

Modern warfare tests the limits of just-war theory

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signor Shannon told the *Courier*, adding that he questions "whether there has ever been a just war."

Before St. Augustine developed the theory, Monsignor Shannon said, Christians were not supposed to fight at all, and indeed were often excommunicated if they entered the military.

But the Roman Empire in which the Christians lived was being attacked by Teutonic invaders, Monsignor Shannon observed. Those attacks were threatening the existence of Roman culture and civilization.

"I think the just-war theory was really an effort to extricate Christians from a problem," he noted. In solving that problem, St. Augustine built on ideas formulated by Greek and Roman philosophers and political thinkers — Cicero, in particular.

Over the centuries, the theory has evolved as world conditions changed, Monsignor Shannon continued. Whereas St. Augustine wrote about the conditions for a just war involving Rome — the one existing political entity in the West — the rise of nation states by the 17th and 18th centuries led canon lawyers to declare a "right to war." Under this modification of St. Augustine's theory, nation states were justified in waging war in order to defend their sovereignty and interests.

The theory also came to encompass the notion that the results of war must be proportionate to the evil the war was intended to halt.

Later thinkers applied this principle to such weapons of mass destruction as nuclear armaments. Some Catholic thinkers have gone so far as to say that no evil could justify the use of such

weapons under any circumstances. And the scale of destruction that results from even conventional war raises doubts that a war employing modern technology could ever be just, Monsignor Shannon observed.

The priest made a similar argument in "Christian Conscience and Modern Warfare," an article he wrote for the Feb. 15, 1992, edition of *America* magazine. That article analyzed an editorial in the Italian journal *La Civiltà Cattolica*, which seriously questioned whether any war today could be anything but total — thus, suggesting that the just-war theory was outdated.

"The advent of modern warfare, which almost inevitably tends toward total war, has, therefore, made even the war of legitimate defense morally questionable," Monsignor Shannon wrote.

The Italian journal's editorial noted that the Persian Gulf War began with a just cause — liberating Kuwait — but that the mass destruction in Iraq and the direct or indirect loss of hundreds of thousands of civilian lives from allied bombings so outweighed the good the war produced that it could no longer be spoken of as a just war, Monsignor Shannon noted.

Monsignor Shannon also speculated that the church has begun to move beyond the just-war theory. Whereas Pope Pius XII said it was a Catholic's duty to serve in the military of his country, the council fathers at Vatican II defended the right of Catholics to be conscientious objectors to war in general.

And in *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response*, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' 1983

pastoral letter on war and peace, U.S. bishops defended the right of Catholics to selectively object to wars, Monsignor Shannon noted.

Thus, the church has reached a point at which the viable position for Catholics is either supporting the just-war theory — which more and more church leaders are questioning — or choosing to be conscientious objectors to war.

But amid the debates over just war, what are Catholics who are drafted or who are already in the military to do?

"A good Catholic cannot take part in something unjust," Bishop Glynn remarked to the *Courier*. "But when there is considerable debate about whether a war is just, it's up to the individual to make the best judgment he can in his conscience."

Due to the complexity of foreign policy, however, Bishop Glynn said "The ordinary citizen must, practically speaking, depend on the government" to determine whether a war is just.

Once in the military, a soldier would have difficulty if he decided to object to a particular conflict on just-war grounds, Bishop Glynn acknowledged. The burden of proof would fall upon that soldier to prove that in his or her conscience the war was unjust.

Of course, if one asserts that no war is just, what should the response be to such situations as that of Somalia or the former Yugoslavia.

"Somalia is not the kind of situation to which just war can be applied," Sister McCarthy observed. "Just war is meant to be applied to conflicts between nations."

On the other hand, "Does Serbia or Croatia or Bosnia have a just cause? It's a very complex situation," Sister McCarthy continued. "There's a clear need to stop the mostly Serbian aggression."

But in both situations, Sister McCarthy said, other forms of international pressure could help. That pressure could include blockades, creating safe areas for innocent civilians, sending in unarmed observers and, if necessary, committing an armed international police force to escort relief supplies and to fight only in defense.

Military intervention in the Yugoslavian situation, Sister McCarthy speculated, has the potential to make the situation even worse than it is.

"Innocent people are always massacred in a war," she noted. "The atrocities are horrendous, but bombing will only make it worse."

Monsignor Shannon advocated the creation of an international force trained in non-violent tactics. Training of Filipino citizens in non-violent tactics led to a successful coup against Ferdinand Marcos in 1986, he noted.

Further, Monsignor Shannon called for the United States to allow selective conscientious objection. This would allow even those already in the military to refuse to serve in conflicts they believe to be unjust.

Bishop Glynn acknowledged that past wars that began for just reasons have become unjust while in progress. But, he said, such judgments can often only be made after the conflict has ended.

Thus Bishop Glynn continued to defend the just-war theory.

"We can argue constantly, but do we ever prove anything?" he asked. "There's arguments on both sides."

"St. Augustine was trying to say there must be other ways," the bishop continued. "But if there do not seem to be ways to avoid war, here's some things that could make it just. That's his legacy."



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School events

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girls attend classes at Nazareth Hall, 180 Raines Park. Grades 6-8 take their classes in the Nazareth Academy building, 1001 Lake Ave.

Nazareth Academy serves as a high school for girls in grades 9-12. Both the Academy and the Hall are owned and operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Parents of children preschool-grade 5 should go to the Hall on registration day. Grade 6-8 students and their families should register for Nazareth Hall Middle School in Room 112 at Nazareth Academy. Grade 9-12 students should also register at the Academy.

For details, call 716/647-8704.
The Nazareth Schools' Blue and Gold Sweepstakes '93 is now in progress.

Tickets are available for \$50 each. First prize is \$25,000 in cash or a four-year lease on a 1993 Lincoln Continental, Jeep Cherokee or Corvette. Second prize is \$4,000 and third prize is \$2,000.

The grand-prize drawing will be on Friday, March 26, at 8 p.m. There will also be three early-bird drawings — with prizes of \$1,000 cash or a \$1,500 tuition credit — on Feb. 5, Feb. 26 and March 12.

Call 716/647-8720 for tickets. The festival is open to the public.

Registration set at Mercy

Our Lady of Mercy High School, 1437 Blossom Road, Brighton is holding registration for grades 7 through 9 on Wednesday, Feb. 10, from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the school cafeteria.

This registration applies to students entering grades 7 and 9 as well as new students entering grade 8. Current Mercy students entering grade 8 in the

fall of 1993 are not required to register on Feb. 10.

For details, call Charla Kucko at 716/288-7120.

Elmira schools to enroll

The Holy Family School System in Elmira is holding registration and re-registration this month for the 1993-94 school year.

Registration will take place on Monday, Feb. 22, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at each school building: Holy Family Primary (pre-K through grade 3 along with pre-school day care), 421 Fulton St.; Holy Family Intermediate (grades 4 through 6), 301 Demarest Parkway; and Holy Family Junior High (grades 7 and 8), 1010 Davis St.

In addition, re-registration for all grade levels will take place at Holy Family Intermediate School next Monday and Tuesday, Feb. 8-9, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Questions can be directed to Virginia Andrus at 607/734-4414, or any of the school principals: Constance Brady (primary school), 732-3588; Brenda Lisi (intermediate school), 734-0841; or Elizabeth Berliner (junior high), 734-0336.

AQ plans garage sale

The Parents' Association of Aquinas Institute, 1127 Dewey Ave., Rochester is seeking donations for its annual garage sale.

The sale is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, April 24-25, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the school gymnasium.

Donations of clothing, furniture, books, records, jewelry and/or appliances are requested. To make these contributions, call Diane Turner at 716/227-0944.