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CURRENT ROMAN CATHOLIC ETHICS ON WAR AND PEACE VIS-À-VIS THE UKRAINE-RUSSIA WAR

Tobias Winright and Maria Power

TEMPLE TRACTS



William Temple
Foundation

Current Roman Catholic
Ethics on War and Peace
vis-à-vis
the Ukraine-Russia War

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Editors Introduction

This tract is published on 24 February 2023, exactly one year after Russian military forces attacked and invaded Ukraine, leading to the largest, most destructive war in Europe since the end of World War II. In this tract, we survey statements, articles, and blog posts by Catholic theologians and ethicists – as well as by Pope Francis and the Vatican – about the war.

In the Catholic theological tradition, the ethical issue of war and peace has been addressed by two major approaches: nonviolence (pacifism) and just war theory. In recent decades, these two perspectives converged in official Catholic teaching, as well as in the thinking and efforts of many theological ethicists from both camps, culminating in a firmer orientation toward peacebuilding. Accordingly, nonviolent practices and methods for preventing, and responding to, violent aggression are prioritized, whereas the opening for the use of armed force is narrower, with the criteria for its justification and its conduct more stringently applied.

More recently, though, the emphasis on nonviolence is so pronounced within Catholic circles, including by Pope Francis, that the status of just war theory has become ambiguous. Yet, this present war has prompted a reconsideration of the almost exclusive emphasis on Christian nonviolence that has occupied debates on war and peace in the Roman Catholic Church in recent years. Indeed, in our survey of the relevant literature from the past year, most Catholic moral theologians employed just war reasoning and criteria to evaluate the war, while some Catholic moral theologians emphasized active nonviolent resistance and practices. We conclude that both approaches are needed, and we call for renewed efforts on the part of Catholic theologians and ethicists toward the development of an integrated ethics of war and peace that will promote and protect a just and integral peace.

Ryan Haecker, Series Editor

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The Background to the Current State of the Question within Roman Catholicism

While this year marks the sixtieth anniversary of Saint Pope John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in terris*, issued on April 11, 1963, the past year has served as a reminder of the continuing threat and reality of *bellum in terris*.¹ Pope Francis has remarked numerous times that 'a third world war fought piecemeal' is underway in Ukraine, as well as in Syria, in Myanmar and 'everywhere in Africa'.² For Francis, these conflicts are neither isolated nor unrelated since 'the destinies of countries are so closely interconnected on the global scene'.³ The people of Ukraine, he states, are being 'martyred'⁴ by Russian aggression, and the consequences of this war have impacted other nations and people, especially the poor and vulnerable, in places such as Africa.⁵ The risk of escalation from conventional to nuclear war, with its repercussions beyond Ukraine and Russia, too, has weighed heavily in statements by Pope Francis and others.

This year is also the fortieth anniversary of the United States Catholic bishops' 1983 pastoral letter, *The Challenge of Peace*, which addressed the nuclear threat at the height of the Cold War. The bishops 'locate' themselves in the 'Catholic tradition on war and peace [which] is long and complex' and consists of 'a mix of biblical, theological, and philosophical elements'.⁶ They seek to 'draw from' this moral

¹ This tract will be published in German in the April 2023 edition of *Oekumenische Rundschau*.

² Francesca Merlo, 'Pope: Much can be done to stop Third World War fought piecemeal', *Vatican News*, 19 December 2022, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2022-12/pope-francis-interview-canale-5-italian-television.html>. Pope Francis has used a variation of the phrase on numerous occasions since 2014, 'Pope Francis warns on "piecemeal World War III"', *BBC News*, 13 September 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29190890>.

³ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 3 October 2020, §259. Francis mentions the 'piecemeal' third world war in this paragraph and earlier in §25.

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html#_ftn23.

⁴ Sophie Peeters, 'Pope Francis renews wish for peace in war-torn world', *Vatican News*, 26 December 2022, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2022-12/pope-francis-angelus-stephen-peace-appeal-christmas.html>.

⁵ Fidèle Ingiimbere, S.J., 'The Effects of the Ukraine Invasion on Africa', *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 5 December 2022, https://www.laciviltacattolica.com/the-effects-of-the-ukraine-invasion-on-africa/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=LCC+Eng+DailyNewsletter+05Dec2022+NonPaid_04.

⁶ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1983), §7, §14, <https://www.usccb.org/resources/challenge-peace-gods-promise-and-our-response-may-3-1983>.

tradition and ‘develop it’ to ‘help Catholics form their consciences and to contribute to the public policy debate about the morality of war’.⁷ While the bishops continue to rely on just war theory, they acknowledge the validity of active nonviolence, which Vatican II formally recognized nearly two decades earlier, in ‘fending off aggression and resolving conflict’.⁸ Indeed, Catholics who espouse either just war or nonviolent approaches to the ethics of war and peace are together called to protect and pursue a ‘positive’ peace that, as Vatican II’s *Gaudium et Spes* stated, ‘is not merely the absence of war’⁹ but rather the presence of conditions that allow for human flourishing. Additionally, the bishops regard as illegitimate ‘a crusade mentality’ whereby one believes their nation has ‘absolute justice’ on its side and is less restrained in its use of armed force.¹⁰ A ‘watershed’ document, *The Challenge of Peace* contributed to further developments in ‘a trajectory of the tradition’ of Roman Catholic approaches to the ethics of war and peace.¹¹

As Drew Christiansen, S.J., once described it, the Catholic moral tradition on war and peace has become ‘more stringent in its application of just war thinking and more accepting of nonviolent alternatives even by the state’.¹² When the United States went to war against Iraq twenty years ago, Christiansen added that ensuing Catholic teaching ‘evolved as a composite of nonviolent and just-war elements’.¹³ Indeed, during the first decade of the 21st century, Catholic theologians, ethicists, clergy, religious, and practitioners – including both pacifists and just war thinkers – have shifted their focus toward seeking and sustaining a *just peace* through practices of *peacemaking* and *peacebuilding*.¹⁴

⁷ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace*, §7, §16.

⁸ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace*, §78. Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), §78, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html. That *Gaudium et Spes* and *The Challenge of Peace* approved of nonviolence is significant given that as late as 1956 Pope Pius XII stated that ‘a Catholic citizen cannot invoke his own conscience in order to refuse to serve and fulfil those duties the law impose’ when their nation legitimately defends itself with arms. Pius XII, Broadcast to the World (December 23, 1956), in *The Pope Speaks: The Teachings of Pope Pius XII*, ed. Michael Chinigo (New York: Pantheon Books, 1957), 325, 327.

⁹ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace*, §68, §121. Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 78.

¹⁰ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace*, §93.

¹¹ Todd Whitmore, ‘The Reception of Catholic Approaches to Peace and War in the United States’, in *Modern Catholic Social Teaching*, ed. Kenneth R. Himes (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004), 493, 513.

¹² Drew Christiansen, S.J., ‘After Sept. 11: Catholic Teaching on Peace and War’, *Origins* 32, no. 3 (May 30, 2002): 36.

¹³ Drew Christiansen, S.J., ‘Whither the “Just War”?’’, *America* 188, no. 10 (March 24, 2003): 8.

¹⁴ Lisa Sowle Cahill, ‘Just War, Pacifism, Just Peace, and Peacebuilding’, *Theological Studies* 80, no. 1 (March 2019): 169-185; and Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers: Pacifism, Just War, and Peacebuilding* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2019). Different authors tend to use various labels, including ‘just peacemaking’, ‘just peace’ or ‘just peace ethic’, ‘nonviolent peacebuilding’, and ‘peacebuilding’. See, for example: Glen Stassen, ed. *Just Peacemaking: The New Paradigm for the*

Yet, as Lisa Sowle Cahill notes, the nonviolent, or pacifist, approach, while ‘a clear minority’, has gained traction and ‘considerable’ sway.¹⁵ Indeed, in April 2016, a group of peacemakers, led by Pax Christi International and hosted by the Pontifical Council on Justice and Peace, issued an ‘Appeal to the Catholic Church to Re-Commit to the Centrality of Gospel Nonviolence’.¹⁶ They stated:

The time has come for our Church to be a living witness and to invest far greater human and financial resources in promoting a spirituality and practice of active nonviolence and in forming and training our Catholic communities in effective nonviolent practices. In all of this, Jesus is our inspiration and model.

Following this they declared: ‘We believe that there is no “just war”. Too often the “just war theory” has been used to endorse rather than prevent or limit war. Suggesting that a “just war” is possible also undermines the moral imperative to develop tools and capacities for nonviolent transformation of conflict’. Finally, they offered a path forward for the Church:

We propose that the Catholic Church develop and consider shifting to a Just Peace approach based on Gospel nonviolence. A Just Peace approach offers a vision and an ethic to build peace as well as to prevent, defuse, and to heal the damage of violent conflict. This ethic includes a commitment to human dignity and thriving relationships, with specific criteria, virtues, and practices to guide our actions. We recognize that peace requires justice and justice requires peacemaking.

The proliferation of such an initiative demonstrates an increasing ‘Catholic scepticism about the moral justification of war at all’¹⁷ and a leaning ‘in a pacifist direction [that] sees all military action as moral failure’.¹⁸ And, for a time, it seemed

Ethics of Peace and War, 3rd ed. (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2008); R. Scott Appleby, Robert J. Schreiter, and Gerard Powers, eds., *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics, and Praxis* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010); Eli Sasaran McCarthy, *Becoming Nonviolent Peacemakers: A Virtue Ethic for Catholic Social Teaching and U.S. Policy* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012); and Maryann Cusimano Love, *Just Peace in Practice* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019).

¹⁵ Cahill, ‘Just War, Pacifism, Just Peace, and Peacebuilding’, 171.

¹⁶ ‘Appeal to the Catholic Church to Re-Commit to the Centrality of Gospel Nonviolence’, April 2016, available at Catholic Nonviolence Initiative, a Project of Pax Christi International, <https://nonviolencejustpeace.net/appeal-to-the-catholic-church/>.

¹⁷ David DeCosse, ‘Justice, Self-Respect, and the Ukrainian Decision to Go to War’, *Political Theology*, 9 June 2022, <https://politicaltheology.com/%EF%BF%BCjustice-self-respect-and-the-ukrainian-decision-to-go-to-war/>.

¹⁸ Cahill, ‘Just War, Pacifism, Just Peace, and Peacebuilding’, 181. As Cahill notes regarding one of its most influential advocates, Eli McCarthy, his ‘primary agenda is a virtue-based approach to just peace’ (181). See Eli McCarthy, *Becoming Nonviolent Peacemakers*, where he emphasizes the *nonviolent* approach to peacemaking and posits that ‘it would be quite difficult to ever turn to violence if a community acknowledged and committed itself to the virtue of nonviolent peacemaking’ (219). Of course, in saying ‘quite difficult’ he perhaps isn’t necessarily concluding that it’s ‘impossible’.

as though Christian nonviolence would become *the* official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, especially as it was hoped that the Pontiff, encouraged by Cardinal Peter Turkson, would publish an encyclical promoting active nonviolence as a way of life. Although this has not materialised, the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative has pointed to Francis’s 2015 *Laudato Si’* and 2020 *Fratelli Tutti* encyclicals as evidence that he is offering ‘a critical step towards the illumination of nonviolence and a just peace moral framework’.¹⁹ Additionally, Pope Francis did respond to the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative’s plea by adopting nonviolence as the topic for his 2017 World Day of Peace letter.²⁰

Still, a number of Catholic theologians see ‘a margin of ambiguity’²¹ in Francis’s and the Church’s current stance on nonviolence and the use of armed force. Thomas Massaro, S.J., asks: ‘Does this seeming papal endorsement of nonviolence transform the Roman Catholic Church into a ‘peace church’?... Has Francis definitively renounced the just war approach?’²² For Massaro, ‘the answers to these questions, while far from simple, are in the negative – at least for the time being.’ Such ambiguity about the status of just war theory has lingered during the war in Ukraine.

For example, Massimo Faggioli has observed that ‘Russia’s war in Ukraine, where there is clearly an aggressor and an attacked’, tests the Vatican’s position of permanent neutrality in international relations.²³ Not only are Pope Francis and the Vatican walking ‘a diplomatic tightrope’, but in doing so they risk ‘drawing moral

Also, see Marie Dennis, ed., *Choosing Peace: The Catholic Church Returns to Gospel Nonviolence* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2018).

¹⁹ Eli McCarthy, ‘Francis’ “Fratelli Tutti” weaves the threads of nonviolence and just peace’, *National Catholic Reporter*, 4 December 2020, <https://www.ncronline.org/opinion/guest-voices/francis-fratelli-tutti-weaves-threads-nonviolence-and-just-peace>. Admittedly, in *Fratelli Tutti* the pope seems to echo the 2016 Appeal further in a pacifist direction by writing that ‘it is very difficult nowadays to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a “just war”’ (§258) and that ‘a concept of “just war” cast by Augustine no longer can be upheld ‘in our own day’ (fn242). For another interpretation of these lines from the encyclical, see Tobias Winright, ‘Just War Theory: When It’s Right to Take Up Arms’, *The Tablet* 275, no. 9385 (January 16, 2021): 6-7.

²⁰ Pope Francis, Nonviolence: a style of politics for peace’, 8 December 2016, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20161208_messaggio-l-giornata-mondiale-pace-2017.html.

²¹ Cahill, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*, 318.

²² Thomas Massaro, S.J., ‘Pope Francis: Renewing Roman Catholic Approaches to Peace’, *MST Review* 24, no. 2 (2022): 118. For an article on how Pope Francis’s emphasis on nonviolence and peacemaking does not yet rule out the possibility of justified uses of armed force in the foreseeable future, see Christian Nikolaus Braun, ‘Pope Francis on War and Peace’, *Journal of Catholic Social Thought* 15, no. 1 (Winter 2018): 63-87.

²³ Massimo Faggioli, ‘Putin’s War & Pope Francis’, *Commonweal*, 16 March 2022, <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/putins-war-pope-francis>. For a recent volume on the subject, which appeared before the Ukraine-Russia war, see Marshall J. Breger and Herbert R. Reginbogin, eds., *The Vatican and Permanent Neutrality* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2022).

equivalence between Russia and Ukraine'.²⁴ A number of Ukrainian Catholics and other Christians, in fact, have expressed disappointment with the pope's reluctance to be more forthright about Russia's unjust aggression and the justice of Ukraine's defense of its land and its people.²⁵ In Faggioli's view, the war in Ukraine will prove to be 'a turning point' that calls for 'robust theological work' about ethics, war and peace.²⁶ In this connection, he highlights the work of some Catholic theologians associated more with just war thinking than pacifism, although they do appreciate active nonviolence, too.

The invasion of Ukraine by Russian forces and the subsequent war do not offer a straightforward moral response for Roman Catholics. Although the invasion itself was manifestly unjust, the right of the Ukrainian state and people to defend themselves was not. This has naturally meant a recourse to arms as the Ukrainian nation refuses to submit its sovereignty to its more powerful neighbour which has a history of human rights violations in defeated territories dating back centuries. No one expected the Ukrainian armed forces to succeed in resisting the invasion.²⁷ But in doing so, they further confused the response of Roman Catholic ethicists and theologians as it became obvious that an either/or response was not feasible within the practical politics of what some have called the new Cold War. This war has prompted a reconsideration of the almost exclusive emphasis on Christian nonviolence and pacifism that has occupied debates on war and peace in the Roman Catholic Church since 2016.

Over the past year, numerous blog posts and articles have emerged asking: 'In the face of overwhelming odds, the Ukrainians fought back. What are implications of their decision to engage in a war of self-defence for the current debate within Catholicism over the rejection of just war theory in favour of Christian

²⁴ Massimo Faggioli, 'Ukraine, the Vatican, and Vatican II', *Commonweal*, 29 April 2022, <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/ukraine-vatican-and-vatican-ii>.

²⁵ Loup Besmond de Senneville, "Is he well advised?": in Ukraine, ongoing criticism of Pope Francis', 24 January 2023, <https://international.la-croix.com/news/politics/is-he-well-advised-in-ukraine-ongoing-criticism-of-pope-francis/17210>

²⁶ Massimo Faggioli, 'Will the Ukraine War Influence Catholic Doctrine?', *Commonweal*, 16 October 2022, <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/ukraine-war-catholic-doctrine-vatican-ii-nuclear-faggioli>. See also, Jeff Israely, 'What exactly does Pope Francis think about the war in Ukraine?' *World Crunch*, 4 October 2022, <https://worldcrunch.com/opinion-analysis/pope-francis-on-ukraine>; and 'Pope Francis has failed to be a spiritual mediator in Ukraine,' *The Economist*, 20 December 2022, https://www.economist.com/europe/2022/12/20/pope-francis-has-failed-to-be-a-spiritual-mediator-in-ukraine?utm_medium=cpc.adword.pd&utm_source=google&ppccampaignID=18156330227&ppcadID=&utm_campaign=a.22brand_pmax&utm_content=conversion.direct-response.anonymous&gclid=Cj0KCQiA_bieBhDSARIsADU4zLd6WqnkyzvLmBn5VoeSML8sc4WIq-6wwSL6EhnD_RCj71iLJCgjhgaAt7-EALw_wcB&gclsrc=aw.ds.

²⁷ Ashley Beck, 'Ukraine and self defence in Christian thinking,' *Catholic Social Thought*, 17 March 2022, <https://catholicsocialthought.org.uk/ukraine-and-self-defence-in-christian-teaching/>.

nonviolence?’²⁸ The Ukraine-Russia war has forced Catholic theologians and ethicists to ask whether some of us, including perhaps Pope Francis, have acted prematurely in relegating just war theory to the margins or even supplanting it with nonviolence and pacifism. Indeed, Michael Sean Winters has suggested that ‘the most significant intellectual development in the life of the church this year was the emphatic reinstatement of just war theory as the principal Catholic moral approach to violence’.²⁹

In the rest of this essay, we survey these articles and blog posts by Catholic thinkers from the past year addressing the Ukraine-Russia war. We concentrate on the ways that just war, pacifism, just peace, and peacebuilding have been brought to bear in moral analyses of this war, as well as on how the war has impacted these ethical perspectives. We conclude with a proposal for an integrated approach to pursuing and protecting a just and integral peace.

²⁸ David DeCosse, ‘Justice, Self-Respect, and the Ukrainian Decision to Go to War’, *Political Theology*, 9 June 2022, <https://politicaltheology.com/%EF%BF%BCjustice-self-respect-and-the-ukrainian-decision-to-go-to-war/>.

²⁹ Michael Sean Winters, ‘2022 saw opposition to Pope Francis, plus intellectual and ecclesial shifts’, *National Catholic Reporter*, 26 December 2022, https://www.ncronline.org/opinion/ncr-voices/2022-saw-opposition-pope-francis-plus-intellectual-and-ecclesial-shifts?utm_source=NCR+List&utm_campaign=85e5ff3a09-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2022_12_22_03_07&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_6981ecb02e-85e5ff3a09-%5BLIST_EMAIL_ID%5D.

Catholic Just War Theory and the War in Ukraine

It should be noted that although Pope Francis has emphasized peace and nonviolence throughout the war, he has come to acknowledge the moral legitimacy of armed force by Ukrainians to defend themselves and their nation. When asked during an interview about whether it is morally right for countries to send weapons to Ukraine, the pope responded, ‘This is a political decision which it can be moral, morally acceptable, if it is done under conditions of morality’, before referring explicitly to the Catholic just war principles of just cause and proportionality.³⁰ A senior Vatican diplomat described the Holy See’s position as ‘neutral’ but ‘without ethical or moral indifference’, meaning that ‘Ukraine has a perfect right to defend itself, but the sending of arms must be proportionate’.³¹ The Vatican’s secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, similarly expressed concern that providing Ukraine with weapons might disproportionately escalate the conflict, as he concurrently affirmed that ‘the principle of legitimate defense remains’ for Ukraine against Russian aggression.³² When pressed about his ‘seeming unwillingness to directly criticize Russia for its aggression against Ukraine, preferring instead to speak more generally of the need for an end to war’, Francis replied: ‘Certainly, the one who invades is the Russian state. This is very clear. Sometimes I try not to specify so as not to offend and rather condemn in general, although it is well known whom I am condemning. It is not necessary that I put a name and surname... Everyone knows my stance, with Putin or without Putin, without naming him’.³³ Here, Francis implies that Russia’s invasion had no just cause, a criterion of just war theory. As for those Ukrainians who are fighting to defend themselves and their nation, Francis has said they do have just cause: ‘Self defence is not only licit but also an expression of love for the homeland. Someone who does not defend oneself, who does not defend something, does not love it. Those who defend (something) loves it’.³⁴ Moreover, in a letter to Ukrainian young adults Francis wrote that ‘to courageously defend your homeland,

³⁰ Philip Pulella, ‘Pope says supplying weapons to Ukraine is morally acceptable for self defence’, *Reuters*, 16 September 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/pope-says-supplying-weapons-ukraine-is-morally-acceptable-self-defence-2022-09-15/>.

³¹ Loup Besmond de Senneville, ‘Why the pope's worried about a possible escalation in Ukraine’, *La Croix International*, November 17, 2022, <https://international.la-croix.com/news/politics/why-the-popes-worried-about-a-possible-escalation-in-ukraine/16914>.

³² Andrea Gagliarducci, ‘Cardinal Parolin: Ukraine has the right to defend itself, but arms shipments could cause “terrible” escalation’, *Catholic News Agency*, April 7, 2022, <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/250907/cardinal-parolin-ukraine-self-defense>.

³³ The Editors, ‘Exclusive: Pope Francis denounces polarization, talks women’s ordination, the U.S. bishops and more’, *America*, November 28, 2022, <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2022/11/28/pope-francis-interview-america-244225>.

³⁴ Philip Pulella, ‘Pope says supplying weapons to Ukraine is morally acceptable for self defence’.

you had to put your hands to weapons instead of the dreams you had cultivated for the future'.³⁵ Admittedly, only a few of Francis's (and the Vatican's) remarks and statements explicitly apply just war reasoning and principles to the conflict in Ukraine; nevertheless, it is not entirely absent and thus has not yet been abandoned altogether.

Although Winters speaks of the 'reinstatement' of just war theory in Catholic circles, it was never really set aside.³⁶ Of course, there are varied versions of just war thinking within the tradition.³⁷ Cahill has identified two approaches to just war theory, one that offers 'energetic defenses of war' and is more Augustinian, and another that is more Thomistic and espouses a more 'restrictive' or 'stringent' use of just war reasoning and principles.³⁸ Regardless of their differences, just war theorists agree that there are two traditional categories of criteria that have been developed over the centuries: *jus ad bellum* (which includes criteria that ought to be satisfied prior to embarking upon war) and *jus in bello* (which includes criteria that ought to be adhered to during the conduct of the war). Moreover, in recent years, just war theorists have extended just war thinking to include *jus ante bellum* (which includes practices and principles that diminish the likelihood of war) and *jus post bellum* (which includes criteria and practices meant to foster a just peace after a war ends). Proponents from both approaches draw from these categories and use these criteria in their analyses of the Ukraine-Russia war.

George Weigel, who is usually associated with the less-stringent camp, begins by reflecting on Catholic political theory, international relations, moral analysis, and Augustine's understanding of peace as *tranquillitas ordinis* (the tranquility of order). He rejects the 'claims of Catholic pacifists' and maintains that 'the just-war tradition is the normative way of thinking about the challenges of war and peace within a classic Catholic understanding of international relations'.³⁹ Weigel includes a 'peace

³⁵ Cindy Wooden, 'Nine months after Russia began war, pope writes to Ukrainians', *National Catholic Reporter*, November 28, 2022, <https://www.ncronline.org/vatican/vatican-news/nine-months-after-russia-began-war-pope-writes-ukrainians>.

³⁶ Tobias Winright, 'Why I Shall Continue to Use and Teach Just War Theory', *Expositions* 12, no. 1 (2018): 142-161, <https://expositions.journals.villanova.edu/article/view/2325/2230>.

³⁷ Tobias Winright, 'Two Rival Versions of Just War Theory and the Presumption Against Harm in Policing', *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* 18 (1998): 221-239; Tobias Winright, 'Hawks and Doves: Rival Versions of Just War Theory', *Christian Century* 123, no. 25 (December 12, 2006): 32-35.

³⁸ Cahill, 'Just War, Pacifism, Just Peace, and Peacebuilding', 170-171. While we agree with Cahill's account that there are versions of just war theory, including some that are more dovish and others that are more hawkish, we think labelling one as drawing 'primarily on Augustine' and the other as 'Thomistic reappropriations of just war theory' is accurate only to an extent. Christian Nikolaus Braun also writes that Aquinas's treatment of love and justice concerning the ethics of war "is more complex" than Cahill's account of it (Braun, 'Pope Francis on War and Peace', 80, fn. 85).

³⁹ George Weigel, "Thinking Catholic" about Ukraine and the just-war tradition', *The Catholic World Report*, 14 March 2022, <https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2022/03/14/thinking-catholic-about-ukraine-and-the-just-war-tradition/>.

imperative’, or ‘*jus ad pacem*’ commitment for ‘conducting a just war in such a way that a just peace is its result’. While recognizing the complexities of just war thinking and analysis, Weigel holds that the ‘war on Ukraine is clearly’ and ‘unambiguously’ an unjust war on the part of Russia. Weigel argues that Putin is an autocrat who does not hold legitimate authority, which is a *jus ad bellum* criterion. Nor is Putin’s ‘imperial ambition’ a just cause for attacking Ukraine. So, too, Putin’s ‘war-aim – the obliteration of a sovereign state – is hardly “proportionate”’. As for the conduct of the Russian forces, the ‘unrestrained attack on civilians’ violates the *jus in bello* criterion of discrimination, or noncombatant immunity. On *jus ad pacem*, Weigel writes, ‘a Ukraine subjugated to Russia against the will of the Ukrainian people...cannot qualify as a just peace’. In contrast to Putin’s unjust war, on the other hand, ‘for Ukraine, it is a war of legitimate self-defense, which...has been conducted proportionately and discriminately’. Weigel concludes by supporting economic sanctions, too, and asset-seizure that would serve ‘the ends of both a just war and a just peace’.⁴⁰

Another Catholic writer associated with the less-stringent camp is J. Daryl Charles. In his view, the ‘atrocities’ and ‘abominations’ of rape, torture, and indiscriminate slaughter done to Ukrainian citizens point to ‘the clear and undeniable character of an unjust war’ on the part of Russia.⁴¹ He condemns any calls for appeasement, instead urging the United States and its allies ‘to act, motivated by justice’ and with ‘the moral backbone and commitment to provide *whatever Ukraine needs* to defend itself against evil and annihilation’. There is ‘a just, moral obligation’ to help Ukraine with its just defense against Russian forces. In his view, the war in Ukraine ‘forces us – indeed, it forces the world – to admit the reality of evil’ and the need to help Ukraine to defend itself against it. Charles describes Putin’s aggression against the Ukrainian people as ‘utterly vile and demonic’ – strong language that perhaps verges into the crusade mentality that the U.S. Catholic bishops warned about in *The Challenge of Peace*.

Paul D. Miller believes the pope misunderstands the just war tradition. Miller argues that Pope Francis’s criticisms of just war have more to do with its misuse rather than its proper use. Miller also takes issue with the assertion that ‘every war leaves our world worse *than it was before*’. He says this is an empirical claim that goes too far. ‘The question is not whether war leaves the world worse off than it was before, but whether fighting a war makes the world worse *compared to how it would*

⁴⁰ Sanctions are treated, too, by peace studies expert David Cortright, who has written extensively on the subject over the years. Cortright warns of the unintended effects of sanctions, especially upon vulnerable populations, and he recognizes other failures and limitations regarding sanctions. David Cortright, ‘Can Sanctions Help Save Ukraine?’ *Commonweal*, 19 July 2022, <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/can-sanctions-help-save-ukraine>.

⁴¹ J. Daryl Charles, ‘Good, Evil, and the Just War: Ukraine Needs More Aid’, *Providence*, 20 April 2022, <https://providencemag.com/2022/04/good-evil-just-war-ukraine-needs-more-aid/>.

otherwise be.⁴² Additionally, Miller observes that most ‘modern wars’ are small and limited rather than large and total. Finally, Miller notes ‘the incoherence of Pope Francis’ comments about just war’ when he, on the one hand, criticizes just war while, on the other hand, affirms the Ukrainians’ right to defend themselves. After all, ‘that is exactly what the just war tradition affirms’.

Although he does not use the term *jus post bellum* or *jus ad pacem*, Alan Dowd turns his attention to Ukraine’s liberation of its cities and territory that were occupied by Russian forces, and he considers the costs of reconstruction and rebuilding the nation along the lines of a ‘modern-day Marshall Plan’ led by the EU and supported by the U.S., the U.K., Canada, and other countries.⁴³ He also notes, ‘Even when the guns fall silent and reconstruction is underway, postwar Ukraine will need help with internal stability and border security’, including a multinational ‘peacekeeping force tasked with monitoring the Ukraine-Russia and Ukraine-Belarus frontiers, Ukraine’s coastline and territorial waters, and any regions where Ukrainian and Russian forces are in close proximity’. He also recommends that additional defensive systems and training be provided to Ukraine to deter Russia from attacking again.

One writer from the less-restrained group directly criticizes pacifist responses to the war in Ukraine. Marc LiVecche acknowledges that more could have been done pre-war to possibly avoid the war, but he rejects the assertion that NATO’s expansion could be viewed as an aggressive threat to Russia. Like Miller, LiVecche notes that pacifists make claims that are ‘clearly empirically untrue’, in this case that only nonviolence can break the cycles of violence and ensure peace.⁴⁴ He offers as an example the ‘benevolent *post bellum* Allied treatment and the establishment of order, justice, and ultimately, conciliation’ with Japan at the end of World War II. LiVecche believes the just war tradition ‘gives priority to’ peace and using nonviolent tools that can be efficacious; however, those methods sometimes fail, and because the ‘enemy always carries a veto to our peaceful ambitions, wars must sometimes be fought’.

The use of drones and remote-controlled weapons systems by both Russia and Ukraine is examined in another article by LiVecche. Rather than their making just war principles outdated, these new weapons technologies can still be addressed by

⁴² Paul D. Miller, ‘Pope Francis on Just War and Ukraine’, *Providence*, 23 March 2022, <https://providencemag.com/2022/03/pope-francis-just-war-ukraine/>.

⁴³ Alan Dowd, ‘Considering Post-War Ukraine’, *Providence*, 21 September 2022, <https://providencemag.com/2022/09/considering-post-war-ukraine/>. *Jus post bellum* principles and obligations are explored more thoroughly in a series of five essays written by Eric Patterson. Eric Patterson, ‘Just War Order and Ukraine: *Jus Post Bellum* Series, Part 1’, *Providence*, 15 March 2022, <https://providencemag.com/2022/03/just-war-order-ukraine-ending-war-just-post-bellum/>. The subsequent four essays further developing *jus post bellum* considerations are also available at *Providence*, <https://providencemag.com>.

⁴⁴ Marc LiVecche, ‘Just War Response to Pacifism’s Say on Russia-Ukraine War’ *Providence*, 12 April 2022, <https://providencemag.com/2022/04/just-war-response-to-pacifisms-say-on-russia-ukraine-war/>.

this tradition since it has always ‘had to adapt to the changing character of war’.⁴⁵ Focusing on *jus in bello* considerations, he notes that, ‘like any weapons system’, these new technologies, such as remotely piloted aircraft (RPA), can be used ‘for good or evil’, but when used rightly they offer ‘greater precision, discrimination, and proportionality’. They also increase the probability of success, a *jus ad bellum* criterion, ‘allowing us to fight with greater humanity while still winning the mission’.

Finally, Debra Erickson emphasizes a continued commitment to helping Ukraine to win the war rather than settling for a negotiated termination of it because the costs of its continuation may seem ‘just too high’.⁴⁶ For her, the ‘most basic tenet’ of just war theory is that ‘the goal of fighting a war is to win the war, to vindicate the cause of justice against unjust aggression, and to pave the way for a more durable peace’. She acknowledges uncertainty regarding what will happen in Ukraine – that the ‘calculus is only reliable after we know the final result’ – but that in the meantime ‘we should continue to do whatever we can to help them achieve that goal’. Although she does not mention it, these concerns have to do with the *jus ad bellum* criterion, probability of success. However, she appears to emphasize the importance of winning so much that it undermines commitment to the other criteria of just war theory. As such, her article exemplifies the less-stringent approach to just war highlighted by Cahill.

Turning to those theological ethicists identifying with the stringent understanding and application of just war reasoning and principles, Cahill describes them as being more reluctant to justify armed force, identifying with the peacebuilding project, working on creative extensions of just war thinking (*jus ante bellum* and *jus post bellum*), applying criteria to revolutions and other non-interstate conflicts as well as new technologies of war (drones, robots, cyberwar), and leaning toward seeing humanitarian interventions as the ‘most readily defended validation of armed force’.⁴⁷ Although the stricter approach to just war has been accused of being ‘functional pacifism’ or ‘quasi-pacifism’⁴⁸, with regard to the war in Ukraine, ethicists from the stringent version of just war find themselves sharing common ground with the less-stringent counterparts. Of course, from what we have surveyed thus far, a number of the less-stringent thinkers, too, are attending to topics such as *jus post bellum* and new technologies.

⁴⁵ Marc LiVecche, ‘The Constants of Changing War’, *Providence*, 17 November 2022, <https://providencemag.com/2022/11/the-constants-of-changing-war/>.

⁴⁶ Debra Erickson, ‘Can Ukraine Win the War?’, *Providence*, 7 January 2023, <https://providencemag.com/2023/01/can-ukraine-win-the-war/>.

⁴⁷ Cahill, ‘Just War, Pacifism, Just Peace, and Peacebuilding’, 179.

⁴⁸ James Turner Johnson, ‘Just War, as It Was and Is’, *First Things* (January 2005): 21; Eric Patterson, *Just War Thinking: Morality and Pragmatism in the Struggle against Contemporary Threats* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007), 25; George Weigel, *Against the Grain: Christianity and Democracy, War and Peace* (New York: Crossroad, 2008), 5.

A little more than a week before the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, some theological ethicists, hoping to avoid a war, called for a *jus ante bellum* effort, urging Pope Francis to intervene and to deescalate tensions.⁴⁹ A week after the start of the war, nearly 200 theologians and ethicists signed a statement condemning Russian aggression and atrocities in Ukraine, expressing solidarity ‘with the Ukrainian people courageously defending their homeland, their independence and the values of the free world’.⁵⁰ The signatories included both pacifist and just war ethicists and theologians, many who identify with peacebuilding. Some pacifists did not sign because the word ‘defending’ in the above line was open to both nonviolent and *armed* means of defense.

Following up on the statement, Anna Floerke Scheid and Tobias Winright recognize that, from a Christian ethical perspective, ‘nonviolent expressions of resistance’ to attack, occupation, and oppression are ‘the *primary* response’, but they added, ‘Not only is nonviolent resistance by citizens and others to an unjust and immoral invasion justified, but, in our view, with the outcome of the conflict still uncertain, armed resistance is also justified’.⁵¹ With the expectation that the Ukrainian forces would respect *jus in bello* criteria of discrimination and proportionality, Scheid and Winright point also to the *jus ad bellum* criterion of right intent so as to foster attention to *jus post bellum* and the establishment of a just peace. At the time, though, they wrestled with the question of the probability of success, a criterion of *jus ad bellum*, for Ukraine’s forces against Russia’s. By retrieving the work of 16th century Jesuit Francisco Suárez, who argued against Dominican Tommaso de Vio Cajetan concerning this question, Scheid and Winright note that a nation does not need to be *certain* of victory in order for the war to be considered justified.

David Albert Jones acknowledges ‘that most wars are unjust and that a just cause is not sufficient to justify a war’ – a recognition of the stricter approach to just war – as he shows that Russian forces’ intentionally indiscriminate attacks on cities, such as Mariupol, are not acts of just war but, rather, murder.⁵² In his view, the war waged by Russia is unjust in view of both *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* criteria; whereas, Ukraine’s effort ‘has the just cause of necessary self-defence (*jus ad bellum*) and, as far as we can tell, is also being pursued by just means (*jus in bello*)’. As such,

⁴⁹ Tobias Winright and Jackie Turvey Tait, ‘Pope Francis May Be Our Last Hope for Stopping War in Ukraine’, *America*, 15 February 15 2022, https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2022/02/15/pope-francis-just-war-ukraine-242405?fbclid=IwAR2bYgMU03_f-OXOsQII0m5gr5nrkFl_6K4dq4imUH2JshUUTpcQetl5g10.

⁵⁰ Tobias Winright, ‘Ethicists Without Borders Statement on Russia’s Aggression against Ukraine’, *Catholic Moral Theology*, 4 March 2022, <https://catholicmoraltheology.com/ethicists-without-borders-statement-on-russias-aggression-against-ukraine/>.

⁵¹ Anna Floerke Scheid and Tobias Winright, ‘Resistance, responsibility and modern warfare’, *The Tablet* 276, no. 9444 (19 March 2022), 4-5.

⁵² David Albert Jones, ‘Jus ad bellum, jus in bello?’, *The Tablet*, 19 May 2022, <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/features/2/21895/jus-ad-bellum-jus-in-bello-the-just-war-argument-for-arming-ukraine>.

Christians in other countries should offer not only humanitarian support to the Ukrainians but also the other help they have requested, weapons.

Ashley Beck observes, though, that other *jus ad bellum* criteria remain less clear, especially the reasonable chance of success and proportionality. He urges ‘moral caution’ and, in contrast to Scheid and Winright, appears to side more with Cajetan than with Suárez in expecting more certainty on these questions. He calls for humanitarian support for the Ukrainian people, but is hesitant to support further armed efforts. In his view, ‘Christian teaching about the sinfulness of war, even in self-defence, in all but the rarest of circumstances, is challenging for everyone, however difficult it is to say so’.⁵³ Interestingly, Michael C. Kimmage turns the table and argues that Russia has failed to satisfy any of the criteria of just war, even if Putin offered reasons as just cause for invading Ukraine, including probability of success. The ‘war has not gone according to Putin’s plan’ and, if anything, it has had a heavy cost on Russia and has ‘turned Ukrainian public opinion against Russia for generations to come’.⁵⁴ Kimmage says less about just war on the part of Ukraine, but he recommends that European and U.S. leaders ‘make their case eloquently and often’ for supporting the Ukrainians.

Other stricter theological ethicists are less reluctant than Beck to regard Ukraine’s efforts against Russia as fulfilling just war requirements. David DeCosse notes that against ‘overwhelming odds, the Ukrainians fought back’.⁵⁵ Like Scheid and Winright, he thinks ‘that the just war requirement is for a reasonable – but not a certain – hope of success’. On proportionality, DeCosse considers not only casualties and other costs, but also the ‘harms that come from the loss of political sovereignty and the corresponding loss of self-respect’. While recognizing that ‘a campaign of Christian nonviolence’ might be able to achieve the goal of preserving ‘a national sense of self-respect’, he thinks ‘the Ukrainian decision to fight raises hard questions that need answers about how well a singular reliance on Christian nonviolence can address the devastating harms of historical contempt and chronic oppression at the hands of a fascist, massive military power’.

⁵³ Ashley Beck, ‘Ukraine and the challenge of the christian teaching about the sinfulness of war’, *The Tablet*, 19 May 2022, <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/features/2/21896/ukraine-and-the-challenge-of-the-christian-teaching-about-the-sinfulness-of-war>. Beck expressed his reservations in an earlier article: Ashley Beck, ‘Ukraine and self defence in Christian teaching’, *Catholic Social Thought*, 17 March 2022, <https://catholicsocialthought.org.uk/ukraine-and-self-defence-in-christian-teaching/>.

⁵⁴ Michael C. Kimmage, ‘Why Ukraine Matters’, *Commonweal*, 14 September 2022, <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/why-ukraine-matters>.

⁵⁵ David DeCosse, ‘Justice, Self-Respect, and the Ukrainian Decision to Go to War’, *Political Theology Network*, 9 June 2022, <https://politicaltheology.com/%EF%BF%BCjustice-self-respect-and-the-ukrainian-decision-to-go-to-war/>. A thoughtful analysis of the probability of success is offered by Ramón Luzárraga, ‘The Ethics of a Just, Protracted War’, *Political Theology Network*, 30 June 2022, <https://politicaltheology.com/the-ethics-of-a-just-protracted-war/>.

Finally, Gerald Beyer, who has lived in Poland, worries that his ‘fellow citizens and colleagues in the academy in the U.S. do not grasp the reasons for the war and its monumental stakes’.⁵⁶ Given the genocides of the 20th century, Beyer warns that ‘this war is about annihilating a country and its people and continuing Russian expansionism if left unchecked’. He identifies himself as not ‘hawkish’ or a ‘warmonger’, and he notes that he opposed the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, unlike most of the Catholic thinkers in the less-restrained approach to just war. Beyer is ‘a Christian theologian who abhors war and believes that all other reasonable means should be exhausted before the use of lethal force is undertaken’, but he is ‘convinced there are times – albeit rare – when the evil is so great that no measure other than force will prevent grave atrocities on a massive scale’. He supports active nonviolence, civil resistance, and just peacemaking practices, but he believes that these ‘alone will not stop the Russian juggernaut’. Beyer represents a both/and approach that includes nonviolence and just war theory.

⁵⁶ Gerald Beyer, ‘Atrocities in the Heart of Europe Again: On the War in Ukraine’, *Political Theology Network*, 17 July 2022, <https://politicaltheology.com/atrocities-in-the-heart-of-europe-again-on-the-war-in-ukraine/>.

Nonviolence, Pacifism and Peacebuilding

Although some pacifists have conceded that the Ukrainian people have had no choice offered to them but violence,⁵⁷ the response of those who advocate an approach based upon Christian nonviolence to the Ukrainian conflict has been to reiterate the futility of war as an affront to human dignity, to highlight and encourage the nonviolent resistance that is taking place within Ukraine and Russia. While ‘those who are against war should not project those views onto those who are in the life or death reality of conflict’,⁵⁸ especially as ‘Ukrainian resistance to the Russian invasion can be seen as an expression of their dignity’⁵⁹, those who argue from a position of nonviolence offer suggestions of acceptable responses to war and conflict. The conflict in Ukraine has been characterised by vigorous nonviolent action with pictures of weeping Russian soldiers being met with tea, food and kindness making international headlines in February 2022 and many actions taking place since then both in Ukraine and in Russia.⁶⁰ Actions have included the protection of civilians; regular communication and updates regarding the situation to prevent panic within communities; strengthening civil society; monitoring war crimes; and undermining the pillars of Kremlin power with many people choosing to remain in the war zones and resist nonviolently rather than join those fleeing the violence. When Ukraine was initially invaded, the findings of *Why Civil Resistance Works* by Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan⁶¹ were cited as convincing evidence for the efficacy of a completely nonviolent response to the unfolding crisis especially as it was mistakenly assumed that the Ukrainians would not be able to militarily defeat the Russians.⁶² Chenoweth and Stephan argued that their ‘most striking finding is that between 1900 and 2006, nonviolent resistance campaigns were nearly twice as likely to achieve

⁵⁷ ‘Even those preaching nonviolence recognise the challenges that Ukrainians face don’t offer many Ukrainians a choice.’ Thomas Reese, ‘Catholic theologians question the morality of Ukraine’s violent resistance’, *Religion News Service*, 7 March 2022, <https://religionnews.com/2022/03/07/catholic-moral-theologians-on-russia-ukraine-war/>.

⁵⁸ Doug Girardot, ‘I considered myself a pacifist. Then Russia invaded Ukraine, and I had some questions,’ *America: The Jesuit Review*, 4 March 2022, <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2022/03/04/ukraine-russia-dorothy-day-pax-christi-242511>.

⁵⁹ Mya Jaradat, ‘Turning the enemy into a neighbour: how Catholics are responding to the war in Ukraine,’ *Deseret News*, 4 April 2022, <https://www.deseret.com/faith/2022/4/3/23006623/how-catholics-are-responding-to-the-war-in-ukraine-pope-francis>.

⁶⁰ <https://www.icip.cat/en/nonviolence-in-ukraine/>.

⁶¹ Erica Chenoweth and Maria J Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

⁶² See for example: <https://www.peacecatalyst.org/blog/2022/3/14/ukraine-reflections-pacifism-violence-and-nonviolent-resistance>.

full or partial success as their violent counterparts'.⁶³ Although innovative in its approach, the book's definition of civil resistance is somewhat thin, focusing on participation in public acts of protest in a manner that seems to suggest that nonviolent campaigns of action are swift in bringing success. Furthermore, it does not move into the definition of nonviolence advocated by Martin Luther King and others which requires time to achieve its aims and which is eschatological as well as temporal in its approach. Herein lies one of the intrinsic difficulties with the position taken by advocates of nonviolence – there has been no clear definition of nonviolent action or a nonviolent way of life offered from within Roman Catholicism. The Catholic Nonviolence Initiative offers the following in its Vow of Nonviolence:

I vow to carry out in my life the love and example of Jesus:

- By striving for peace within myself and seeking to be a peacemaker in my daily life;
- By refusing to retaliate in the face of provocation and violence; by persevering in nonviolence of tongue and heart;
- By living conscientiously and simply so that I do not deprive others of the means to live;
- By actively resisting evil and working nonviolently to abolish war and the causes of war from my own heart and from the face of the earth.⁶⁴

This provides something of a foundation for those who want to embrace nonviolence as a way of life with its emphasis on both interior and exterior actions: People must follow the teachings of Christ but, more crucially, it teaches that they must change themselves if they expect the world to be transformed and war to become obsolete.

From the discussion occurring through various blogs and magazine articles, the conversation thus seems to be moving beyond the civil resistance approach towards that taken by King and others which promotes nonviolence as a way of life – a set of skills for living which have to be learnt and consistently practiced rather than one-off actions such as protests. It is not something that brings immediate reward, but rather is an investment in society, both present and future, paid for with the hope that with God's grace all is truly possible.⁶⁵ Indeed to take anything other than a nonviolent approach to conflict, or 'to see a military response as the only viable

⁶³ Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, 35.

⁶⁴ Catholic Nonviolence Initiative, *Vow of Nonviolence*,
<https://nonviolencejustpeace.net/resources/vow-of-nonviolence/>.

⁶⁵ Girardot, 'I considered myself a pacifist'.

solution to conflict is to look at the situation with the despairing eyes of the world, not with the eyes of God'.⁶⁶ From these scattered sources a definition of Roman Catholic approach begins to emerge; and from which actions rather than civil resistance tactics suitable for the Ukrainian context can be discerned. The bedrock of this Roman Catholic version of nonviolence is the belief in and commitment to *imago dei*, that we are all made in the image and likeness of God and consequently, that the suffering imposed by war and conflict are contrary to His plan for us. This is employed as the principal argument against war and conflict. No war can be just because as Thomas Reese suggests:

Countering violence with violence leads at best to forced migrations and enormous suffering, because vast amounts of resources are directed to military ends and away from the everyday needs of young people, families experiencing hardship, the elderly, the infirm and the great majority of people in our world. At worst, it can lead to death, physical *and spiritual* of many people, if not all.⁶⁷

Reese's reference to spiritual death is crucial here and refers in part to the moral injury that war inflicts upon combatants⁶⁸ that prevents the perpetrator from knowing God, an endeavour which is our reason for being: 'to kill a man is to kill, in so far as it is in our power to do so, something of God. It is to kill in ourselves, some of our capacity for knowing God'.⁶⁹ Thus, not only the innocent are victims of violence. Everyone suffers. And, such an argument may go some way towards explaining the pope's stance on Russian aggression.

Nonviolence therefore is foremost about a conversion or change of heart⁷⁰ or what Ingleborg Gabriel has called peacemindedness defined as being:

... based on a commandment to love one's enemies, that leads to peacemaking and reconciliation. The notion, however, sounds different and nearly outrageous in the sight of military aggression and war crimes. Still it cannot be discarded by Christians, since it runs like a red thread through New

⁶⁶ Girardot, 'I considered myself a pacifist'.

⁶⁷ Thomas Reese, 'Catholic theologians question the morality of Ukraine's violent resistance', *Religion News Service*, 7 March 2022, <https://religionnews.com/2022/03/07/catholic-moral-theologians-on-russia-ukraine-war/> (author's emphasis). Or as Roman Catholic Humanitarian, Dr Hugo Slim argues: 'Most people experience war as poverty not as battle, and the civilian has rightly taken the place of the wounded soldier as the lead character in the humanitarian account of war today.' Hugo Slim, *Solferino 21: Warfare, Civilians and Humanitarians in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Hurst, 2022), 24.

⁶⁸ For a discussion of this see Maria Power, *Catholic Social Teaching and Theologies of Peace: Cardinal Cahal Daly and the Pursuit of the Peaceable Kingdom* (London: Routledge, 2021), 145-149.

⁶⁹ Cahal Daly, 'Power for Peace', Sermon for Peace Day in St Mel's Cathedral, 1 January 1976 in *Address on Peace in Northern Ireland, 1976-1983*, Linen Hall Library, Belfast, P13579.

⁷⁰ Reese, 'Catholic theologians question the morality of Ukraine's violent resistance'.

Testament ethics as summarised in the Sermon on the Mount. The emphasis on peace, not only points to its factual fragility, but also to the difficulty humans have to keep the peace in private and in the political.⁷¹

We have to obey Jesus' two commandments to love our neighbour and to love our enemies. A task which Laurie Johnston argues is challenging as 'we have to think about defending those neighbours in ways that don't undermine the fundamental dignity of the attacker in hopes of overcoming that enmity and transforming the attacker into a neighbour'.⁷² Attitudes to the 'other' then form the bedrock of this definition: 'the nonviolent activist does not seek victory but reconciliation, the redemption of the opponent, never his humiliation or annihilation'⁷³ neither should we 'condemn or judge people in very difficult situations'.⁷⁴ This, frequently difficult task, can be achieved through spiritual discipline of prayer petitioning for a change of heart both in oneself and in one's enemies,⁷⁵ and the practice of the corporeal and spiritual works of mercy.⁷⁶

As well as the interior transformation central to adopting the nonviolent way of life, social change is also possible through acts that develop community and promote dialogue between opponents. Suggestions from Roman Catholic ethicists have included: humanitarian resource provision, identifying credible messages and persistent needs-based diplomacy; coalition building; consistent public statements; impacting upon Russian leaders' source of power; and sending waves of peacebuilder delegations to Kyiv.⁷⁷ Another effective nonviolent approach being used successfully in Ukraine is the creation of 'cells of good living' which provide witness and hope to the world that society can be successfully ordered in a manner consistent with Gospel teachings.

⁷¹ Ingeborg Gabriel, 'The End of Christian Pacifism? A Reflection on the Church's Ethics of Peace in Reference to the War in Ukraine,' *Catholic Theological Ethics in the World Church*, 1 June 2022, <https://catholicethics.com/forum/the-end-of-christian-pacifism/>.

⁷² Mya Jaradat, 'Turning the enemy into a neighbour: how Catholics are responding to the war in Ukraine,' *Deseret News*, 4 April 2022, <https://www.deseret.com/faith/2022/4/3/23006623/how-catholics-are-responding-to-the-war-in-ukraine-pope-francis>.

⁷³ Tom Cornell, 'The Future of Christian Nonviolence: Is just war theory meaningless? What about defending the innocent?', *The Plough*, 15 June 2015, <https://www.plough.com/en/topics/justice/nonviolence/the-future-of-christian-nonviolence>.

⁷⁴ Eli McCarthy, 'Pope Francis, Ukraine and effective nonviolent resistance,' *National Catholic Reporter*, 30 May 2022, <https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/pope-francis-ukraine-and-effective-nonviolent-resistance>.

⁷⁵ Cornell, 'The Future of Christian Nonviolence'.

⁷⁶ Hugo Slim, 'Ukraine – Church, Humanitarian Action and Peace,' *Las Casas Institute for Social Justice*, 25 February 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nm40jknOBk>.

⁷⁷ McCarthy, 'Pope Francis, Ukraine and effective nonviolent resistance'.

Integrating Nonviolence, Just War, and Peacebuilding toward an Integral Peace

To conclude, we return to the U.S. bishops' pastoral letter, published forty years ago, *The Challenge of Peace*. Roger Bergman believes this document, which 'embraces a hopeful but realistic eschatology' that 'takes nonviolence seriously' and 'teaches a strict interpretation of the just-war tradition', offers a 'richness' that is 'missing from the Appeal' of 2016.⁷⁸ He thinks the bishops 'got it right': 'we should simultaneously develop strategies of nonviolence *and* hold to a strict understanding of when war can be justified, *and when it cannot* – but we should not jettison the tradition until it is genuinely obsolete'.⁷⁹ He adds that if Pope Francis issues an encyclical on the subject, he 'could do worse than modeling such a teaching on *The Challenge of Peace*'.⁸⁰

We agree, and we recommend a return to the bishops' notion that Catholic theologians and ethicists of nonviolence and just war theory can work together in a *complementary* way, in recognition that both seek to make and build a just peace. Indeed, often missed in Pope Francis's World Day of Peace Message for 2017, 'Nonviolence: A New Style of Politics', is precisely this point about complementarity: 'Peacebuilding through active nonviolence is the natural and necessary *complement* to the Church's continuing efforts to limit the use of force by the application of moral norms'.⁸¹ Similarly, pacifist ethicist William O'Neill, S.J. argues that pacifists and just war Catholics 'bear a family resemblance, though differences remain', especially when contrasted 'from the dominant, secular interpretation of just war – one...more beholden to Hobbes (and Machiavelli) than to...Augustine and Aquinas'.⁸² He encourages proponents of both to 'not condemn' but to 'learn each from the other' and to work together.⁸³ Writing soon after the release of *The Challenge of*

⁷⁸ Roger Bergman, *Preventing Unjust War: A Catholic Argument for Selective Conscientious Objection* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2020), 1.

⁷⁹ Bergman, *Preventing Unjust War*, 4.

⁸⁰ Bergman, *Preventing Unjust War*, 5.

⁸¹ Pope Francis, 'Nonviolence: A Style of Politics for Peace', https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20161208_messaggio-l-giornata-mondiale-pace-2017.html; emphasis added. Bergman has noted this point, too. See Roger Bergman, "'You say Tertullian, I say Augustine": An Essay on Intra-Catholic Dialogue on War, Justice, and Peace', *Expositions* 15, no. 1 (2021): 40, <https://expositions.journals.villanova.edu/index.php/expositions/article/view/2763/2627>.

⁸² William O'Neill, S.J., *Catholic Social Teaching: A User's Guide* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2021), 101.

⁸³ O'Neill, *Catholic Social Teaching*, 103.

Peace, John Langan, S.J. suggested that the notion of complementarity between just war and pacifism ‘should be a fruitful theme’ theme for further reflection in Catholic theology and ethics.⁸⁴ It still is, in our view.

Although Cahill regards peacebuilding as ‘a newer approach’,⁸⁵ we view it more as a recalibration of the principles of both nonviolence and just war, reorienting each together toward pursuing and protecting the positive, or just, peace emphasized by *The Challenge of Peace* and the practice of peacebuilders in conflict zones such as Northern Ireland, Syria, Israel/Palestine and parts of Africa.⁸⁶ Cahill, too, recognizes that peacebuilding ‘draws from both these camps, insofar as partners with different convictions about the ultimate justifiability of violence can work together to transform conflicts nonviolently’.⁸⁷ While peacebuilding is described as seeking to break the logic and cycles of violence rather than providing a justification for war, we believe that a narrow space for the justification for armed force and criteria for its legitimate use remains necessary due to the fallenness of human nature.

In her essay, Cahill mentions a recent call for ‘integral peace’, echoing Pope Francis’s ‘integral ecology’ in *Laudato Si’*, which integrates “just peacemaking and peacebuilding practices, active nonviolence, and just use of unarmed and armed force.”⁸⁸ Perhaps the Ukraine-Russia war will further stimulate collaboration that is *complementary*, rather than more debate and condemnation, between pacifists, advocates of just peace, just war theorists, and peacebuilders. Maybe it will even lead to synthesis, or an *integration* of their work toward a just, or integral peace. We can hope.

⁸⁴ John Langan, S.J., ‘Pastoral on War and Peace: Reactions and New Directions’, *Theological Studies* 46, no. 1 (March 1985): 99. See also Charles E. Curran, ‘Roman Catholic Teaching on Peace and War within a Broader Theological Context’, *Journal of Religious Ethics* 12, no. 1 (1984): 61-81. Curran concludes, ‘All are called to work for peace. Change of heart, nonviolent approaches, and changes of structures to make peace more of a reality in our world can and should be acknowledged by all. War and violence can never be accepted as anything more than a last resort—an *ultima ratio*. Within the pluralism of the believing community, the different positions must realize in theory and in practice that they share much in common’ (75).

⁸⁵ Cahill, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*, 1.

⁸⁶ In a similar way, contributors to Glen Stassen’s project on just peacemaking practices note that this ‘paradigm fills out the original intention of the other two paradigms’, encouraging both pacifists and just war theorists to endeavour more robustly to promote, protect, and restore ‘a just and enduring peace’. Pamela Brubaker et al., ‘Introduction: Just Peacemaking as the New Ethic for Peace and War’, in Stassen, *Just Peacemaking*, 15.

⁸⁷ Cahill, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*, 3.

⁸⁸ Cahill, ‘Just War, Pacifism, Just Peace, and Peacebuilding’, 178. Tobias Winright suggested ‘integral peace’ in his ‘Your “Just Peace” Reading List’, *National Catholic Reporter*, 21 December 21, 2016, <https://www.ncronline.org/books/2017/08/your-just-peace-reading-list>. Similarly, see Gerard Powers, ‘Toward an Integral Catholic Peacebuilding’, *The Journal of Social Encounters* 1, no. 1 (2017): 1-13. Pope Pius XII mentioned ‘integral peace’ in his 1942 Christmas Message, ‘The Internal Order of States and People’, <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/pius12/p12ch42.htm>. It appears that the Vatican’s Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development is exploring the concept of ‘integral security’ as a pathway for peace. See https://padlet.com/DPIHD/Integral_Security.



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