

June 11, 2007

**Justice and Peace Committee
Our Lady of the Lake parish
8900 35th Ave. NE
Seattle, WA 98115**

Dear Justice and Peace Committee Members:

I write in response to your letter of April 15, 2007, to Bishop Thomas Wenski and Bishop William Skylstad.

As you note in your letter, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) shares your deep and abiding concern for the tragic situation in Iraq. In addition to the public statements that you cited in your letter, the Committee on International Policy has in recent months met twice with senior officials of the Department of State to urge a responsible transition and withdrawal from Iraq at the earliest possible date.

USCCB also shares your concern that the bishops' statements are not disseminated as broadly as we would all like. Please be assured that the Conference continues to look for opportunities to lift up the critical moral questions posed by the war in Iraq. Although as pastors and teachers USCCB maintains its distinctive voice in the public debate, the Conference is always open to collaboration and coordination with other Catholic organizations and people of good will. For example, I would note that we have had some contact with NETWORK regarding reconstruction issues in Iraq. It has been our experience that many distinctive voices echoing similar messages are very effective in moving public policy.

With gratitude for your continued concern, I am

Sincerely yours,

**Dr. Stephen M. Colecchi
Director
Office of International Justice and Peace**