

COLUMNISTS

Just-war conditions do not apply to terrorism

Since the dawn of the nuclear age, the official teaching of the Catholic Church, which since the time of St. Augustine (354-430) favored the just-war approach, has been moving in a moderately pacifist direction.

The church is not about to abandon its just-war doctrine, but the hierarchy is more reluctant now to endorse military ventures because the consequences of modern warfare are potentially so much more dangerous and destructive, especially for innocent civilians.

With the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, many Catholics have reviewed the conditions under which a "just war" could be waged. For the most part, their judgment came down in support of a military response on the part of the U.S. government and its allies.

But the traditional limits on the use of military force were noted and underscored: (1) It must avoid any direct harm to civilians; (2) It must not be motivated by revenge or hatred, but rather out of concern to stop unjust aggression; and (3) The values to be defended and the objectives to be achieved must outweigh the harms that can reasonably be foreseen (the principle of proportionality).

There are important differences between the current situation and the Viet-



essays in theology

By FATHER RICHARD P. MCBRIEN

nam War era. The U.S. government saw itself then as the defender of a non-Communist government against the forcible imposition of Communism by another.

Nevertheless, many Americans strongly opposed that intervention. Some of the anti-war activists viewed the enemy as freedom fighters battling for justice and human rights. As the body bags grew in number and as the chances of "victory" dwindled, the patience and support of the American public dwindled. Lyndon Johnson was forced to withdraw as a candidate for re-election and eventually a peace settlement was reached that left the United States in the throes of defeat for the first time.

That moral reasoning and peace activism do not apply today in the war against international terrorism. Some

Catholics and a few Catholic publications do not seem to recognize that fact.

The terrorist enemy does not wear a military uniform, nor have an army, navy, and air force, nor march under a nation's flag. It is transnational in character and works only by stealth.

Unlike regular military forces, the enemy targets noncombatants, with no moral limit beyond which it will not go in its determination to kill as many civilians as possible, by whatever means.

Not even the Chinese Communist government ordered its commanders to flatten the protesters who stood bravely in front of the tanks in Tiananmen Square. There were at least a few self-imposed limits on what they would do against their own people, especially with the whole world watching by television.

The great Mohandas Gandhi once asked the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber why Hitler could not be brought down by the same nonviolent methods that Gandhi had employed so successfully against the British. Buber replied that the British had moral limits beyond which they would not go. Hitler had no such limits, as the Holocaust proved.

The same is the case with Osama bin Laden and his network of terrorists. Their actions on September 11 demon-

strated beyond any doubt that they are utterly without moral limits. And they are all the more dangerous because they view such activities as the work of God.

It would be easier if they could all be dismissed as extremists — operating well beyond the pale of Islam. Their followers and supporters could be numbered in the thousands rather than the millions.

Unfortunately, there is a theological continuum that exists between themselves and their host tradition. For both, the world consists of the faithful and the infidels. God not only allows, but commands, that the infidels be converted or contained. The only internal dispute is over the means of containment.

As Prof. Mark Lilla of the University of Chicago wrote in *The New York Times* Oct. 7, the extremists "have found a way to breed in the religious space opened up by the revelation Islam presupposes."

An enemy without moral limits, acting in the name of God, cannot negotiate in good faith. In the meantime, hundreds of thousands, even millions, of innocent lives remain at risk.

Moral reasoning must take that new reality into account.

Father McBrien is a professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame.

The church's year ends on a note of optimism

33rd Sunday of the Year (November 18): (R3) Luke 21:5-19; (R1) Malachi 3:19-20; (R2) 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12.

This Sunday is the last before the Feast of Christ the King which brings the liturgical year to a close.

The Gospel begins with some admirers speaking of the beauty of the temple as it stood in Jerusalem about A.D. 30. The temple was the third built on the site. The first, built by Solomon around 968 B.C., was destroyed in 587 B.C. by the Babylonians. The second temple was rebuilt by the Jews around 520-515 B.C. after the Babylonian Captivity. Malachi said it would be greater than Solomon's for the Lord of the temple would enter it. The third, actually a reconstruction and enlargement of the second, was done by King Herod the Great to ingratiate himself with the Jews.

There was just the one temple in Palestine. It was the only place where sacrifices were offered. The synagogues were places for the reading of Scripture and for prayer. One temple was an impressive symbol of the oneness of God.

As is so often the case, the men around our Lord were not too perceptive. They were more impressed by the magnificent architecture and adornment



a word for sunday

By FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

of the temple than for what the temple stood: the place of God's special presence among his people.

Our Lord had to correct their scale of values. He shocked them by foretelling that this sumptuous edifice would be devastated so that not one stone would be left on another. Forty years later this happened when the Roman legions destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Our Lord's hearers asked for signs that would warn of this impending catastrophe. Our Lord said that wars, earthquakes, epidemics and persecution would precede the fall of Jerusalem.

Luke doesn't speak of the end of the world, because for a Jew the end of the Temple was tantamount to the end of the world. Yet Luke was talking about an

end of the world that was far different from the destruction of the universe. For Luke the destruction of the temple signified the ending of the world of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament, ~~the church, the~~ heavenly Jerusalem!

Before the end of this new Jerusalem, the church, there would be the same signs that preceded the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem. Our Lord was remarkably honest. He said you can expect trouble and trouble and trouble just because you are trying to be good, to follow me. But Jesus promised help. He promised to be with us, that he would never leave us alone. "Not a hair of your head will be harmed," he promised. He urges all simply to be patient; and he promised that in the end they would be saved — "by patient endurance you will save your lives."

So the Gospel ends, and so does the church year, on a note of optimism, of hope for those who live in Christ.

Some of the Thessalonians thought that the end of the world was so close that they stopped working. St. Paul said, "Keep busy, but don't be busybodies; earn the food you eat by working quietly."

Life is like breathing: inhale by patiently enduring the crosses of daily life; and exhale by doing the daily work of life needed to earn a living. Do both in the name of Christ.

Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

Daily Readings

Monday, November 19
1 Maccabees 1:10-15, 41-43, 54-57, 62-64; Psalms 119:53, 61, 134, 150, 155, 158; Luke 18:35-43

Tuesday, November 20
2 Maccabees 6:18-31; Psalms 3:2-7; Luke 19:1-10

Wednesday, November 21
2 Maccabees 7:1, 20-31; Psalms 17:1, 5-6, 8B, 15; Luke 19:11-28

Thursday, November 22
1 Maccabees 2:15-29; Psalms 50:1-2, 5-6, 14-15; Luke 19:41-44

Friday, November 23
1 Maccabees 4:36-37, 52-59; (Ps) 1 Chronicles 29:10-12; Luke 19:45-48

Saturday, November 24
1 Maccabees 6:1-13; Psalms 9:2-4, 6, 16B, 19; Luke 20:27-40

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