

Project Peace...

Imagining a World without War



It's the beautiful month of May! These lush days bring out the color, the long-awaited singing of the morning birds, the soft no-sweater day temperatures. It's here, folks, and we have the pleasure of basking in all this beauty and freshness into our whole being. How I love this month.

I want to share with you something I am learning as my blood brother is lying in intensive care in Lima, OH. He went into the hospital for a simple procedure but experienced complications and ended up being on a respirator and on dialysis. (Vern, my brother, has since passed on to heaven.)

Once again I am learning that life is so fragile, so much taken for granted. How absolutely beautiful life is and how impermanent it is. How wise the sages of old who urged us always to love but not to grasp and hold onto the things of this life tenaciously.

I relate this whole process of living to our work for peace. We long for a world whose people are at peace with self, and with each other of diverse religions, backgrounds, and race. To hold onto one's own smaller world, to keep some **doors closed** to the "different", to the demanding, to the need for total trust in the next person is most often to suffer intensely within.

May our life stories, and the beautiful short-lived daffodils and the grieving we do for the ones we love lead us to a greater acceptance of what is. By the way, this is my brother's favorite saying: "**It is what it is.**" Sr. Paulette Schroeder pauletteosf@hotmail.com 419.447.0435 ext 136

The Tiffin Middle School Peace Club met with Mayor Aaron Montz and after sharing what they've been doing in TMS, they explored with the mayor what they might do to also urge greater peaceful relationships right here in Tiffin. The mayor urged the students to march in the parades, to make their dreams and hopes present in signs, in

messaging through the media, demonstrations, etc. What good questions and comments the students expressed through this meeting. How proud both Mrs. Lofquist and I were of the students. May their efforts grow and flourish in school, neighborhoods and town.

Bravo for these bright, creative, peace-loving children.

Back: Abby, Mayor Montz, Jena, Breana Lofquist, sr. Paulette, FRONT: Patrick, Evan, Josh, Liam, Braxtin, Aidan MISSING: Katarina



Teaching Diversity

I have now been teaching nonviolence skills to 6th. graders for two years plus one grade of 7th. and 8th. graders. I've learned gradually from the students what they most need in order to deal with theirs but also to prepare global shrinking world dominate their social lives. teach TOLERANCE FOR



any present conflicts of for their future in this where diversity will Therefore I decided to DIVERSITY to them.

I decided to begin this unit on Tolerance for Diversity by exploring with the students their understanding of ISLAM. The following responses (without names given) were returned to me with the question: What do you hear about Islam? In my books, Tolerance=Respect for Diversity.

"Each one of them is a terrorist, but if I met one, I would not jump to conclusions but I would respect them."

"They are killing soldiers and journalists and are trying to cause a war."

"I don't have the best info on Islam, but I have not heard very many good things."

"I hear they eat dogs and cats and most of them are terrorists."

"I hear that they're bombers and are on a mission to kill us."

"No comments."

"very violent"

"Haven't heard...don't watch news."

"They're a peaceful religion, treated correctly."

"They're terrorists, mean people."

What I Therefore Teach:

+Islam means "submission to God." + A Muslim (one who believes in Islam) prays 5 times a day. +Family is so important in the Arab culture that several generations often live together. +Muslims have a strong sense of community. They help each other out financially when necessary. + Respect is so important that Muslims do not generally **publicly** disagree with somebody. +Dancing is allowed only between a woman and a woman or a man and a man. +In terms of dress, women have to cover all their body with loose fitting clothes except their hands and face. + To go to war "Jihad" mostly means an "inner war" but only as a last resort an outer war. (Some of these +'s apply only for Muslims in more conservative Arab cultures.) (Discussion usually follows each point of teaching.)

A Great Quote on HOPEFULNESS by Howard Zinn

“To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness...

What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places—and there are so many—where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction...And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.”



What Project Peace Needs:

Perhaps you are aware how difficult it is to secure funds for peacemaking. I now know from pretty much experience. I haven't been successful in getting a grant for teaching children; nor have I been able to get any monies for international efforts. **I want to acknowledge though some individuals have been very generous.** I am so grateful because these are what has kept Project Peace going. Of course my Franciscan Community has been really generous also. If you should like to donate to this effort, however, either call me: 419.447.0435 ext. 136 or email me: pauletteosf@hotmail.com. I'd like to get another children's nonviolence class started and hire someone, after training, to teach this group, but I need to raise monies to offer this position to someone. This hope, besides the day to day efforts, keeps me hopping.

Blessings abundantly throughout this month.

419.447.0435 ext. 136