

## Information in english

Beigesteuert von Gerhard Dabringer  
Dienstag, 10. März 2009

Institute for Religion and Peace

Head of Institute

Chancellor of the Ordinariate Episcopal Vicar Msgr. Dr. Werner Freistetter

Collaborators

Dr. Gerhard Marchl (Assistant Head of Institute)

Mag. Diana Carmen Albu-Lisson

Mag. Gerhard Dabringer

Mag. Christian Wagnsonner

Fasangartengasse 101, Object 7

A - 1130 Vienna

Tel: +43/01/512 32 57

FAX.: +43/ 01/ 512 32 57 - 29

email: [irf@mildioz.at](mailto:irf@mildioz.at)

>>Map<<

Many people today are asking how we can achieve and sustain more peace and justice in the world. Since the end of the Cold War we have been facing some new and often disquieting challenges. It is becoming increasingly evident that the current threat to peace (such as ethnic conflicts, organised crime, terrorism, etc.) can only be met effectively through solidarity and international cooperation, i.e. on the political, financial, social, cultural and, not least of all, on the religious level, in order to create fair and just living conditions for all.

Also Austria cannot evade these questions. Within the framework of the United Nations Organisation and other international organisations, particularly, however, as a member of the European Union our country is already showing solidarity, also on a military level, by taking part in peace operations.

The 2nd Vatican Council formulates the soldier's responsibilities for peace in the world very clearly: "Those too who devote themselves to the military service of their country should regard themselves as the agents of security and freedom of peoples. As long as they fulfil this role properly, they are making a genuine contribution to the establishment of peace." (Gaudium et spes, 79)

The new tasks in the service of security and peace make it necessary that we reflect on those basic ethical values and norms soldiers in democratic countries are committed to, not only on the basis of International Humanitarian Law but also on the basis of their own self-understanding. The Institute

The Institute for Religion and Peace is an installation at the Military Diocese of the Republic of Austria. It was established in 1997 by the Military Bishop Christian Werner, in order to promote the scientific discussion of current security-political changes in light of the Christian social science.

Msgr. Werner Freistetter was appointed Head of the Institute. Being the son of a high-ranking Austrian officer, he studied in Vienna and Rome and committed himself to pastoral work in Viennese parishes. He later worked at the Institute for Ethics and Social Sciences at the University of Vienna and at the Papal Council for Culture in Rome, where he is still a counsellor today. Freistetter was one of the representatives of the Holy See at the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and is a clerical assistant at the international organisation of Catholic soldiers, i.e. the Apostolat Internationale Militaire (AMI). In 2006, Freistetter was appointed vicar-bishop for science and research, principal theological questions, and international relations by the Military Bishop Werner. Tasks of the Institute

- Science and Research
- Education
- to contribute to the education in profession-related ethics in the Austrian Armed Forces
- to publish introductory articles and materials
- adult education and PR work
- Documentation
- database "Documents on Peace and Security"
- Cooperation
- with scientific, clerical, and social institutions
- with ecumenical and inter-religious institutions
- Consultative work

- to offer advice to the Military Bishop and military priests Enquete

Every year the Institute organises a two-day Enquete with numerous lectures and debates on selected issues, such as military pastoral services and ethics of the soldier. What is of particular value in this context is our cooperation with the newly established military dioceses or respectively those that are currently being established in our neighbouring states, which is to be further deepened and intensified in the future. Ethica and the Internet

The two most important media of the Institute for Religion and Peace are the journal Ethica and the webpage <http://www.irf.ac.at>. Ethica publishes Enquete documentations, commented world-peace messages of the Pope, scientific papers as well as Church documents on current issues. On the webpage you will find texts written by the members of the Institute, instruction materials, presentations, further links, and a vast collection of Church documents. Documents on Peace and Security

Today the collection "Documents on Peace and Security", dating back to 1989, comprises more than 1700 statements of Christian Churches on issues of peace ethics, ethics of soldiers, military interventions and the international peace order. Through the Institute's website full-text versions of these documents can be accessed. There are numerous search possibilities – according to topic, institution, author, title, and free search within the texts – which facilitate fast retrieval of the desired sources. In 2005 also an English user guide was installed.