

In still other cases, they propose or engage in "active non-violence" as programmed resistance to thwart aggression or to render ineffective any oppression attempted by force of arms. No government, and certainly no Christian, may simply assume that such individuals are merely pawns of conspiratorial forces or guilty of cowardice.

Catholic teaching sees these two distinct moral responses as having a complementary relationship, in the sense that both seek to serve the common good. They differ in their perception of how the common good is to be defended most effectively, but both responses testify to the Christian conviction that peace must be pursued and rights defended within moral restraints and in the context of defining other basic human values.

In all of this discussion of distinct choices, of course, we are referring to options open to individuals. The council and the popes have stated clearly that governments threatened by armed, unjust aggression must defend their people. This includes defense by armed force if necessary as a last resort. We shall discuss below the conditions and limits imposed on such defense. Even when speaking of individuals, however, the council is careful to preserve the fundamental right of defense. Some choose not to vindicate their rights by armed force and adopt other methods of defense, but they do not lose the right of defense nor may they renounce their obligations to others. They are praised by the council, as long as the rights and duties of others, or of the community itself, are not injured.

Pope Pius XII is especially strong in his conviction about the responsibility of the Christian to resist unjust aggression:

"A people threatened with an unjust aggression, or already its victim, may not remain passively indifferent, if it would think and act as befits a Christian. All the more does the solidarity of the family of nations forbid others to behave as mere spectators, in any attitude of apathetic neutrality. Who will ever measure the harm already caused in the past by such indifference to war of aggression, which is quite alien to the Christian instinct? How much more keenly has it brought any advantage in recompense? On the contrary, it has only reassured and encouraged the authors and fomentors of aggression, while it obliges the several peoples, left to themselves, to increase their armaments indefinitely ..."

"Among (the) goods (of humanity) some are of such importance for society, that it is perfectly lawful to defend them against unjust aggression. Their defense is even an obligation for the nations as a whole, who have a duty not to abandon a nation that is attacked." (27)

None of the above is to suggest, however, that armed force is the only defense against unjust aggression, regardless of circumstances. Well does the council require that grave matters concerning the protection of peoples be conducted soberly. The council fathers were well aware that in today's world, the "horror and perversity of war are immensely magnified by the multiplication of scientific weapons. For acts of war involving these weapons can inflict massive and indiscriminate destruction far exceeding the bounds of legitimate defense." (28) Hence, we are warned: "Men of our time must realize that they will have to give a somber reckoning for their deeds of war. For the course of the future will depend largely on the decisions they make today." (29). There must be serious and continuing study and efforts to develop programmed methods for both individuals and nations to defend against unjust aggression without using violence.

We believe work to develop non-violent means of fending off aggression and resolving conflict best reflects the call of Jesus both to love and to justice. Indeed, each increase in the potential destructiveness of weapons and therefore of war serves to underline the rightness of the way that Jesus mandated to his followers. But, on the other hand, the fact of aggression, oppression and injustice in our world also serves to legitimate the resort to weapons and armed force in defense of justice. We must recognize the reality of the paradox we face as Christians living in the context of the world as it presently exists; we must continue to articulate our belief that love is possible and the only real hope for all human relations, and yet accept that force, even deadly force, is sometimes justified and that nations must provide for their defense. It is the mandate of Christians in the face of this paradox to strive to resolve it through an even greater commitment to Christ and his message. As Pope John Paul II has said:

"Christians are aware that plans based on aggression, domination and the manipulation of others lurk in human hearts, and sometimes even secretly nourish human intentions in spite of certain declarations or manifestations of a pacifist nature. For Christians know that in this world a totally and permanently peaceful human society is unfortunately a utopia and that ideologies that hold up that prospect as easily attainable are based on hopes that cannot be realized, whatever the reason behind them.

"It is a question of a mistaken view of the human condition, a lack of application in considering the question as a whole; or it may be a case of evasion in order to calm fear, or in still other

cases a matter of calculated self-interest. Christians are convinced, if only because they have learned from personal experience, that these deceptive hopes lead straight to the false peace of totalitarian regimes. But this realistic view in no way prevents Christians from working for peace; instead, it stirs up their ardor, for they also know that Christ's victory over deception, hate and death gives those in love with peace a more decisive motive for action than what the most generous theories about man have to offer; Christ's victory likewise gives a hope more surely based than any hope held out by the most audacious dreams.

"This is why Christians, even as they strive to resist and prevent every form of warfare, have no hesitation in recalling that, in the name of an elementary requirement of justice, peoples have a right and even a duty to protect their existence and freedom by proportionate means against an unjust aggressor." (30)

In light of the framework of Catholic teaching on the nature of peace, the avoidance of war, and the state's right of legitimate defense, we can now spell out certain moral principles within the Catholic tradition which provide guidance for public policy and individual choice.

3. The Just-War Criteria

The moral theory of the "just-war" or "limited-war" doctrine begins with the presumption which binds all Christians: We should do no harm to our neighbors; how we treat our enemy is the key test of whether we love our neighbor; and the possibility of taking even one human life is a prospect we should consider in fear and trembling. How is it possible to move from these presumptions to the idea of a justifiable use of lethal force?

Historically and theoretically the clearest answer to the question is found in St. Augustine. Augustine was impressed by the fact and the consequences of sin in history — the "not yet" dimension of the kingdom. In his view war was both the result of sin and a tragic remedy for sin in the life of political societies. War arose from disordered ambitions, but it could also be used in some cases at least to restrain evil and protect the innocent. The classic case which illustrated his view was the use of lethal force to prevent aggression against innocent victims. Faced with the fact of attack on the innocent, the presumption that we do no harm even to our enemy yielded to the command of love understood as the need to restrain an enemy who would injure the innocent.

The just-war argument has taken several forms in the history of Catholic theology, but this Augustinian insight is its central premise (31). In the 20th century, papal teaching has used the logic of Augustine and Aquinas (32) to articulate a right of self-defense for states in a decentralized international order and to state the criteria for exercising that right. The essential position was stated by Vatican II: "As long as the danger of war persists and there is no international authority with the necessary competence and power, governments cannot be denied the right of lawful self-defense, once all peace efforts have failed." (33) We have already indicated the centrality of this principle for understanding Catholic teaching about the state and its duties.

Just-war teaching has evolved, however as an effort to prevent war; only if war cannot be rationally avoided does the teaching then seek to restrict and reduce its horrors. It does this by establishing a set of rigorous conditions which must be met if the decision to go to war is to be morally permissible. Such a decision, especially today, requires extraordinarily strong reasons for overriding the presumption *in favor of peace* and *against war*. This is one significant reason why valid just-war teaching makes provision for conscientious dissent. It is presumed that all sane people prefer peace, never *want* to initiate war and accept even the most justifiable defensive war only as a sad necessity. Only the most powerful reasons may be permitted to override such objection. In the words of Pope Pius XII:

"The Christian will for peace ... is very careful to avoid recourse to the force of arms in the defense of rights which, however legitimate, do not offset the risk of kindling a blaze with all its spiritual and material consequences." (34)

The determination of *when* conditions exist which allow the resort to force in spite of the strong presumption against it is made in light of *jus ad bellum* criteria. The determination of *how* even a justified resort to force must be conducted is made in light of the *jus in bello* criteria. We shall briefly explore the meaning of both (35).

Jus Ad Bellum: Why and when recourse to war is permissible.

Just Cause

War is permissible only to confront "a real and certain danger," i.e., to protect innocent life, to preserve conditions necessary for decent human existence and to secure basic human rights. As both Pope Pius XII and Pope John XXIII made clear,

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For the Christian, a strong presumption exists against war and in favor of peace. The section examines the extraordinarily strong reasons when this presumption may be overridden. Why and when may a people go to war? How may they fight?

In Catholic tradition an answer is to be found in the just-war or limited-war doctrine which evolved in the effort to prevent war and reduce its horrors. The American bishops offer a contemporary understanding of this doctrine by distinguishing "*jus ad bellum*" and "*jus in bello*."

"*Jus ad bellum*" refers to the moral decision to begin warfare. Why and when is the decision morally justified?

Drawing upon the just-war tradition, the pastoral letter formulates a set of seven rigorous conditions which must be met if the decision to go to war is morally permissible.

These difficult questions which must be answered affirmatively are:

- (1) Is there just cause?
- (2) Is there right intention in view of the reasons related to the just cause?
- (3) Does this people in comparative justice with the adversary have sufficient right or just cause on its side?
- (4) Is war the last resort when all peaceful alternatives have been exhausted?
- (5) Is there probability of success or only irrational violence or futile resistance?

(6) Is the good expected by going to war proportionate when weighed against the evils that will result?

(7) Is the decision made by competent authority, by those truly responsible for the common good?

"*Jus in bello*" refers to what constitutes morally right conduct during a war. It formulates how even a justified resort to force ought to be waged.

You have heard it said, "All's fair in love and war." But what the pastoral letter says is that not all is morally right in the name of war. Limits and conditions must be imposed upon waging war. The strategies, tactics, and individual actions during war must be judged by the principles of proportionality and discrimination.

Proportionality demands that we continue to weigh the ratio between the cost in lives, the destruction and suffering and the good to be achieved by pursuing the just cause with right intention. Also, just conduct of a war must be discriminate and directed against the unjust aggressors. Directly intended attacks on non-combatants and non-military targets are prohibited.

The American bishops readily admit the complexities in applying and interpreting many of the criteria of the "*jus ad bellum*" and "*jus in bello*". Nevertheless, proper questions must be asked in discussing the nuclear arms race and the conduct of nuclear war as well as conventional war. The debate occurring today is encouraged.