

## Introduction and Agenda

It is wonderful to be with each of you this weekend and to hear the piece of the truth that each of you have to offer. I will focus on three areas in this reflection.

- 1) What is a just peace framework and how it applies to a case
- 2) Some key questions for the Church
- 3) How can a just peace framework impact the military

### 1. What is a Just Peace framework?

It is rooted in the biblical notion of Shalom: “justice and peace shall embrace;” (Psalm 85.10) so it reminds us that peace requires justice-making, but also peacemaking is the way to justice. Jesus modeled this approach particularly in the Sermon on the Mount. For example, living under military occupation he becomes vulnerable, invites participation in the Reign of God today, cares for the outcasts, loves and forgives enemies, challenges the religious, political, economic, and military powers, along with risks and offers his life on the cross to expose and transcend both injustice and violence. He also leans us toward justice understood as restorative justice, with a focus on the harm done to relationships and how to heal. Thus, this just peace approach is consistent with Gospel nonviolence, or as Pope Francis said that “true discipleship must embrace Jesus’ teaching about nonviolence.”<sup>1</sup>

Just peace arises out of the Sermon on the Mount, which contains the Beatitudes and the transforming initiatives of active nonviolence as Gerald described earlier. The Beatitudes call each of us to holiness, to a way of life that includes the virtue of active nonviolence and uplifts related virtues. This virtue of active nonviolence realizes the goods of a) conciliatory love that draws enemies toward friendship, and b) the truth of our ultimate unity and equal dignity. Related virtues include mercy, compassion, empathy, humility, hospitality, solidarity, courage, and justice. Nonviolence specifies courage as suffering out of reverence for dignity or sacred giftedness of others without distorting our dignity by killing or possessing others, and justice as more about restorative justice. Pope Francis called on political and religious leaders to apply the beatitudes in the exercise of their responsibilities.

A Just Peace ethic also builds on the trajectory of contemporary popes’ teaching and statements. In the early 1960s, Pope John XXIII wrote about how “war is not a suitable way to restore rights.”<sup>2</sup> Paul VI linked peace and structural justice and said the “Church cannot accept violence, especially the force of arms.”<sup>3</sup> John Paul II said “violence is evil, it violates our dignity, it is the enemy of justice,”<sup>4</sup> “rejected definitively the idea that justice can be sought through recourse to war;”<sup>5</sup> and he called us “not to follow those who train us in how to kill.”<sup>6</sup> Benedict XVI called “love of enemies the nucleus of the Christian revolution”<sup>7</sup> and said it’s “impossible to interpret Jesus as violent.”<sup>8</sup> Pope Francis focuses us on mercy; he says “the true force of the Christian is

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis, “Nonviolence: A Style of Politics,” World Day of Peace Message, Jan. 1, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Pope John XXIII, *Peace on Earth*, 1963; par. 127.

<sup>3</sup> Pope Paul VI, *On Evangelization in the Modern World* (1975) 37.

<sup>4</sup> Pope John Paul II, Homily at Drogheda, Ireland, Sept. 29, 1979.

<sup>5</sup> Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 23: *AAS* 83 (1991), 820-821.

<sup>6</sup> Pope John Paul II, Homily at Drogheda, Ireland, Sept. 29, 1979.

<sup>7</sup> Pope Benedict, *Midday Angelus*, Feb. 18, 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Pope Benedict, *Angelus*, Mar. 11, 2012.

truth and love, which means rejecting all violence, so faith and violence are incompatible;”<sup>9</sup> “war is the negation of all rights and does grave harm to the environment;”<sup>10</sup> that “justice never comes from killing”<sup>11</sup> and “war is never a necessity;”<sup>12</sup> he told us “not to bomb or make war on ISIS,”<sup>13</sup> and “the door is always open to dialogue, even with ISIS.”<sup>14</sup>

A Just Peace framework is also being woven together through ecumenical organizations and interfaith collaborations. For example, the World Council of Churches called for turning to a Just Peace approach in 2011 and 2013,<sup>15</sup> as did the book *Interfaith Just Peacemaking* published in 2012.

### *Ethical Focus and Method*

A Just Peace ethic participates in such a vision of human flourishing as Shalom and the Sermon on the Mount by focusing on conflict in three distinct, yet overlapping ways:

- 1) developing the habits and skillsets to transform conflict (*jus in conflictionis*)
- 2) the practices and transforming initiatives to break cycles of violence (*jus ex bellum*)
- 3) the ongoing actions to build more sustainable peace (*jus ad pacem*)<sup>16</sup>

I propose a virtue-based just peace ethic which integrates key virtues, normative practices, principles, and guiding questions for all three focus areas and all stages of conflict.

*Virtues:* A virtue-based approach can help us to focus on developing the character and practices of a just peace ethic. Thus, we will be better motivated and prepared to creatively imagine nonviolent ways to transform conflict, to choose, and to sustain those ways through difficult situations. It offers a set of core virtues or habits to orient and better apply a set of just peace principles for specific actions. Virtues also help us to better integrate or keep consistent means and ends, i.e. the principle of reflexivity. As a virtue approach, it goes beyond pacifism, which is often “understood as a rule against violence” by challenging us to become better people and societies in engaging conflict.

*Practices:* The just peace practices and transformative initiatives would include two complimentary types: peacebuilding, which is more constructive; and nonviolent resistance, which is more obstructive or non-cooperative with injustice. For example, some of the practices include meditation and prayer, such as a Eucharistic prayer that explicitly names Jesus’ love of enemies and rejection of violence; education and training in nonviolent practices, building nonviolent communities and cultures, environmental justice, and interfaith collaboration. They would also include creative nonviolent resistance to injustice, unarmed civilian protection, and nonviolent civilian-based defense.

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<sup>9</sup> Pope Francis, *Angelus*, Aug. 19, 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’* (56), and speech at UN Sept. 25, 2015.

<sup>11</sup> Pope Francis, Mar. 20, 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Pope Francis, Sept. 8, 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Pope Francis, Aug. 19, 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Pope Francis, Nov. 26, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> WCC, “Ecumenical Call to Just Peace,” 2011.

<sup>16</sup> Drawing on conversations with and suggestions by Professor Gerald Schlabach at University of St. Thomas. He is using the categories of “*jus in conflictionis*, *jus ex bellum*, and *jus ad pacem*” respectively.

Further, they would include initiatives such as conflict transformation to draw adversaries toward partnership, acknowledging responsibility for harm, identifying the human needs of all actors, trauma-healing and restorative justice, significantly reducing weapons and the arms trade, as well as working with civil society and the UN to both advance nonviolent practices and to outlaw war. Vatican II and Pope Paul IV made a profound statement that it was “our clear duty to strain every muscle as we work for the time when all war can be completely outlawed.”<sup>17</sup> So we need to take seriously, what moral framework would more faithfully and effectively get us closer to war being outlawed.

One particular practice I want to elaborate on is unarmed civilian protection. This practice is offered by about 15 organizations such as Nonviolent Peaceforce, Christian Peacemaker Teams, Cure Violence, Peace Brigades International, and the Catholic version called Operation Dove. In South Sudan Nonviolent Peaceforce’s protection, which engages all armed actors, has reduced sexual assaults and rape by armed actors from regularity to zero in the areas NP patrol’s and directly saved 14 people from an armed militia attack. An attack was occurring in a UN protection site, and as people were running and being shot, 14 women and children rushed into a mud hut with 2 NP officers. Three different times the armed militia came in demanding the NP officers leave, but each time they refused saying they were unarmed and non-partisan. This courage allowed these 14 people to survive the attack. One of the NP officers said, “If we had a gun we would’ve been shot immediately; so without arms we can find other ways.”<sup>18</sup> Further, NP engages all armed actors and has been training Syrians over the past year with Cure Violence. Both in the U.S. and in other countries, such as Honduras, Cure Violence has hired credible messengers, whom have lowered shootings and homicides by 40-70%; and even 88% in Honduras.<sup>19</sup>

*Principles:* A Just Peace approach utilizes just peace principles to guide our action choices and apply at all stages of conflict. Some examples of principles include: • human dignity of all people • positive peace (includes structural justice) • participatory processes • healthy relationships • reconciliation • restoration • sustainability.<sup>20</sup>

*Key questions for implementing a just peace ethic:*

We would ask: What are the root causes of the conflict? What habits are at stake? What just peace practices could be scaled up as transformative initiatives? What do the just peace principles suggest for choosing possible actions?

*How might it apply?*

If we look at Syria, particularly during the hostile stage of the conflict, then a virtue-based just peace approach would clarify the root causes, identify what virtues/vices are at stake, and

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<sup>17</sup> Pope Paul VI, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 1965, par. 81.

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=9&v=WcFwpcIMcE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=9&v=WcFwpcIMcE)

<sup>19</sup> <http://cureviolence.org/results/scientific-evaluations/>

<sup>20</sup> Many of these are drawn from Maryann Cusimano Love’s set of just peace principles.

perhaps suggest some of the following transforming initiatives in accord with particular just peace principles.

1. In accord with the principle of human dignity, we would exercise humanizing rhetoric and reduce cultural marginalization to defuse the violence and see clearly the path toward just peace.
2. Focusing on diplomacy which attempts to include all, not just some, key stake holders both armed and unarmed.
3. Increased funding for peacebuilding, such as creative forms of trauma-healing and nonviolent civil resistance. [Examples of nonviolent resistance vs. ISIS: Muslim leaders encircled a sacred site in Mosul which prevented ISIS from destroying it; a Muslim woman marched to ISIS headquarters demanding release of political prisoners as many joined her they got some released in Raqqa; local businesses went on strike in Aleppo and slowed down the operations of ISIS]
4. Economic pressure needs applied on all armed actors fueling the flames of war.
5. A coordinated strategy for using credible messengers to entice defections from armed groups, such as ISIS, is a key for defusing the violence.
6. Significant reduction in, if not complete embargo on, the flow of arms to defuse capacity and will to rely on violent activity.

## **2. Key questions and Implications for the Church**

In general, the mission of the Church is to draw people to a loving relationship with God by illuminating God's way in the person of Jesus. This calls the Church to be a sacrament of our ultimate unity as children of God and with all creation. Hence, Cardinal Turkson said "all killing is fratricide" or the killing of a close family member.

In light of our mission and using a pastoral approach, what might be the Church's role in situations of mass atrocities? What if when a large-scale lethal threat is near and grave, the Church—as the People of God—focused on active nonviolence by using a just peace ethic before, during, and after such events? In turn, what if the Church would advocate for nonviolent strategies for protection of those at risk and to sustainably transform the conflict?

However, if governments or the UN decide, based on international law, for military action in such genuine atrocity cases, the Church's role is to insist that the answer is not war or killing but protection and transformation. The Church should always be clear that protection must be consistent with and serve a larger goal of the transformation of the conflict. And that any humanitarian protection must be 1) consistent with and serve a larger goal to become better people, grow in virtue and perhaps even holiness; 2) address key human needs of all actors, including adversaries; [example: needs for respect, livelihood, meaning, connection, effectiveness, inspiration, respect for religion, etc.]<sup>21</sup> and 3) promote the welfare of the entire human community, including those in adversary nations. Focusing on a just peace moral framework and drawing the broader society and governments toward that framework will likely better enable these commitments. In addition, the Church should point to the under investment by societies to adequately develop effective nonviolent strategies and skillsets for protecting communities and preventing violence,

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<sup>21</sup> See [www.cnvs.org/training/needs-inventory](http://www.cnvs.org/training/needs-inventory).

and urge that the world invest much more talent and treasure to design and scale up nonviolent strategies for protection.

Further, the Church would name the atrocities *and* the violent response of military action as a tragedy, a failure on the way of just peace, and inconsistent with human dignity and a culture of human rights for all. The Church does not need to and should not provide explicit justification or legitimation for violent responses (including lethal force) neither before nor during hostilities. When the level of dehumanization is so high, then what is ‘necessary’ is not lethal force, but more creativity and the willingness to risk one’s life for the sake of the dignity of all people. The Church’s role is to keep a just peace approach front and center. Thus, the Church would not be abandoning the responsibility to protect. It is shifting the focus on how we might protect communities, but also oriented by sustainable transformation of the conflict.

*What are the advantages of using a just peace ethic compared to a just war ethic?*

This integrated just peace ethic better enables us to transform conflict by addressing the personal, relational, structural, and cultural dimensions. In turn, it enables us to not only address direct violence, such as killing, but also structural violence and cultural violence. By cultural violence I mean those aspects of culture that can be used to justify or legitimate, both structural or direct violence; ex.'s include language, habits, symbols, ideology, moral frameworks, art, media, etc.

The just peace ethic also has less risk of abuse as we have seen how the just war theory has too often functioned to justify or enable war over the last 1600 years, even if Catholic leadership often may not use it that way. The just peace ethic will better help us to imagine, develop, and commit to nonviolent practices, while cultivating just peace consistently throughout all stages of conflict. Further, it is less likely to yield massive preparations for war which also divert needed resources; more likely to actually prevent, limit, and move us toward outlawing war, better addresses the role of personal and cultural habits formed by preparing and engaging in war, better breaks cycles of violence, better builds more sustainable peace, and is more consistent with Jesus’ call to love the way he loved us.

A couple examples of how the legitimation of a just war ethic at least distracts us from or even obstructs the development and commitment to nonviolent practices: First, we spend little if any time trying to imagine how to humanize or illuminate the dignity of our enemies, which is not only a Gospel mandate but is an essential step in overcoming mass violence. Second, when Pope Francis said not to “bomb or make war” on ISIS, most U.S. Catholic press and many political/religious leaders left out this phrase, then discerned an openness to some military action, and focused their discussion on how much. Instead, the Catholic community could have better faced the call to not “bomb or make war” and worked together to identify creative nonviolent responses. Third, we rarely hear U.S. religious and political leaders speak about or promote nonviolent resistance (especially boycotts, strikes, civil disobedience, etc.) to injustice and violence.

### **3. What could a Just Peace framework offer to the U.S. Military?**

First, it highlights the need to work together to increase active nonviolence, especially in light of its demonstrated effectiveness. Military voices speaking out and direct advocacy on such ways of thinking and practices would help all of us.

Second, a just peace approach would better imagine new pilot programs. For example, the U.S. military could pilot an unarmed protection unit. Major Luke Foster and Andrew Rice from the Australian Department of Defense endorsed this practice of soldiers being unarmed in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea in the late 90's. They argued that "relying on the people to ensure the safety of the peace monitors reinforces their responsibility for peace;" and "although it caused some angst in the soldiers, there were a number of occasions when things could've been worse if they were armed and when the people assisted patrols in difficult circumstances."<sup>22</sup> The U.S. military could also pilot a program in nonviolent civilian-based defense as some other countries have done. They could pilot training other countries in strategic nonviolence and become a world leader in such a service.

Third, a just peace approach could help the Department of Defense enjoy a healthier role in U.S. policy, that is, by enabling the Department of State to lead in transforming conflicts through their nonviolent practices of diplomacy, development, and peacebuilding. In turn, the DOD may better orient itself to the fuller meaning of peace beyond mere stability or basic democratic institutions to just peace, with its structural justice and thriving relationships. This would also enable a shift in key questions toward how to identify root causes and habits at stake, how to address the key needs of all actors, how to transform conflicts rather than merely end them, how to break cycles of violence rather than win wars, and how to create sustainable peace; as well as asking how to turn adversaries into future partners and how to better acknowledge responsibility for harm done. In addition, they would also ask how do we get closer to outlawing war, not merely how to avoid war crimes.

Fourth, a just peace ethic could offer guiding principles both for the enhanced formation of soldiers and for more healthy action in conflict zones, such as more respect and empathy for all actors. Several military actions may not meet the just peace principles, but soldiers could be called to get increasingly close to meeting them.

### **Conclusion**

Gen. Douglas MacArthur fought in WWI, WWII, and the Korean War. He said "you cannot control war; you can only abolish it. Those who shrug this off as idealistic are the real enemies of peace. Those who lack the enterprise, vision, and courage to try a new approach when none others have succeeded, fail completely the simple test of leadership."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> [http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/images/publications/CP\\_A\\_Barely\\_Tapped\\_Resource.pdf](http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/images/publications/CP_A_Barely_Tapped_Resource.pdf) p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> MacArthur, speech to Massachusetts legislature on July 25, 1951 in *General MacArthur: Wisdom and Visions* (2000), p. 152. See also Drew Christianson, *Healing the World*, 2005, p. 32. Another quote from MacArthur: "In the evolution of civilization, if it is to survive, all men cannot fail eventually to adopt Gandhi's belief that the process of

As Pope Francis proclaimed, “In the silence of the Cross, the uproar of weapons ceases and the language of peace is spoken.”<sup>24</sup> Therefore, I humbly suggest that the Catholic Church could better embody Gospel nonviolence by shifting to a just peace approach.

Peace be with you.

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mass application of force to resolve contentious issues is fundamentally not only wrong but contains within itself the germs of self-destruction.” See B. McIntosh, “Breaking the Betrayal,” in the *Veteran*, spring 2011, Vol. 41 no. 1, p.30.

<sup>24</sup> Pope Francis, Homily, Sept. 7, 2013.