



Gospel Nonviolence

& Just Peace

Theological Reflection #4

The Challenges of Global Conflict and Eradicating Violence



Opening Prayer

O God of compassion and peace bless us with an awareness of your presence with us. We ask to be open and receptive to your call to Gospel nonviolence and just peace.

Introduction

Gospel nonviolence is about justice and right relationships – Shalom. It is not merely the absence of war; it is not passive but active, and it is rooted in the message of the Gospel. Affirming the vision and practice of active nonviolence is at the heart of the vision and message of Jesus and the life of the Catholic Church. We need to believe that a world of peace and justice is possible. We need to believe that this can be achieved in a peaceful, nonviolent way, without weapons of war. We will explore and challenge the concepts and applications of “Just War Theory” and “nuclear deterrence” in light of the signs of the times.

Education

Read or listen to any one or more of the articles or videos found below as a way to deepen an understanding of Gospel nonviolence and just peace.

Articles/Written Talks/Other

- **Prospects for a Nuclear Free World** Pope Francis' address to the International Symposium "Prospects for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons and for Integral Disarmament" Nov. 10, 2017 <https://bit.ly/2BHS91Z>
- **Challenging the Just War Theory** National Catholic Reporter, September 1, 2014
<https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/making-difference/challenging-just-war-theory>

Videos/Audio

- **The Three Myths of War** Paul K Chappell (6 minute video) – Captain Paul K. Chappell is the Peace Leadership Director of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. Iraq war veteran. <https://bit.ly/2SvqBbs>
- **Nuclear Weapons and the Human Future** (10 minute video) Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, Oct. 2, 2007
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_CutgNL59DQ
- **Rethinking Just War Theory** (45 minute audio recording) April 24, 2016.
<http://www.abc.net.au/sundaynights/stories/s4449459.htm>

Books

- **A Global Security System: an Alternative to War**, World Beyond War. The book is available to read free on-line at <https://worldbeyondwar.org/alternative2016/>
- **Put Down Your Sword** by John Dear, 2008, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI



Questions for Personal Reflection:

Take the main points to prayer and ask God where God is present in this.

- What resonates with you? What do you resist? What challenges you?
- How does this learning fit in your lived experience as a School Sister of Notre Dame, SSND Associate, or SSND colleague/friend? How does it fit with your faith Tradition?

Sacred Scripture

Matthew 26: 47-52

- How do these words of Jesus resonate with your understanding of who you are as a disciple of peace and nonviolence? ... about your understanding of abrogating the 'Just War Theory'?
- What would our world look like if we all responded to life with peace and non-violence?

Sharing

Identify insights and look for implications for action.

- What have you learned? • What are you called to do?
- Who will support you or what will you need to fulfill your intentions?
- What are the implications for your interactions with others and with all of creation?

Possible Actions

- What exactly is it that you want to change? (long-term goal)
- What action are you going to take now? (short-term goal)
- Who can you involve in your action?

Closing Prayer

Disarm our hearts, God of Peace;
help us renounce the fear
that takes the form of weapons.

Help us choose the fierce love
that moves the human family
to dialogue, not destruction.

Our children are fragile
as is our Earth.

Give us the wisdom
to cherish those gifts
by voicing our support
for a world free
of nuclear weapons.

Disarm our hearts, God of Peace;
help us to embrace your wisdom and your will
as you challenge us to choose life,
not weapons of destruction.

We pray for authentic and lasting peace.
We pray for the will to bring this about
so we may be called peacemakers,
the children of God.

In your name we pray for the end
of the weapons of war. Amen.

- *Education for Justice, 2014*