions on a Journey CLC, served as facilitator of the team.

The Vatican Observer to the UN tentatively accepted the invitation to come to Cincinnati but ultimately was not free to come to because of his UN commitments. He was replaced by John Carr, the recently retired Executive Director of the USCCB Department of Peace, Justice and Human Development, who was very well received by the high school students, college students and adults. Expenses for the coalition’s programs were paid for by Xavier University, the College of Mt St Joseph, and The Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

Here is what the Coalition accomplished working from October 2011 to April 2013:

1. Planned and executed a very successful program for High School teachers in August 2012. This included a keynote presentation on the UN and *Pacem in Terris* by Caroljean Wille, SC. She represents the Sisters of Charity Non-Government Organization (NGO) at the UN. Alice Gerdeman, CDP presented “Infusion,” a technique for including peace and justice issues in any curriculum. There were breakout groups for each discipline (science, math, religion, world

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languages) and an opportunity for the teachers to learn about best practices in peace and justice issues in the Cincinnati area. More than 40 teachers attended the event from 13 different high schools. 87% of the teachers evaluated the overall program as being very much or extremely meaningful to their work. 100% of the teachers evaluated the keynote presentation as being very much or extremely meaningful to their work.

2. Organized and led 2 groups of 20 adults in *Just Peacemaking*, a product of Pax Christi, USA and Just Faith Ministries. Just Peacemaking involved 12 sessions of 2 hours each. One of the groups requested a presentation on “A Public Authority for the World Community” as one of the three optional topics. Donna Park made this presentation and led the discussion that followed.
3. Donna Park presented a session to Father Ben Urmston’s *E Pluribus Unum* class at Xavier University on “A Vision of Peace for the World Community.” This presented John XXIII’s call for a Public Authority for the World Community from *Pacem in Terris* as part of his vision of peace. Donna explained how John’s call can best be met by a Democratic Federal World Government and described how US History can point the way. At the end of the session, the students were asked to fill out a survey on how to move forward toward a public authority for the world community. No one suggested we don’t need to change anything. The most popular response (3 of 7) was to create Regional Federations (like the European Union) and then unite the regions.
4. Planned and executed a very successful program for over 300 high school students and 36 teachers from 18 high schools in the Cincinnati Archdiocese. The program (see attached) was entitled “New Hope to the World: Called by Our Faith to be Peacemakers.” The theme for the day was “Rooted in your faith and the prophetic words of *Pacem in Terris*, how are you called to be a peacemaker as New Hope to the World?” A visual for the theme was the series of four ever-larger concentric circles from *Pacem in Terris*, centered around human nature and dignity: human rights and duties, public authorities, international relations, and the world community. The President of Xavier University, Michael Graham, SJ welcomed the students to the day and Archbishop Dennis Schnurr offered a prayer and introduced the keynote speaker Mr. John Carr who spoke on *Pacem in Terris*. The day also included a video on *Pacem in Terris* created by McNicholas High School, opening and closing songs by the McNicholas High School Liturgical Choir, an art show including both individual contributions and a mosaic containing small pieces from participating students, table discussions at which the students were mingled across schools and shared their ideas on the meaning of peace, 3 breakout sessions organized around the 4 circles of the *Pacem in Terris* theme where each student attended 1 of 15 breakout groups in each of the 3 sessions, a meditation period in which college students led a reflection on “where do you go from here,” brief speeches from 4 high school students on “where they go from here,” and finally, discussions within school groups where the teachers and students talked about what they would bring back to their school from the day’s experiences. 92% of the students and 100% of the teachers evaluated the overall program as being very much meaningful or really inspiring.
5. Donna Park led a breakout group on a “Vision of Peace for the World Community” explaining how John XXIII’s call for a “public authority of the world community” can best be met by a Democratic Federal World Government. Consistent with the subsidiarity principle from Catholic

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Social Teaching, a federal world government would only deal with issues world-wide in dimension leaving national governments to deal with national issues and problems. 2 students found this breakout group inspiring and 4 found it very meaningful. Only 1 teacher evaluated the breakout group, but she evaluated it as inspiring. At the end of the session the students were asked which approach they recommended for moving towards a public authority for the world community. Of 58 students, only 2 (3%) replied that we don't need to change anything at all. 47% suggest moving forward within the UN framework, and 26% liked the idea of creating regional federations and then uniting the regions.

6. One of the college representatives on the Educating for Peace Coalition was Jean Lim, a theology professor from Xavier University. She was able to include 12 college students as participants in the high school program as breakout leaders, mentors for the students who gave brief speeches, and meditation guides. She also included *Pacem in Terris* in her course work in the spring semester. Her students found their participation very meaningful and were energized by their experience.
7. John Carr, the keynote speaker for the high school program, gave a longer presentation for college students and adults in the evening. The video created for the high school program was also shown to the adults and the art display, including the mosaic, was left up for their enjoyment. John shared the concentric circles described in 3 above. The question and answer period covered questions in all 4 circles from *Pacem in Terris* as described in #4 above.
8. The *Pacem in Terris* mosaic is going to be circulated during the 2013-2014 school year to schools who are interested in displaying it. In addition to the mosaic, the list of breakout group leaders willing to visit the schools will also be shared along with additional material on *Pacem in Terris*.