

# The Theory of a Just War

## A Traditional Ethical Value Gone Bankrupt

### Part II

Serious students who believe that just war in our contemporary technological world is impossible, have considered:



1. The vastly different set of circumstances present in the case of a fight between Assisi and Perugia (say, in 1205), which was little more than a glorified street brawl, or a rumble — what with hoe and spear and daggers and swords (pretty tame weapons, to say the least!) — over against

- (a) Thermonuclear high-megaton explosives capable of wiping out an area a hundred miles in diameter, with fallout contaminating the surrounding areas up to several hundred miles;
- (b) botulinus toxin — one of the super-

class chemical gases described in "America's Hidden Arsenal" (a book on Chemical and Biological Warfare, by Seymour M. Hersh) — 8 ounces of this gas, rightly deployed, can wipe the whole human race off the earth.

(c) Lt. Col. William S. Gochenour Jr., one of the Army's top germ warfare experts, estimated in 1963 that 60 quarts or so of a highly concentrated germ agent could be disseminated at an altitude of 100 miles for 50 kilometers, resulting in a cloud 200 meters in diameter that could theoretically cover an area of 6,000 kilometers, or roughly one third of the area of New York State. (That could result in a death tally reaching as high as 10 million persons.) (Cited in Seymour Hersh, p. 69.)

2. The fact that, for all of our technological sophistication, we have not yet discovered a mechanism for resolving international dispute. A resort to the violence of war is a return to the Stone

Age mentality but with the weaponry of the atomic era.

At whatever level of interpersonal conflict, the resort to violence is a concession to the lowest instincts of brutality in man. We can very well look down our noses at the savagery of ancient Rome as it crucified its victims in the field or watched with glee as gladiators impaled one another on spear and sword. But, in the name of consistency, we had better not overlook the technological sophistication by which we can wipe out whole thousands of people from the face of God's earth.

Could Pope Paul VI have had all of this in mind when he uttered his anguished appeal for a cessation of all war before the United Nations General Assembly on Oct. 4, 1965? I am sure he did. And his cry has found echo in millions of hearts filled with fear of this hour of human history when man's creative genius has developed a power of destruction which can wind up that history in a matter of seconds.

### Guest Columnist

By Father Vincent LeFrois

## Vatican II and Protestants

The blistering sun of Vatican II is bringing about a thaw in the relationship between Catholics and Protestants.



Stated very simply, the problem was this. "The Church established by Christ the Lord is, indeed, one and unique. Yet many Christian communions present themselves to men as the true heritage of Jesus Christ.

"To be sure, all proclaim themselves to be disciples of the Lord, but their convictions clash and their paths diverge . . .

"Without doubt, this discord openly contradicts the will of Christ, provides a stumbling block to the world, and inflicts damage on the most holy cause of proclaiming the good news to every creature."

Father LeFrois is pastor of St. Michael's Church in Livonia Center.

We are all conscious of the difficulties and predicaments we experienced in the past.

"Nevertheless, the Lord of Ages wisely and patiently follows out the plan of His grace on behalf of us sinners. In recent times He has begun to bestow more generously upon divided Christians remorse over their division and a longing for unity."

So Vatican II proceeds to set before Catholics "certain helps, pathways, and methods" by which we can help bring about unity. Then follows a radically different but welcome approach to our separated brethren.

The council reminds us that we "cannot impute the sin of separation to those who at present are born into these Communions and are instilled therein with Christ's faith. The Catholic Church accepts them with respect

and affection as brothers."

Also, the council reflects, "some, even very many, of the most significant elements or endowments which together go to build up and give life to the Church herself can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church: (e.g.) the written word of God; the life of grace; faith, hope and charity, along with other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit and visible elements."

The result of all this is that "the brethren divided from us also carry out many of the sacred actions of the Christian religion. Undoubtedly . . . these actions can truly engender a life of grace, and can be rightly described as capable of providing access to the community of salvation."

As Catholics, we are not giving up any of our Christian beliefs. But we will try, despite many and serious obstacles, to participate skillfully in the work of the Holy Spirit to bring about unity.

### Editorial

## Peace and Justice Intertwined

Pope Paul, who, as much as any individual in the world, has shown continued and deep concern over the ongoing strife and lack of justice in present times, has provided deep insight into the nature of these problems in recent statements.

Speaking of the World Day of Peace, the pontiff draws a parallel, although not directly, between two spheres in which the twin thirsts of the Twentieth Century — peace and justice — are involved.

"A peace that is not the result of true respect for man is not true peace," says the Holy Father. "And what do we call this sincere feeling for man? We call it justice."

Speaking of totalitarian countries which boast of peace at home while stifling free expression and religious sentiment, the Pope asks the question, "What name shall we give to a peace which claims a right to impose itself by trampling on this primary justice?"

Turning to the international scene, Pope Paul implied ominously that peaceful coexistence is not the key to world cooperation.

"A life of pretense is the atmosphere resulting sometimes from an inglorious victory, at other times from an irrational despotism, from a coercive repression, or from a balance of permanently opposing forces, which are usually on the increase

as they wait for a violent outburst which by devastation of every sort shows how false was the peace imposed only by superiority of power and force."

Peace based on fear is fragile, he seems to say. The arms race can lead but to "devastation."

This man, espousing strongly the sentiments of the Prince of Peace, sees that true peace cannot be faked nor can it be had at the expense of other men. Peace exists only in a symbiotic relationship with justice, each nurturing and supporting the other to kindle a new entity warming the lives and souls of all men everywhere.