

Are These Our Neighbours?



People who believe war is just.

Jesus said:

“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

Mt. 5:44

“All who draw the sword shall die by the sword.”

Mt. 26:47

Some Reasons for Going to War

- 1) Cause must be just - to protect innocent life and secure basic human rights - not as retribution.
- 2) War must be the only possible means of securing justice. All peaceful alternatives must have been exhausted.
- 3) Only right means may be employed in the conduct of the war. Unnecessarily destructive acts or unreasonable conditions are not acceptable.
- 4) The good probably to be achieved by victory must outweigh the probable evil effects of the war.

What is a just war?

The Christian criteria covered 7 points (see reasons), but Pius XII stated simply “to defend against aggression”.

Background

In earliest times conflicts arose to protect people, their land and their agriculture base (food and water).

In Old Testament times this was extended to subjugation of peoples, still going beyond “an eye for an eye”.

Despite the New Testament message, the world has seen the claiming of new lands accompanied by exploitation of peoples.

Empire building can be either political or economic or both.

Problems

In all wars since the end of the First World War (1918), more civilians have been killed than military personnel.

With advances of science, ever more destruction and death is possible through the “machines” of death, such as H bombs, missiles, cluster bombs, anti-personnel mines, biological weapons.

It is impossible not to destroy non-military buildings and people, euphemistically called “collateral damage”.

War is used as a tool to subdue frightened, innocent and ignorant people.

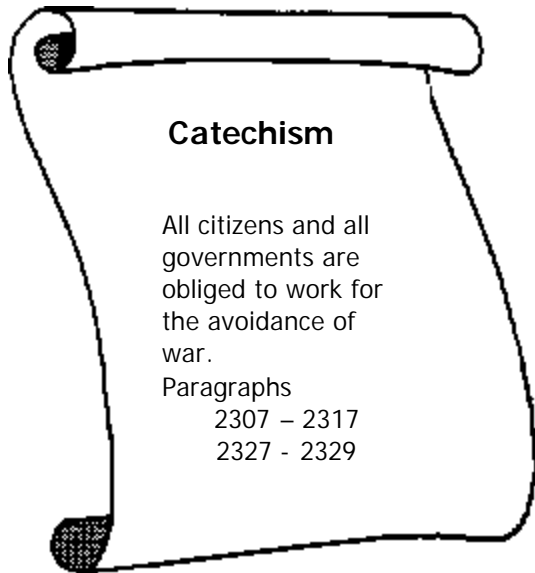
Under the concept of total war, there are no civilians.

Some Responses

If we don't do it to them, they will do it to us.

It is far better to protect our own military through use of materials and machines than to expose them to injury and death in the battlefield.

Always we need to remember the effects are intended for the greater good.



“The more I learn of Jesus, listen to his words and understand his life, the more clearly I see non-violence as the only course for one who would be His follower.”

Bishop Michael Kenney, Juneau, Alaska

“If you want peace, work for justice.”

Pope Paul VI

Reference Sources

Gaudium et Spes, Vatican II

Pacem in Terris, Pope John XXII

Catholic Social Teaching and Movements, Marvin L Krier Mich, Twenty Third Publications 1998

The Gospel of Peace and Justice, Ed. Joseph Gremillion, Orbis books 1976

The Church and a Catholic's Conscience, Robert L. Spoeth, Winston Press

The Just War Theory, Brother John Raymond, www.monks-of-adoration.org/

Consistent Life Ethic, Strategic Plan 1997

Speaker Resource

Canadian Legion

Project Ploughshares

Political Science Department on campus (St. Thomas More)

Peace Makers (Mennonites and other faith groups)

Kairos (ecumenical social justice group)

Canadian military

Development and Peace

Discussion

1. Are there ways of controlling nuclear, biological and chemical weapons?
2. What is ethnic cleansing? Are we justified in resisting its application?
3. The defense industry is a very important aspect of our economy. What alternatives are there for areas that rely on the industry for their economic well being?
4. Are wars simply to defend against aggression or are there always other motives?

Actions

1. Be in contact with any of the above groups so that both you and they may be better informed. If necessary, join one of the groups.
2. Be aware of refugees from war torn countries in your community.
3. Be prepared to contact elected members of government.
4. Ask the Canadian bishops for guidance by means of a pastoral letter.