

The staff had the opportunity to attend the fall session of the Catholic Committee of Appalachia (CCA) Oct. 26--28. CCA is an organization of Christians working in a variety of ministries in Appalachia. Its most notable achievement has been the publication of the Bishops' Pastoral Letter This Land is Home to Me which presents the Church's position on many of the social problems in this area. The theme of the conference concerned the use and abuse of the Land and its natural resources. The Lord is the true owner of the Land and we work and live on it as "strangers and guests." We all have a responsibility to examine how we use the land. Are we responsible to others and future generations in our stewardship? Do we use products made by companies that are destroying the land? Are we willing to examine our own actions and to call other groups to recognize their obligations to manage resources charitably and wisely? While CCA directs most of its energies changing societal structures, we at the Farm realize our responsibility to examine these issues in the use of our own land and possessions. Our contribution to the conference was to emphasize the need to pray and to depend on the Lord as the priorities in facing these tasks.

Fr. Peter Henriot stressed that the only worthwhile and effective ministry is one modelled after the life of Jesus. If we do not constantly recognize the presence of the Lord in personal and societal struggles, difficult but finite problems will forever seem insurmountable and infinite. We at the Farm and many of you are concerned and eager to help change the waste and suffering which result from the abuse of the land and her people. But social action must always be rooted in prayerful reflection upon the Gospel message if we wish to bring Christ's message of love and justice to a world which can never establish either without the help of the Lord.

Jim Clark

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