

INTRODUCTION

Last year's Justice & Peace Commission Annual Report noted that the Commission, due to new developments in staffing, funding and program direction, had arrived at an "important moment" in the history of its mission to the Archdiocese of Baltimore. From the activities of this year, outlined in this Annual Report, the Commission has indeed utilized its resources to the fullest in addressing that "important moment." This Report will highlight Commission activities from February, 1983 through February, 1984 and will also note the possibilities for the coming year in the Commission's role for the Archdiocese.

THEME FOR 1983: BISHOPS' PASTORAL LETTER, THE CHALLENGE OF PEACE

The Commission's program year begins each February with an overnight reflection and planning meeting. Joined by new members appointed by Archbishop William Borders, the Commission evaluates the previous year's activities and formulates a comprehensive goal for the coming year. The chosen focus at the February 1983 meeting for the Commission work of that year was the Bishops' Pastoral Letter on War and Peace, The Challenge of Peace. The Commission had studied the drafts of the Pastoral Letter, which was due to be approved at a special meeting of the Bishops in May. The Commission recognized that its own international justice emphasis would require significant attention to this Pastoral, which had already become one of the most notable documents issued by the American Bishops. The Challenge of Peace would clearly become an essential contribution to the American Catholic examination of the nuclear weapons crisis, and to the national debate on this question.

The Commission developed a goal statement at its February meeting which reflected these considerations. The statement also reflected the Commission's role in the Archdiocese as an education, resource and witness body on issues of international justice and peace. As adopted by the membership, the statement read: