

Nonviolence and Just Peace Conference

Session 3 – Nonviolence and Just Peace. Moderated by Gerry Lee

Gerry Lee: ... and the inspiring insights that we've shared, or the powerful insights that each of you have shared with us in our small groups as well as in these plenary sessions. Today we take those insights and that powerful sense of the coming together from so many communities around the world on this subject, and we are charged with taking that hope into action and putting all the insights into some decisions, some commitments that we will make together on making nonviolence more a part of our churches' active teaching and practice.

So today is, you'll sense, and perhaps you're already sensing there's a sense of urgency and actually somewhat of a time limit because by the end of today we hope to have our commitments from each other, first our decisions on actions we could take together and individually as well as a statement, and common consensus document from this gathering. So in order to do that, we're going to have to really focus as much as possible and keep moving the process along. We'll use the same process that we used yesterday, so we will begin with four presentations and they will then have a brief dialogue between themselves and then I will invite you to come up and take one of the empty seats and briefly share your own insight on the subject.

Our topic this morning is Nonviolence and Just Peace: How are Catholic communities already practicing and embodying Just Peace? What are the latest developments and theological reflection on Just Peace? And how does this build on the scriptures and Catholic social thought?

And we have with us this morning Archbishop Odama, Francisco de Roux, Eli McCarthy, Jasmin Nario-Galace who will share with us some of their insights on Just Peace. Who would like to begin. Francisco?

Fr. Francisco de Roux, S.J.: Thank you very much. Good morning. Thank you for inviting me. Excuse me my Spanglish. We are trying to be very effective in giving you a message. It's my first time in a conference with Pax Christi International. And I don't have even a theological contribution but I was very impressed by the contributions I get from you yesterday, and especially from Eli and [inaudible] paper about the violence he has had to face in his situation, being he himself a person of nonviolence. My contribution is about my experience in Colombia for twenty years working in the Magdalena Medio, a very violent [inaudible] in my country and tiring to do [inaudible] Just Peace, [inaudible] human sustainable process with people, with the victims, the poor ones, the excluded. And also in the middle of a very strong conflict among the paramilitaries, the guerrillas and the military. Talking to everybody, and trying to persuade everybody to change [inaudible] and going through a very complex, difficult process. Always unpredictable. Twenty-seven of our companions were killed by the paramilitaries and the guerrillas. And in the paper I sent to you I was referring to Alma Rosa Jaramillo, a very courageous lawyer. She came to work with us, she was killed by the paramilitaries. And when we found her, she was in the mud, dead, they have cut off her legs and her arms with a

chainsaw and this was basically our daily situation, we've been like this in the Magdalena Medio. This is also a process built up in the moral [inaudible], built on human dignity. The dignity we don't get from the guerilla, not from the government, not from the military or from the paramilitary, we get [it] just because we are human beings. You were referring to humanity yesterday; this is the passion of Jesus, Jesus is passionate for human dignity. And this was really affecting our people because people get their strength to keep struggling for justice in peace in the area. Now, we are in a new moment because of the dialogue between the Colombia government, the FARC guerilla and the National Liberation Army guerilla. I have been with the victims several time in La Havana in Cuba. And the presence of the victims in the dialogue has been also very impressive, their testimony, their decision to continue to peace after suffering so much. And been accompanied the president of Colombia [inaudible] conference during the Havana, I know the quality of this transformation of the process of peace because of the suffering of the victims. But, we are about to get a final peace agreement in Colombia, probably in two or three months, with the FARC people, a bilateral cease-fire agreement. But my country is totally divided because we have a lot of people who are [open] to the peace process because their economic interest and military interest also, and it makes me think about Jesus telling us that "Happy the peace makers," but we're going to face contradiction and refusal for what you are doing.

There is something that I would like to invite you to do, but probably to join me, I'll try to join you in what you are trying to do. There are two results I am expecting from this process. The first one is really to have the Catholic Church [inaudible], abandoning the just war perspective. My country, a Catholic country, it has been scandalous. I mean, because of that, the priests and the nuns could join the guerrillas after reading liberation theology, because of the paradigm, not because of the liberation theology, because of the paradigm of just war they joined the guerilla and it has been hell for Colombia. But our military, a Catholic military, is trapped. Is also based on the just war paradigm. And the paramilitary, they pray the Virgin Mary before going to kill people. This is awful. So please help us to stop, stop the paradigm and to build up a new paradigm. Finally, I brought this sign. This is the tie of the Colombian original people, the [inaudible] people. They used to be a guerilla, and now they use the tie in their nonviolence protection of people. They use wooden sticks to protect themselves. Can you imagine? 12,000 people with wooden sticks confronting the Colombian army, or the guerillas. And this is the way they are [inaudible] now.

Thank you.

[applause]

Archbishop John Baptist Odama: I would like to thank Pax Christi, especially the organizers, for slotting my name in their list that I be present for this gathering. I want to thank God that I have this opportunity to speak to a gathering of Pax Christi for the first time. I thank God for each one of you. I'm going to share something that is very dear to me, and [inaudible] this day's [inaudible], pray over it and asking God, can you enlighten me more, not only enlighten me, but

give me the courage during the years you have left for me to live on this earth that I do it before you call me back to you.

The point is, the point is we have this life in us and a pair of them [shows his hands], what do they mean for me? The five fingers indicate the five continents. The Americas, Europe, Asia, Africa and Oceania. And on these five continents, you find human beings and these human beings are divided into two. Male and female. In each of those continents. And when you bring them together, they are one hand. And in this century, I discovered, when I was doing praying. The human beings are majorly divided into two colors, if we want. This one [indicates the palm of his hand] you can put it for the white and all other colored people. And this one [indicates the back of his hand] is for the black. But the two colors form one hand. At the back and inside. And when you put us inside, at the back is more or less the same. So I've been praying, when will I have the chance to participate vigorously, to awake the sense of being humanity in people. So that we have what we call human family.

Yesterday I was [inaudible] Petros, we were talking. And he asked if we could ask the pope to write a letter about the human family, being one human family, we are one human family. This thought came stronger in me when I was engaged in peace work at home. For 23 years we were in [inaudible]. Rebel group called LRA, yes, Lord's Resistance Army, and then the government of Uganda were engaged in war. As the common saying at home is, when two elephants are fighting, it is the grass which is under the feet of these elephants that is suffering. So the civil population, the poor, especially children, and their mothers and their fathers and so on, they suffer. So we came to the sense that we must work for peace and promote harmony. I want to end with a statement of Pope St. John Paul II. He said, "War is a lie, war is a lie. Why? Because it destroys what it says it wants to defend." And I saw this happen under my eyes. And so I said no more war in this area. Let us move humanity to accept peace and not war anymore.

Thank you.

[applause]

Dr. Jasmin Nario-Galace: Good morning, there's so many ideas in my head about the topic that I thought I'd write a reflection so I can keep it inside the time of five to seven minutes I believe. I am from Miriam College [inaudible] and Miriam College is one of the 2,500 member schools of the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines, or CEAP, which has a JEEPGY program. So, JEEPGY, "J" stands Justice and Peace, "E" for Ecological Integrity, the second "E" for Engaged citizenship, "P" for Poverty alleviation, "G" for Gender Equality and "Y" for Youth Empowerment.

The JEEPGY expresses CEAP's mission transformative education which enables individuals to participate in the fulfillment of God's intent for all peoples. A world free from war and the threat of it, a world where justice and equality prevail, a world where human rights are promoted and respected, a world where diversity is accepted and celebrated, and a world where resources of the earth are utilized with future generations in mind. JEEPGY uses a whole-

school approach. CEAP encourages its Catholic member schools to integrate JEEPGY in the different facets of school life. Their vision and mission, co-curricular and extracurricular programs, research, instructional adherence, and outreach projects.

The general orientation of the JEEPGY framework is in righting relationships with God, humanity, and all of creation. The pillar programs are guided with the values of Just Peace, stewardship, human dignity, integrity, equality, love, dialogue, tolerance, and spirituality, among others. It takes seriously what Pope John Paul II had said, that if you want to reach peace, teach peace. Many Catholic schools in the Philippines, including the school where I am from, have declared themselves zones of peace. Miriam College, as a JEEPGY champion, shares capacities in our CEAP members school in why and how we should infuse the principles of Just Peace in the widest aspects of school life. Many Catholic schools have now explicitly articulated in their vision and mission and school philosophy the principles of Just Peace. Just Peace principles are integrated in the curriculum of many schools. Miriam College, through the peace Education Network, have been getting the government of the Philippines to issue an Executive Order, which is a presidential order, mandating basic education and teacher education institutions to integrate peace education in the curriculum.

Catholic schools have also put up actual physical spaces, such as centers for peace, or justice, or environment, or social action, or gender equality to ensure the promotion of peaceful values in the school culture. Catholic schools have also integrated Just Peace principles in their curricular and extracurricular activities. Student organizations promoting the principles of Just Peace, such as Pax Christi, have been established at many academic institutions. Catholic schools outreach projects also live by the principles of Just Peace. Miriam College, for example, has a twinning project with a school in Mindanao attended by Muslims, which is the minority in the country and historically the oppressed people. Students exchange letters throughout the school year and get a chance to meet and work together at the end of the year. The project is our way of accompanying the national peace process through this people to people peace process that helps build bridges of friendship and understanding between young people from two cultures and challenge historical prejudices. How does a turn to Just Peace impact the moral analysis of conflict, praxis, and engagement? If Just Peace means defending and restoring the fundamental dignity of all, if it means prioritizing love, compassion, reconciliation, and mercy, if it means the way of Jesus which is loving the enemy and not winning over him or her, but winning him or her over to our side, if it means the way of Jesus, which is inclusion and not exclusion, then the way we analyze and approach conflict should be the way of nonviolence.

The new emphasis of our peace work should be looking at and addressing the roots of conflict. Of the 29 conflicts currently being waged in the world, only one is classical, according to Project Plowshares. Most of these are civil or internal and waged along ethnic lines. Many of these wars are waged because of experience of deprivation, of historical injustice, of the refusal of the majority to allow the minorities to chart their political future with greater autonomy. The changing nature of conflict calls on us to change the way to solve them. For example, the

dispossession of land of the Muslims and the indigenous peoples in the Philippines as well as government neglect have pushed them further down in [inaudible] poverty. The refusal to allow them to exercise the right to greater self-determination cannot be solved by war. Catholic communities in the Philippines, including the predominantly Catholic security sector are beginning to see the wisdom of targeting the root causes of the conflict, and not those who waged it. Modify the security paradigm from winning the war to winning the peace. Many Catholic educational institutions are in the forefront, supporting the peace process in lobbying for laws that will address the legitimate grievances of the people, historically marginalized and oppressed, reaching out to those in the margins, especially the Muslim and indigenous women, whose voices are otherwise not heard, and finding spaces to bring these voices to the attention of decision makers, including policy makers. Many of us back home are at the forefront of campaigns to end war and [unclear] weapons because we know that billions of [unclear] are military for war can be used to improve the lot of our country's ethnic and religious minorities. We are the forefront of campaigns to end war because we have personally heard the narratives of victims.

Let me just say this last paragraph. In sum, I believe that Catholic communities should work for the abolition of the war system that legitimized war as a means of resolving conflict. Let's focus our efforts on preventing violent conflict, re-addressing the root causes of injustice, poverty and discrimination. And for violent conflicts that are already there, let us use the means already available to us, such as diplomacy, negotiation, and dialogue. Terrence Rynne said it quite well, "The only path is to renounce violence, to begin anew with dialogue, to break the chain of injustice, that is Jesus's way, that must be our way as a Catholic faithful."

Thank you very much.

[applause]

Eli McCarthy: All right, well, good morning everyone, hope you're feeling well. My name's Eli McCarthy, I'm from the United States, I work with the Conference of the Superiors of Men, which is the U.S. Catholic men's religious orders, the director of Justice and Peace, and I also teach at Georgetown University, Justice and Peace studies.

So I'm going to share a bit about theological developments, the possible content of a Just Peace approach, and some of the implications for our moral process. First, theology. Just Peace is rooted in biblical *shalom*, the song that justice and peace shall embrace, reminds us that peace requires justice-making, but also, peace-making is the way to justice. Jesus modeled this approach to living under foreign military occupation. He also leads us toward restorative justice, with a focus on the harm done to relationships and how to heal. Just Peace is clearly unfolding in the trajectory of contemporary popes' teaching and statements. Pope John XIII wrote about how war is not a suitable way to restore rights. Paul VI linked peace and development. John Paul II said violence is evil, it violates our dignity, it is the enemy of justice. There's no justice without forgiveness. And he calls us not to follow those who train us in how

to kill. Pope Benedict called loving the enemy the nucleus of the Christian revolution. Francis has focused us on mercy, calls us to give up the way of arms, says war does grave harm to the environment, that justice never comes from killing, and faith and violence are incompatible. He told us not to bomb or make war on ISIS. The door is always open to dialogue, he says, even with ISIS. Just Peace is also being woven through ecumenical organizations and interfaith collaborations. For example, with the World Council of Churches turning to a Just Peace approach in 2011.

Second part, the content. I propose that the Catholic Church should shift to a Just Peace approach based on Gospel nonviolence. A Just Peace approach offers a vision of Christ's *shalom* and an ethic to guide our actions to build peace, to prevent, diffuse, and heal violent conflict. As an ethic, it includes a commitment to human dignity and thriving relationships. It can offer a set of core virtues to form our character and shape core practices, as well as to both orient and better apply a set of Just Peace criteria for specific actions. As a virtue approach, it goes beyond pacifism, understood as a mere rule against violence, by instead challenging us to become better people and societies in engaging conflict, which I think is more consistent with Jesus. Core virtues would include nonviolent peacemaking, mercy, solidarity, etc. The seven core practices of the virtue of nonviolent peacemaking were outlined in the pre-conference document on Just Peace. Some examples could include: using an explicit nonviolent Eucharistic prayer in our liturgies; conflict transformation that sees conflict, but not violence, as an opportunity for growth and addresses root causes; unarmed civilian protection, such as a nonviolent peace force and Operation Dove. For instance, in South Sudan, a nonviolent peace force's protection has reduced sexual assaults and rape from a regularity to zero in the areas that they patrol. Also the practice of nonviolent civilian-based defense, such as in Czechoslovakia in 1968 against the Soviet Union and in the Philippines in 1986. Also in the pre-conference doc, the seven Just Peace criteria proposed by Maryann Cusimano Love would guide our action choices and apply in all stages of conflict, such as sustainability, participatory process, and restoration. In justice and peace, it is key to recognize that the means are the seeds to the end. So we must use means that reflect the ends we hope to accomplish if we are to fully reach such an end.

So, the last part, implications. A Just Peace approach has been articulated by theologians on issues of drones, nuclear weapons, ISIS, etc. So, for example, with lethal drones, we could begin with the virtue question, "What kinds of people are we becoming?" This helps us to see more clearly that lethal drones instill fear and anxiety in communities rather than build right relationships. We see that they mask root causes of conflict so they perpetuate violence often, rather than sustainable peace. We see that they increase dehumanization by objectifying the other through a video game mentality, damaging our capacity for empathy, and often creating Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome in drone operators. In contrast, the just war approach does not adequately assess the reality of habit-formation and limits our view of possible Just Peace practices.

Thus, in order to adequately develop a Just Peace approach I think we as the Catholic Church should no longer legitimate the just war language or appeal to the concept of justifiable war. Not only is it not true, but as we've already seen for 1,700 years, such legitimation will continue to constrain our Just Peace imagination and our will to embody Just Peace practices. So when a large-scale lethal threat is near and grave, the church, as the body of Christ should urgently draw on Just Peace analysis, advocacy, intervention, and healing before, during, and after such events. If governments or the UN decide based on international law, for military action in such genuine atrocity cases, I think the church's role is less about condemning those persons who took such action. Instead the church's role is to clearly name such a response of violent action as a tragedy, a failure on the way of Just Peace, as well as inconsistent with human dignity and a culture of human rights for all. The church's role is to keep a Just Peace approach front and center in all such cases, and advocate, even in the midst of violence, for Just Peace actions that will transform the violence.

So I end here with reminding us that both Vatican II and Pope Paul VI have called the church to go further, saying boldly, it is "our clear duty to strain every muscle as we work for the time when all war can be completely outlawed." In turn the goal is to outlaw war, not to legitimate or refine the criteria for war. As Francis proclaimed, "In the silence of the cross the uproar of weapons ceases and the language of peace is spoken." Therefore, I humbly suggest that the church should embody Gospel nonviolence by using a Just Peace approach with specific criteria, virtues, and practices to prevent violence, diffuse violence, to heal well after violence, and to consistently build Just Peace.

Thank you.

[applause]

Gerry Lee: Let's just take a moment to let these powerful reflections by our presenters sink in, and then as yesterday, they'll have a chance for a brief dialogue amongst themselves and then I will invite you to come up to one of the empty seats here to share briefly your own insights.

Archbishop John Baptist Odama: I wanted to ask my sister, [unclear] established institutions, and particularly the schools, the Catholic schools, how long has this been, and what are the impacts on the society of the Philippines.

Dr. Jasmin Galace: Thank you. It's a very good question, I wish I... Um, the peace education actually began in 1986 after Marcos fled the country and a civil society emerged, because the dictatorship was no longer there. So with it came the birth of peace education and so many schools, some schools thought it was wise actually to have changed mindsets to nationally transform mindsets and attitudes and support actually the peace process that started soon after Cory Aquino came into power. So we believed that the peace process is not just vertical, and should be accompanied by horizontal peace processes, you know, changing these mindsets and attitudes. So it has been going on for a long time now, and what has been the impact? I would say it's changing mindsets and attitudes because really a lot of people that have been

through peace education with us are now peace advocates -- they are in the government institutions, they are in civil society organizations, in human rights organizations, in peace organizations and so you have now many workers in the vineyard, you know, because they have been inspired by peace education. It's just one comment I can think of at the moment.

Eli McCarthy: Yeah, I have a question for the archbishop. First of all, all these were great examples of Just Peace practices that have been [unclear] some of that root causes, horizontal/vertical relationships. I'm really curious to hear more about your negotiations with LRA, and what did you learn from that, what does this group need to hear about that, what was challenging.

Archbishop Odama: Thank you. I must say, one basic underlining point is this one: Human beings want to be listened to. Secondly, they want to be loved. Thirdly, yesterday Bishop Taban said they want to be trusted. And putting these points across I was struck on what are called inter-religious group of Muslims, Orthodox, Anglicans, and Catholics. We started to promote that sense of trusting the government, the rebels. And we became like a bridge, linking them. That was the first time we did. Secondly we began to do advocacy to rally other people to support this idea of dialogue between these two people. And we went to many, many, many countries, including the Sudan, especially South Sudan who participated. The negotiations were more with the, I would say, the help of Southern Sudan. Contradictorily, the present leader of the rebel group in South Sudan was our chief negotiator. And we were telling him, by the way, you are struggling for independence. If you become independent, don't repeat the mistake we in Africa have done, so don't repeat them. But unfortunately after two years, three years, they plunged into the very thing we were warning them not to do. And the process of our negotiations took about two years, two years. And at the end, the two sides disarmed themselves in our region, particularly in the northern part of Uganda, centrally where I am. The rebels put down their arms, the government put down their arms and they decided to agree not to continue this war in Uganda. Unfortunately, the final peace agreement was not signed. Up to now it's not signed. But we go, except that our conflict violent conflict in Uganda has been exported to South Sudan, to Central Africa, and to [unclear]. That is the little I can say. I gave you some background to it.

OK, thank you.

Dr. Jasmin Galace: I have a question for my brother Francisco here, and listening to you I can resonate very much with what you're saying about there's [unclear] the peace agreement within the FARC and government but that the support of the people is still not there, in general, the country's still divided. I can say the same thing for the Philippines. the peace agreement was signed with the government and the Moro Islamic National Liberation Front but the Christian majority would still not be supportive of the peace process. And I just want to ask if, did you try actually asking those who were directly affected by the armed conflict what their perspectives on this were. I'm asking this because we did a round of conversations with women directly affected by armed conflict in the Philippines, they really said that they are tired of war.

They are tired of war, that war is not the answer, its affects, suffering, loss of life, displacement, the women have been saying the proliferation of [unclear] actually leads to greater insecurity, that the socio-economic deficiencies breed war and unrest.

So I was wondering if, Francisco, in Colombia the women or those on the margins directly affected by armed conflict have been conversed and these perspective have been brought to the fore. This is what we try to do in the Philippines, we try to bring them to the attention of the decision--makers.

Fr. Francisco de Roux, S.J.: Thank you for your questions. Really in Colombia the presence of women in the peace process is really very important. Going to Havana with [unclear] we got together with women because they are the people who most have suffered because of the conflict and they were really affected, talking to the guerillas and to the government and the military in order to transform the situation. But I have to say something to education, I was very impressed by your contribution of education in the Philippines. In Colombia [unclear] the guerillas and trying to invite them to be consistent with human dignity and [unclear] and the massacres. they always refer to us as educators of the Colombian people as Catholic, in our Catholic colleges and universities, and they said you have educated our ruling classes and see what they have done with our people. And probably [unclear] sort of abandon [unclear] and human dignity which you were referring to, and that this is quite a problem we have to face.

Gerry Lee: Thank you. I invite now anyone to come up to one of the empty seats and to share a reflection or a response from your own experience as we continue the conversation. And I have a request from the translators to try to slow down so they can translate while you talk, some of us are speaking very quickly.

Peter Prove: Thank you very much. I have actually several comments and observations but I will try and keep them brief. First of all, I want to thank Eli for what he has said and written in terms of giving substance to the concept which all too often is too vague, of Just Peace. Giving substance to that concept in terms of criteria and applications and consequences. I wanted to ask perhaps all the panelists, but maybe especially Francisco and the archbishop about some of the built-in assumptions we have about whether or not it's possible to dialogue with certain actors. And perhaps in the current context we think especially of ISIS as being fundamentally not amenable to dialogue and how to deal with that. But I think when we hear the sort of testimony that Francisco gave about the sort of atrocity that he described it's really not a million miles from what ISIS does. And I'd like to invite them -- and the same can be said about the LRA -- and so I would perhaps like to invite them to reflect more and to sort of encourage us not to assume that there is no possibility of dialogue with even those who seem not amenable to it. Another comment that I would like to make draws on the commentary about peace education which seems to me to certainly to be a fundamental challenge to be mainstream. On the other hand, and now I speak not only on behalf of [unclear] but more as a parent, I am very concerned about the influence of violent video games. It is not a peripheral issue. It is informing the expectations and assumptions of an entire generation, and I think, and this is the first

generation that has been so affected by that overwhelming trend of that sort of [unclear]. And I wonder what the consequences will be and how we as a church, as churches, address that prevailing phenomenon, that prevailing cultural influence.

Archbishop Odama: I thank you for the question. The LRA and the government of Uganda, particularly LRA, there was no imminent site [unclear] that we would talk with them. My argument all the time was, are there people, this people we can talk to. Are there people LRA talk and trust, are they there? Why don't we find these people and address the issues for all concerned through those who the LRA trust and are able to talk to. And indeed that was at the end our entry point. Then, we began to ally ourselves with those whom they trust and they can talk to, to be their friends. That was making LRA as our friends. But we took the principle as an inter-religious group, that the LRA and the government were our children. So we love them both. We don't hate any of them. What we are not happy about is their doing the fighting. And that was how we entered in. Thanks be to God.

I don't know about Colombia?

Fr. Francisco de Roux, S.J.: My conviction is that dialogue transforms people everywhere. I know five people, for instance, I met them for the first time 30 years ago, they are totally different now because of dialogue. But this is different in any culture. In Colombia where we have a Catholic country, going to discuss, going to see the guerrillas immediately after a massacre, immediately after an attack they had done. [Unclear] It is just after they've acted we've gone to see them. And we tried to respect them always, to tell them that we don't understand what they are doing, but we believe they are doing that because they think this is the best thing they can do for mankind or for the Colombian people, and then we start the dialogue, inviting them to be consistent with humanity, with human dignity in order to get the transformation of the conscience. [Unclear] this is always possible. I mean it. [Unclear] I know that.

Eli McCarthy: I would just add a couple things on that, I mean, these are really great examples, I think are really hopeful for whatever situation, and with ISIS we have examples of them actually negotiating with other groups particularly around hostages and other kind of systemic things in the areas kind of where they work, so they are talking to people and I think this point about identifying people they trust, the people of credibility is just really huge. We've seen that be effective with the Cure Violence model that's been doing gang preventions and working in Honduras, etc.

But the other thing I think we are invited to think about is sort of a big gap in the church is that there are a whole range of nonviolent practices such as nonviolent resistance, where you try to diffuse the sources of power, whether it be material power or you create a defection strategy, right, where you identify defectors from ISIS who can then witness to members of ISIS and start to limit the number of people in that group. Also there's unarmed civilian protection right now in Syria, Nonviolent Peace Force is training Syrians on how to do unarmed civilian protection in

their neighborhoods. So that becomes a piece of the puzzle. There's trauma healing that can be used in a really strategic way to help make it less likely people will join ISIS or maybe even make there more of a pool for people in ISIS to leave. So I don't think we have to limit ourselves to dialogue and there are certainly sometimes with dialogue is not; people aren't quite ready for it. So we can think sort of outside the box.

On video games, I've got some kids, I've got an eight-year-old and a three-year-old. It's a big challenge, I mean, I'm not totally sure, what we try to do is really focus on the kinds of friends they have, who are the friends they hang out with. There are nonviolent video games where you can actually learn how to do strategic nonviolence, and I would also say television, limit as much television as possible because a lot of the commercials and even the shows often generate that interest.

Dr. Jasmin Galace: I'd like to address the video games theme. Actually I know that in some schools in the Philippines there's a symbolic [unclear] and I'm not sure if that would include video games, but at home, the children are now teenagers, but when they were little when they were christened and during the first birthday I specifically wrote in the invitation, "no war toys." And as they were growing up I explained to them why it was so. So they never begged war toys. One is 21 now and one is 19. They asked to buy video games but it's always the NBA.

And also I'm a speaker challenging bullying and I go to different Catholic schools to talk about challenging bullying. And often, all the time, I get questions from parents, the male parent, you know, who complain to me and would say, you give a lot of excellent options on how to challenge bullying but we are very disappointed that you don't have an option about fighting back. So I think we have to re-think about how we socialize men and boys and how we teach them that they need to fight back, that the way to solve conflicts is by fighting back, but to teach them that there are other ways in which we can actually solve conflicts like by dialogue and conflict resolution techniques which are peaceful and perhaps we can start from there. So socialization at home is very important. So hopefully my boys, well I haven't seen them actually get in a fist fight, they always buffet each other and make them, and my husband and I when there's tension between the two, we ask them to come together and talk about it. [Unclear]

Merwyn DeMello: *As-Salaam-Alaikum.*

Audience: *Wa-Alaikum-Salaam.*

Merwyn DeMello: [Unclear] You know one of the things, when I knew that I was coming to this conference I consulted with my Afghan colleagues and one of the things I said, "What message should I take? I wish one of you, as a practitioner of Islam, as a practitioner of peace-building, as an individual who professes to Islam that embodies nonviolence, that embodies peace-building, you should be the one here. You have the legitimacy of talking about Afghanistan and of talking about Islam, and peace-building and nonviolence." So they said to me, "Convey to your friends there how proud we are to be Afghan." And therefore, I thought the least I could do is greet you with the greeting of peace, which is *as-salaam-aleikum*, and then speak a few words in Dari

to you. My name is Merwyn DeMello, I am catholic with a small "c." I am also of Kenyan origin, born in Kenya, lived in several countries, and now I'm trying to imbibe within me, I'm two years old, two years old in Afghanistan, imbibe within me the principles and precepts of Islam. We've hear of [unclear], we've heard assumptions, and we've heard frameworks, and then life goes on.

In the morning I wake up at 4:30 in the morning for the simple reason that I love, I deeply love and treasure the call of the *azan*. That refreshes me. Mosques, [unclear] are in abundance. There's one five minutes away from my home. So I pray with the *azan*, I meditate. I then prepare myself mentally and physically for the day. And therefore I am able to survive. And I'm able to survive because of the relationships that I have. Just Peace, to me, in Afghanistan, in Kabul where I don't, I personally don't know if I'm going to return to a normal life, there have been several explosions near where I live with my wife. And I have by God's grace, [foreign words] that I am alive today and able to speak to you. When I leave my home, which I make a point to, at 6:30 in the morning and walk, despite the fact that all kinds of security regulations that are framed, frameworks by people who do not belong to Afghanistan because they want to keep themselves safe. The Afghans do not have that option. My friend and colleague who's 26 years old in my peace-building department with international assistance mission that has a 50-year presence in Afghanistan, basically a framework for Christian-sending agencies having four primary aspects to it: community-building, health, education, and now this component of peace-building, gives me the channel to do what I do in Afghanistan. However, when I sat with Hamid Mohammed Ebrahimi who's 26 years old, and the bread-winner for his family, his father died when he was a refugee in Pakistan about 10 years ago. He has three brothers and a sister and his living mother. And of course, his broader [foreign word] which is family which he also supports, started as the assistant project manager and I'm proud to say in January of this year he assumed my responsibilities of the project manager.

Three months ago when we were developing plan for the next three years, and feel free to read more about that in my sharing [unclear], he said to me, "Merwyn, what I would like to do is to introduce Just Peace as one of our concepts of our strategic plan. It came from Mohammed Hamid Ebrahimi.

My day to day life, from about 6:30 to 7:00 I'm done with my prayers, my breakfast, talking a little bit with Kirsten my wife about what our day is going to look like, she also works in the department, and then I walk about a 20-minute walk to my workplace. What do I encounter? Thousands of people waiting in line applying for passports to leave the country. But as I walk I'm very strategic about who I'm talking to [unclear]. Guns and people holding guns are in abundance in Kabul. But these are also human beings. One of the most beautiful aspects of this culture is greeting and being greeted back. Nobody cannot respond to you or to me if I say *As-Salaam-Aleikum*. There's a smile on their face, if they're eating something they are bound are offer to me to join them. I've often sat with people right on the sidewalk and eaten a piece of naan or if it happens to be lunchtime, eating their lunch with them. Or, if it's during Ramadan,

which I make a point to honor and fast with them as a sign of solidarity and therefor living Just Peace and nonviolence, nonviolent action. Much to the consternation of my own colleagues in my own organization that says, "Be careful, you might be poisoned, or you might be a security threat." And I say, "No, peace-building means nothing in this context, peace-building is hundreds of years old in Afghanistan, it is not new."

We talked a little bit about transformation. This is to me transformation, where I, on a day to day basis, -- it says 10 minutes [laughter] I, on a day to day basis, [unclear] trust formed along with my colleagues, along with my Afghan friends, I have stories and multiple stories. My greatest inspiration is a man called Abdulla. Abdulla has a small [foreign word], which is basically a cart on which he sells vegetables. He was my first encounter with a vendor. He is one of the, he imbibes purity. He imbibes [foreign word] which is welcome, a welcome culture. My understanding of Abdulla, every Wednesday evening, 4:30 p.m., I carry two bags in my hand and I go grocery shopping. And these really are my best, best friends. Abdulla has a small cart on which he sells onions, potatoes, tomatoes, and whatever vegetable likely in season. And Abdulla is the kindest man I have ever met, and I've lived quite a while. Anyhow, Abdulla not only sells me his vegetables, I work with him on a credit basis. Money has no significance in Afghanistan, it's the relationship behind the money, that is what matters, that comes from my African roots as well. So Abdulla, not only, you see he has this olden kind of scale on which I set one kilo of tomatoes and one kilo of [unclear] and it's always one-and-a-half kilo, but what he does is he tilts the scale in such a way that it looks even, and he gives me whatever I want. And, because I'm at the beginning of a pretty long walk through the market, he has a place for me on his cart where he can then store my bag. Abdulla has been for me the channel to meeting leaders in society where he lives. What I'm basically trying to say is, I may not ever achieve anything in my peace-building department -- we make plans and then things are postponed, nothing happens -- but I will have the legitimacy of relationships and maybe, maybe somewhere down the line I will have lived Just Peace and lived nonviolence. Thank you.

[applause]

Rev. Pat Cunningham: Hello my name is Pat Cunningham, I'm a Columban missionary based in Seoul, South Korea. I've been involved in the campaign the building of a naval base on Jeju Island in a small village called Gangjeong village. And what the archbishop mentioned, that war is a lie, that kind of hit me immediately. And not only is war a lie, but preparations for war is a lie. The destruction of the marine coastal environment to prepare the ground for the building of the base, the destruction of sacred ground [unclear] rock where traditional ancestral services have been conducted down through the years, 500 years. This destruction of the coast line hurts, pains grievously the villagers. And the Catholic solidarity movement, we've been with the villagers, we've walked with the villagers, we have been participated the peace marches around Jeju Island to highlight the destruction caused by theses preparations for war. And Just Peace, in terms of preventing war, but preventing I think preparations for war. Preparations for war that we see in Okinawa, the archipelago of Okinawa, all those beautiful islands, not just the

mainland of Okinawa where the relocation of Futenma Air Force base to Henoko Bay. Henoko Bay is a beautiful, absolutely pristine area, very sensitive ecological area, the grazing grounds for the [unclear], the manatee, are going to be completely destroyed, they are filling in, they are filling in Henoko Bay to facilitate the building another base. [Unclear] as if there's not enough military installations in Okinawa, they need another one. But not only the mainland, main island of Okinawa, but also the other archipelago islands. Yonaguni, Yonaguni, where a spy base is being built by the self-defense forces. So, I think preparations for war are very much under way in northeast Asia with the pivot and the projection of 60% of US naval forces into that region is having a devastating impact on indigenous communities and on the environment and green life. So I just want to make the connection between preparations for war and the environment, the impact on that, on the environment.

Gerry Lee: Thank you.

Rev. Pat Cunningham: Thank you very much. [inaudible]

[applause]

Gerry Lee: Ok we've got to move along, we only have about five more minutes for our discussion and then we'll break.

Ana Raffai: [Speaks in French; English translation:] *I'll speak in French. I came [to] ask two questions to [Fr. DeRoux] and Ms. Philipines. And to share with you all my objection on the notion of just peace. I'll ask my question to you first, sir. As I live in a post war region where war is still on the minds of many, my question is How have you come to convince your friends, your Catholic friends, to not resort to violence after having received violence. With your friend, your combatant that died. And my question to you, ma'am is... You are, as I understand, the majority, that started a school that includes the minority. Again, the question, again... How did you see the interest... the good that you have... to start a school together. It's a big question for us in Bosnia. For example, there are two schools that are totally separate and kids live in terrible circumstances this way. How did you, being the majority, convince your colleagues in the minority to start a school together. Maybe first the questions and the objections.*

Rev. Francisco de Roux, S.J.: Thank you for your questions. You know, we have a long work to do in Colombia. We have a long work to do in my opinion, years, for our transformation, our personal transformation. But, victims in Colombia, the ones who have suffered the war, they are the ones asking to stop the war, and to stop the war everywhere, and to stop the war now.

Dr. Jasmin Galace: I will respond to it in accordance to how I understood the question; the question as I understood it is how to, why do Catholic schools, how do we manage to convince them to teach this education. There are three reasons that come to mind at the moment, number one is because we're Catholic institutions it is an ethical imperative, [unclear] of our faith. So all these principles of Just Peace are part of the Catholic faith, so solidarity, tolerance, love, compassion, all of these are in our faith, so that's number one, it's an ethical imperative.

The second piece reason that it is not difficult in the schools to teach peace because it's a [unclear] alternative. Many people die from armed violence. In the Philippines, for example, the Philippine Action Network Small Arms, in a study that they made, said that 26 people die on a daily basis from gun violence. So and it is from [unclear] situations, we do not count yet those who die from armed conflict. In a conflict between the government and the National Democratic Front, more than 60,000 people have died from that, and in a conflict between the government and Moro National Liberation Front and other Moro groups, 160,000 people have died from these armed conflicts, so the second reason is a practical alternative because we want to save lives, so it wasn't difficult to get Catholic schools on board.

A third reason is because it's a legal obligation. The Philippines is a signatory to very many human rights instruments, international humanitarian law among others, the civil and political covenant among others, so it's a legal obligation so it wasn't difficult to get them on board because of these three reasons. And the fourth one is because of human nature and human are basically peaceful, so I always tell my students so when you see other people coming into a room you do not meet them with a slap in the face, you meet them with a hello. So we are naturally peaceful, that we were not born with violent genes, and the tendency of people is to cooperate and to live together peacefully so for all these reason it's not difficult at all to get Catholic schools on board in this way, they are with us. Thank you.

Giuliana Martirani [Speaks in Italian; English translation:] *I'm from Naples, and mafia is the context in which we work. I'm part of Pax Christi Naples and Italy, and our relations with Francisco are due to the fact that we accompanied him to the districts of Sanità, in the centre of Naples, Scampia, in the suburbs of Naples, and Caserta, on the road where young prostitutes gather. The United Nations expect 250 million migrants, both environmental and war refugees, within 2050. This is the scenario we are facing.*

In Sanità there are many Colombian girls who came as prostitutes, but now are working in different jobs, and some of them got married.

I think that when Catholic/Christian communities work with other people and other religions engaging in a peace building process, they are actually practicing nonviolence.

In the parish church of Sanità there is not only a parish priest, but also a "co-parish", who is a Sister. As she does everything, except the Consecration, she's called the "co-parish of Sanità". She's the one who visits people in their homes and listens to their problems. When Alex Zanotelli, a Combonian Missionary, came back from Africa, he asked me where to go, to Scampia or Sanità. I said: go to Sanità. There he works with cooperatives, and has promoted a "pampered tourism", because no tourist wants to visit Sanità, even if there are some wonderful places to see, including old churches and the catacombs of St. Gennaro. So, he decided to implement this project, accompanying the tourists to and from the station or airport, constituting cooperatives for visiting the catacombs, and creating an orchestra with 50 people, in imitation of the project implemented in Venezuela by Maestro Abreu.

With such a local and global vision – parish and mission – things can actually be done. Zanotelli did something very important: he opened Sanità to wealthy people. So did the girls from the streets in Caserta, who are no longer prostitutes, but have created a dressmakers cooperative, where they work with dignity. All these are really potential processes. I would like to tell Remerio that you are the heirs of Badshah Khan, the first nonviolent army.

Gerry Lee: Grazie

[applause]

Rev. Mr. Nathanael Bacon: Good morning. My name is Nate Bacon and I'm part of an ecumenical missionary community called InnerChange. Mostly evangelicals and Catholics working together on the board. I'm also a permanent deacon, I live in Guatemala. And I'm also part of the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation commission of the Franciscan family for Central America. And I guess I just wanted to share almost in the form of a prayer request really for the country leaders for JPIC for the religious congregations are meeting right now in Honduras. And I think most are aware that there was a quite remarkable environmental activist names Berta Cáceres, environmentalist and leader of an indigenous group called COPINH in Honduras working to defend their territory, their rights as indigenous peoples against a hydro-electric dam project, among other things. This is typical of a number of a number of the struggles going on right now in Central America.

There's some great lights amidst the darkness, in Guatemala there's a place called La Puya where a group has nonviolently blocked the entrance, has been blocking the entrance to the mine for four years, four years. Rooted in their faith, accompanied by Pax Christ in some of their training, and so it's a great light. The JPIC congregations have tried to accompany these struggles and walk alongside. But the challenges are great and in the case of Berta, within a few days, another activist, Nelson Diaz from the same group was also assassinated. And thankfully Cardinal Turkson, from the Vatican, made a pronouncement and a letter of solidarity and accompaniment. But the JPIC commission of Honduras of the religious asked the bishops of Honduras to also say something and they've said nothing. They sent a letter to each bishop. So there's these ongoing challenges here, locally, and whether they're motivated by fear, which is understandable, you know in the light of so much violence, or convoluted interests that get involved in our hierarchy, these are some of the challenges. So I guess I see greater hope in the JPIC thrust of religious communities, I think my little piece was on diaconal communities, I think how do you sustain this, you know, I think sort of that local and global that [unclear] was talking about, I think we need to band together in communities that can give us light and support ourselves in the face of martyrs, in the face of ongoing persecution, in the face of silence from our church leadership. On behalf of my friends in Central America, they send you greetings, they are happy to hear that this is going on and they also ask for your prayers and so I invite you to remember, the memory of the martyrs of our territory in Central America, the many, Monseñor Romero amongst others and Berta Cáceres now and to be in solidarity.

Ana Raffai [speaks in French; English translation:] *I didn't voice my objection. I wanted to also say my objection on the notion of just peace. I want to only... I'm not sure it's a happy notion for us, at least in the region where I live and work. Because the war was fought for justice... at least regular people like us... they think they're fighting for justice. And I'm afraid that "just peace" will be firstly, justice... meaning my justice, and then peace. And that's the situation we have today. And it's why I'm pleading for the notion of "non-violence" because non-violence allows the question: How do we make peace.*

Dr. Marco Ghisoni: Good morning everybody, my name is Marco and I will speak in Italian. [continues in Italian; English translation:] *My name is Marco, and I'm here as a representative of a nonviolent group called "Operazione Colomba", which is part of the Pope John XXIII Community. We are a small group with a nonviolence background of 24 years. During the last four years, our group has involved more than 2,000 people, especially youngsters of about 20 years old, mostly women. One group left Italy to work in the midst of armed conflicts. At present we have volunteers in Colombia (Apartadó), Palestine, North Lebanon with the Syrian refugees, and Albania.*

Stopping violence without weapons is possible: this is the point I wish to underscore, because we have experienced it as a group, and surely many of you have also experienced it. We work in the midst of armed conflicts, where sharing is our way of life. We support the victims of conflicts, taking all the risks, as a basis for building trust and credibility. This allows external people to engage in a nonviolent struggle, which might exist already, but with no support or visibility. Our Colombian friends say that paramilitary groups go to their homes intending to take their land and threatening them with words as these: "if tomorrow you are still here, you'll be all killed". The members of our group in the communities reply that the next day they will get up and go to work. These people cannot be left alone, they need to be accompanied. We do not teach nonviolence, we learn it from them. They only need our support.

We are a Catholic organization with a Catholic name and all the rest; however the volunteers and the means with which we support our project don't come from the Catholic Church, but from other cultural environments. Funds come from the Italian civil society, which is highly sensitive to nonviolence. What we have managed to do so far has been done with no financial support from the State, political alignment or academic background. It was just a spontaneous movement, but capable of developing a scientific model, repeatedly implemented throughout these 24 years.

There was a timid support from the Catholic Church, but nothing concrete. Hence, cultural work is required. Clearly, what human beings can do is helping to stop violence. Just peace comes afterwards as a result of the work done. Colombians want us to remain with them because otherwise they would be killed, but the roots of their war are to be found in our home countries – Europe and the United States. We need, therefore, to work in our countries where many interests are at stake (oil, production and trade in arms, drug trade, multinationals). Stopping wars is possible, stopping violence is possible, and I would like that the Church came out more bravely, saying that all these people from all over the world -- peace agents --, are working also on behalf of the Catholic Church. I wish that all the experiences we have shared could get even more visibility and coordination. I wish the Church created a commission, an intervention group, able to

anticipate conflicts, take preventive measures, and intervene. These are not pipe dreams, they can be done!

[applause]

Rev. Francisco de Roux, S.J.: Marco, thank you for your presence, thank you for your solidarity, you have trust our people, you have risked yourself and your family. Thank you.

Gerry Lee: Wow. Let's thank our panelists and those like Marco in the chairs.

Very moving this morning, but we also have to move along. So I'm going to ask you to get your coffee, but not to linger, I will ask you to take your coffee and go directly to your groups. We have a lot of work to do, so please if you could move as quickly as possible to take your coffee and go back to your group tables and we will begin our reflection in small groups.