

COLUMNISTS

Change, forgiveness needed to achieve peace

I wonder whether the systems set up through the strike-retaliate mentality work. Watching Israel and the Palestinian Authority, I suspect not. For how many years has this been the dominant philosophy of those seeking to secure Israel? For how many years has this been the mode of seeking Palestinian rights? Where has it gotten these two groups? This past weekend was one of the bloodiest, with both civilian and military loss of life. Where does this system really get us?

I watched various news commentaries over the weekend, and many solutions were offered. One fellow suggested there has to be one big blow-out of a war with winner-take-all. Another proposed that Arafat should step down and all will be solved. Somebody else claimed that the U.S. should just go in and "get rid" of all the Arab states surrounding Israel. Every solution seemed to rely on the assumption that the system of strike and retaliate somehow works, and that it offers a way to make sense of what's happening. Every solution seemed to presuppose that, with some modifications, the strike-and-retaliate system will somehow, in some way, work.

But I think it is not working and will never work. It hasn't worked up until now. And all the big "blow-out" wars didn't work either. There was no end to hostilities after World War I or World War II — just a recasting and reliving of them in new ways. Strike and retaliate looks pret-



the moral life

By PATRICIA SCHOELLES, SSJ

ty flawed, if you consider real life.

In his New Year's message on peace, Pope John Paul II insists that forgiveness is necessary for world peace. When I first read this, I found myself becoming impatient with it. To me, forgiveness sounded like a "cop-out" — a way of avoiding the work that actually has to be done. I had the impression that forgiveness would leave justice by the wayside. If we forgive, the other party just gets away with it. They don't have to pay the price their wrong-doing has caused. Forgiveness means that justice is evaded in favor of weakness.

That's what I thought when I first read the New Year's message. In the meantime I've had some other thoughts. Among these is the horrible realization of what is happening in Israel.

The forgiveness of which John Paul speaks calls us to go beyond our traditional thinking that every rift will end with a winner and a loser. It takes us be-

yond assuming that one party is right and the other is wrong. It takes us beyond assuming that the burdens and costs of overcoming division can be paid by only one party. It takes us beyond assuming that reconciliation and peace will come about if only one party changes.

Pope John Paul's vision of peace through forgiveness relies on the far more realistic and much more biblical concept of a reconciliation in which both parties change. It insists that both parties bear some of the costs required for peace. Both parties will benefit from the settlement, too. The forgiveness to which John Paul refers does not let us "forget" the harm done or permit us to overlook the reality of what has happened. In fact, it calls us to remember harms done and deal with them. It doesn't deny reality or let us bury or forget it so that we "keep the peace" by sowing seeds of dissension that will crop up at some later time.

At the heart of his notion of forgiveness is the precept that we have to overcome our need to be right, our need to revenge the losses we have experienced, our desire to destroy the other. Both parties have to be willing to change, to be willing to work together to create a new situation in which we will both be different. This is the sort of forgiveness that is implied in every relationship, whether it is marriage or friendship or parenthood. The willingness and the pledge to forgive is built into every human relationship. It

must surely be part of any Israeli-Palestinian "solution."

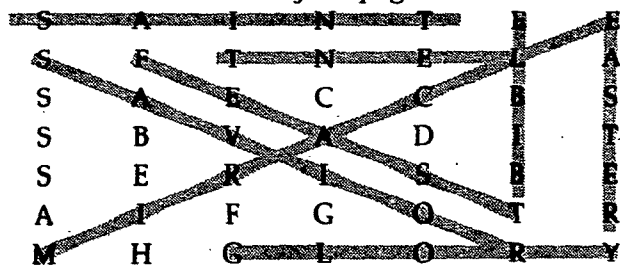
Some people may insist it is still possible to name "who's to blame" in the Middle East. They might think the same about Northern Ireland, or about Hindus and Muslims in India and Pakistan. I think it is no longer possible or meaningful to decide "who's to blame" in any of these situations. I'm not saying the hurt experienced can be forgotten or that it should be denied or overlooked. It can't be. It has to be dealt with.

But if the only method we have for dealing with atrocities, wrongs and hurts is to retaliate, we will never have peace. We cannot achieve peace this way even if we define "peace" simply as stopping the violence. It certainly will be impossible to retaliate our way to "peace" if we expand that concept to designate a situation in which genuine human flourishing can happen. The situation in Israel today makes clear that the present "system" of retaliation simply doesn't work. We will have to move forward and craft a method of dealing with hurts against us that can take us beyond revenge, that allows us to get on with our lives in spite of the ways we have been wronged, that implies that both parties will change so a new future is possible for both. We will have to learn to forgive.

...
Sister Schoelles is president of St. Bernard's Institute.

Kids' Chronicle

Answers from page 12



Bonus word: MASS

Sleepover Bristol Harbour Style!



So near...yet far enough away

Remember as kids, sleepovers were great fun? Adult sleepovers are even better! Discover the Inn at Bristol Harbour Resort two ways:

The Harbour Escape Weekend

- Stay Friday or Saturday Night
- Receive Dinner and Breakfast for Two
- \$159 All Inclusive

Ski and Stay

- Ski Bristol Mountain (One lift ticket included)
- Stay at the Inn
- \$69 Weekdays/\$79 Weekends
- Per person based on double occupancy

For more details & reservations call 396-2200
Available NOW-April 25

BRISTOL HARBOUR RESORT
5410 Seneca Point Road • Canandaigua, NY 14424 • www.bristolharbour.com



Catholic Family Center

Pregnant? Need Help?

Catholic Family Center's Pregnancy Hotline

CALL 1-800-CARE-002

25 Franklin Street • Sibley Tower Building, 7th Floor
Rochester, New York 14604-1007 • 716-546-7220
www.cfcrochester.org

13TH ANNUAL \$10,000 CASH GIVEAWAY
Francis DeSales-St. Stephen's School Geneva, New York
will be selling raffle tickets for the benefit of their school.
Cash giveaway is as follows:
1st prize - \$5,000 • 2nd prize - \$2,500
3rd prize \$1000 • 4th prize - \$500
PLUS - 10 Prizes of \$100 Cash
PLUS Dinner Dance for 2 on night of drawing at Club 86
PLUS 2 \$50 Early Bird Drawings beginning March 17
Drawing will be at a dinner dance on Friday, April 26, 2002.
Cocktails 6:30 Dinner 7:30, Club 86, Geneva, NY
Winners need not be present • Ticket donation is \$100
For more information or to purchase a ticket, please call the school
at 315-789-1828 or Christine Turnbull at 585-526-6292

We will match all advertised beer prices in Monroe County

St. Patrick's Day Specials

OLD MILWAUKEE 24 - 12 oz. Cans \$6.47 + tax & dep <small>after \$2.00 mail-in rebate</small>	MILLER 30 Pack Cans \$10.97 + tax & dep	NEW CROWN POP 12Qt. Bottles \$4.99 + tax & dep <small>42 per bottle by the case</small>	MOLSON 24 - 12 oz. Bottles & Cans \$11.99 + tax & dep
COORS LITE 18 Pack Cans \$8.99 24 Pack Bottles/Cans \$11.99 30 Pack Cans \$14.99 <small>per case + tax & dep</small>	NANTURAL ICE 24 12 oz. Cans \$8.33 + tax & dep	BECKS & ST. PAULI 12 Pack \$9.99 + tax & dep	SKYY 12 Pack \$12.98 + tax & dep
CORONA & HEINKEKEN 12 Pack Bottles \$10.97 + tax & dep	SMIRNOFF ICE 12 Pack \$11.99 + tax & dep	KEYSTONE 24 - 12 oz. Cans \$7.99 + tax & dep	BUDWEISER 18 Pack Bottles or Cans \$9.58 + tax & dep

Lower Prices! A wide range of other brands at every day low prices

NEW CROWN BEVERAGES

1060 Norton St • 342-1275 • Between Carter & Hudson
OPEN MON-SAT 8 AM-6 PM