



LAUCKS FOUNDATION

Reprint Mailing 128

As a public service, Laucks Foundation calls attention to published material that might contribute toward clarification of issues affecting world peace, equity among peoples and environmental responsibility.

December 1993

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With Christmas in mind, we are reprinting in this issue an extended excerpt from the heart-lifting story of Frederick Franck, an artist who turned the crumbling ruin of an 18th century water mill into a uniquely sacred edifice for the benefit of all people, without regard to creed or preference. Inspired by Pope John XXIII's encyclical calling for peace on earth, Doctor Franck named his huge sculptured wood, stone and earth creation "Pacem in Terris."

Pacem," he said, "was to be one man's act of artistic faith: a work of art outside of the art game and a spiritual statement outside of all 'religious' games." That it has become "a sacred place that would speak to the sacred space at the core of the human heart" is confirmed not only by passing wayfarers of all faiths, but by the many distinguished concert artists, chamber music groups, poets, and dramatists who have performed in its remarkable chamber.

[Permission to reprint granted by Dr. Frederick Franck
96 Covered Bridge Rd. Warwick, N.Y. 10990]



A WORK OF ART INTENDED TO BE
AN OASIS OF QUIET, WHERE SELF
AND NATURE MAY RECONNECT.



IT IS DEDICATED TO WHAT IS HUMAN
IN EVERYONE BORN HUMAN.

[Note: Text and drawings throughout have been enlarged several times]

THE STORY

We first spotted, around 1957, the old wreck of MCCANN'S HOTEL on a winter hike. It was standing in its decrepit dignity on the snow covered banks of the Wawayanda river...our dream house!

A few years later on another such hike we happened on it again. It stood there sadly abandoned, with a scribbled FOR SALE sign on it. It was so deep under the snow that we couldn't even peek through the grimy windows. Still, we went to the local realtor and took the plunge, sight unseen. The panic came later when the thaw set in and we could inspect our property: our dream house was a terminal case...

Inside we found the rubble of McCann's deceased tap room. Upstairs the mortal remains of the guest rooms, a dozen dirty cubicles, each one contained a rusty iron bed in which peddlers and itinerant laborers had stretched their limbs a century ago. The rest of the furniture consisted of spiderwebs dating back to 1840 when the gaunt tall inn arose on the river bank.

We consulted a contractor. He looked at our dream house shook his head and said: "Why don't you tear it down?" He pulled out a catalog: "Why don't you let me build you something nice, huh, like this one? It'll save you



money, it'll save you trouble..." Providence intervened. We ran into Bert Willemse, a fellow Hollander who in summer was a gladiolus grower, but changed into a carpenter every year when the gladiolus wilted. "I'll fix it up for you!" he said and fix it he did. He knocked out the cubicles, replaced sagging roof beams, made the leprous taproom into a cosy living room. Bert was far from an intellectual, but his hands had pure genius. Once he had restored McCann's gin mill, he built a dam downstream from rocks he pulled from the riverbed and some concrete. He worked alone, sometimes assisted by Bert Jr, for nobody else could meet his standards. In his enthusiasm he forgot to ask a permit for his dam. It was promptly condemned to death by the Conservation Department. The "Obstruction" was to be removed at once. I implored Albany to send an engineer to take a look at it. The man arrived with a frown, took his look, threw up his hands: "This is a masterpiece! You built this?" Bert answered "Yup!" We got a retroactive permit for our swimming hole. Prophets of doom predicted that the first winter flood of the angry Wawayanda would sweep Bert's dam

away. He swore it would stand! Hadn't his ancestors built dykes in the last thousand years? Thirty years later the dam is still as good as new, almost.

To resurrect a stiff like McCann's is to court bankruptcy aggravated by a nervous breakdown. But we were happy in our dream house, had taken new roots in the American earth, and survived. Apparently we asked for more....

THE OLD MILL

On the riverbank across from the house, stood an unofficial garbage dump. In the summer it was overgrown with poison ivy. The first winter we lived in ex McCann's, when all the leaves had fallen, we saw that the dump was enclosed in massive walls of field-stone. Debris spilt out of three window holes and the collapsed almost Romanesque archway.

I found out that it was the ruin of an 18th century watermill, mostly grist mill but occasionally moon lighting as a cider mill which supplied the raw material for the superb applejack which, according to legend, was greatly appreciated by McCann's connoisseurs of applejack.

During those years I spent a great deal of time in Africa, on the medical staff of Dr. Schweitzer's Hospital

in Lambarene. Each time we returned to Warwick we puzzled what to do with the early American garbage dump I meanwhile acquired, after finding the present owner of the mill which had first been sold in 1850 by Hezekiah Hoyt to Hartman Clarke, address unknown... I began to clear the jungle so that we could see the great stones that hands had placed one on the other without mortar, walls that had outlived untold people who had been proud of being so well cemented together.

Soon after returning from the Equator, it was in the midst of the Cuban missile crisis — on October 12, 1962, I happened to read the opening speech of Pope John XXIII to the Second Vatican Council he had convoked in Rome. In the heat-panic of threats and counter-threats, for once a man in a uniquely prominent position spoke words of such humanness, confidence, compassion as are all too rarely



SPOKEN BY THE WORLD'S GREAT. I was so deeply stirred by this true human being, this genius of the heart, that I dropped all I was doing. I followed an irresistible impulse and flew to Rome, responding as the artist I can't



help being. I had to draw this exceptional Pope and his Council.

I was sure it would mark a

watershed in the history of the human spirit... In many ways it did indeed...

I drew in and around St. Peter's during all four sessions, the drama and its main actors. Then Pope John died on June 3, 1963. On that very day I received a medal from him in appreciation of the drawings I had done of the first session and which had been published widely. That night I flew once more to Rome to draw this beloved prophet of human solidarity a last time.



I flew back to New York. The moment I saw the old mill again I knew what I had to do. I was to convert the garbage dump into an oasis, a place outside the rat race, a sacred place for Everyman, Everywoman, regardless of creed, dedicated to the Spirit which had so clearly spoken to us all through John XXIII through Albert Schweitzer, through Daisetz T. Suzuki.

I would call it Pacem in Terris, after John XXIII's last encyclical written on the threshold of death in which he said: "God has imprinted on the human heart a Law his conscience demands him to obey."

Mind you: on the heart itself, not just on the paper of holy books! It must be the Law of Life, the Tao, the Dharma: the law of human life, of human Suchness!

*

Bert and I went to work. We dug 1200 wheelbarrows of debris out of the ruin, by hand, for machinery would have destroyed the ancient walls. The debris made a fine terrace. We rebuilt the collapsed archway.

I did numberless sketches: they were less a search for form, than the jotting down of what I saw clearly in my mind's eye.

*

The roof would be "modern", it would symbolize the winging of the Dove of Peace of the Spirit.

*

As we dug out the thresh we uncovered the pit where once the mill wheels turned, we even found the axle: it became the trunk of the Tree of Life mosaic that consists of spikes, pieces of fly wheel, horse shoes, found in the rubble.

*

Eventually Bert, almost miraculously, not only assembled that 51 foot truss that carries the roof singlehandedly. He placed it, all by himself on its abutments, without using a crane. How? "With the jacks of my truck", is all he would say with a shrug.

*

I refused to satisfy the curious who wanted to know what I was building. Sometimes I said "a bowling alley", other times: "a cathedral."

*

While building and sculpting I felt indeed a close kinship with the cathedral builders, the masons, wood carvers, icon makers of the Middle Ages, even with the cave artists of Aurignac, some 30,000 years ago.

Art is NOT a luxury! Art either arises from

one's depths or it is Kitsch. Art is one's digging tool in search of Meaning, in search of one's own Truth. It is a "religious" activity, not in any sectarian sense but in the sense of a RELIGIOUS ATTITUDE TO LIFE TO EXISTENCE AS SUCH, AS BEING SUPREMELY MEANINGFUL

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PACEM was to be one man's act of artistic birth: a work of art outside of the art game and a spiritual statement outside of all "religious" games.

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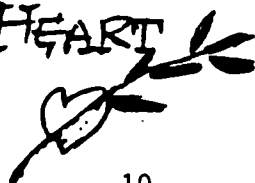
I did not ask anyone's advice, opinion or financial support. Clarke, my wife, took a job to pay Bert's wages and the bills for materials.

*

Pacem in Terris would become a huge sculpture by itself, a sculpture of wood, stone and earth, a sculpture one could walk into, sit down in, meet oneself, and climb out of, refreshed with one's trust in life renewed. I hoped that

*

IT WOULD BE A SACRED PLACE THAT WOULD SPEAK TO THE SACRED SPACE AT THE CORE OF THE HUMAN HEART



I carved in the façade:

" I BUILT PACEM IN TERRIS, AN OASIS OF
INWARDNESS, FOR RECONNECTING SELF
AND NATURE. IT IS DEDICATED TO
ANGELO RONCALLI, JOHN XXIII, TO ALBERT
SCHWEITZER AND TO DAISETZ T. SUZUKI
PROPHETS OF WHAT IS HUMAN IN
EVERYONE BORN HUMAN...."

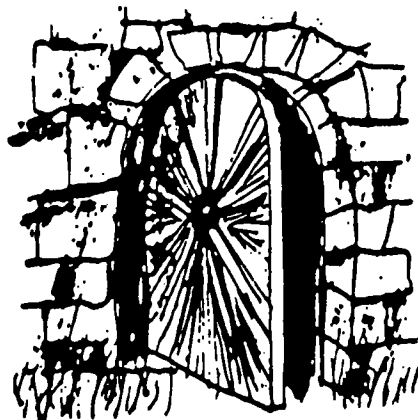


When at last, after three years Pacem in Terris was finished (it never really is!) I wanted to share it with all to whom it might speak. Ever since it has been open to all on week-ends from May to October. People have come, brought their friends and children. Thousands of moving comments have been written down on the pad for such thoughts



Artists of note volunteered concerts, plays, poetry readings. Lovers were married here, children Christened.

It has been made available for Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Buddhist, Shinto services. Loners, no less religious for being unaffiliated have found it conducive to reflection, recollection, meditation and prayer.



Apart from this little book Pacem has nothing to sell: no souvenirs, no theories, no ideologies.

On the contrary: IT ASPIRES MERELY TO BE A REMINDER - TO YOU, TO US - OF WHAT CANNOT BE BOUGHT, SOLD OR ADVERTISED:

THE FULLNESS OF LIFE

The exceptional ~~acoustics~~ ^{acoustics} made Pacem a wonderful place for chamber music: a yearly series of distinguished concerts resulted.

As the building and sculpting went on, it struck me, that Pacem was a natural stage set for two medieval plays which had deeply moved me in my youth and never forgot: The Play of Everyman, and the Passion Play. I wrote my own contemporary variations on both themes. "The Death and Life of Every One" and "Inquest on a Crucifixion", were premiered here and found their way to New York, Washington, Erie, Schenectady etc. etc. all the way to Melbourne, staged by different troupes and offered as theatrical readings.

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FREDERICK FRANCK: "SEVEN GENERATIONS", 1990/91
steel and glass, 8x32 ft.

*Cathedral of St. John the Divine, N.Y.C. / Pacem in Terris,
Warwick, N.Y. / Penn State U. / Omega Institute, Rhinebeck,
N.Y. / Wainright House, Rye, N.Y. / Bucknell University /
Fundacion Elpis, Buenos Aires / Harrisburg Pa. Peace Garden
/ and the Netherlands.*

From the Great Law of the Six Nation Iroquois Confederacy:
"In all our deliberations we must be mindful of the impact of our
decisions on the seven generations to follow ours."

PACEM IN TERRIS IS INSPIRED BY THE GREAT
HUMANNESS OF A CATHOLIC POPE, JOHN XXIII, A
PROTESTANT DOCTOR, ALBERT SCHWEITZER
AND DAISEI T. SUZUKI, A BUDDHIST SAGE

It is not connected with any religious, sectarian,
Cultic, political or ideological organization.

TO BE HUMAN OR NOT TO BE ... THAT IS THE QUESTION!



PACEM IS OPEN TO ALL
MAY - OCTOBER
ON SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS
FROM 11 - 6
ADMISSION IS FREE

96 Covered Bridge Rd.
WARWICK NY 10990

(614) 986.4329

**BY CAR: DIRECTIONS: Geo Washington Bridge - Rte 4.
Then: Rte 17 North at Bergen Mall - Continue
past Tuxedo Park - Take Rte 17A on left, via
Sterling Forest - Greenwood Lake, Warwick.
Here 17A meets Rte 94, turn left on 94 for 3
miles to Fancher Road on your right. At the
end is "Pacem in Terris."**

**BY BUS: NYC BUS TERMINAL - WARWICK LINE
(ca. 1½ hour)**



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Education for Peace Equity among Peoples Environmental Responsibility