



## Everyone Can Be an Artisan of Peace

### Theological Reflection #7



School Sisters of Notre Dame  
Central Pacific Province

Transforming the world through education

- ✚ Challenge the validity and application of “[Just War Theory.](#)”
- ✚ Integrate Gospel nonviolence explicitly into our everyday lives.

### Opening Prayer:

God of the nations, look upon the lands devastated by war and show us the way to peace. Turn our guns into plows and our bombs into bread. Remove hatred from our hearts and vengeance from our memories. Give us the wisdom and the will to end terrorism and war whether in lands far or near, or in the confines of our families and communities. Help us to remember that we are one world and one family. Grant this through the intercession of all the peacemakers of all times and all places, especially those who suffered persecution and death for the sake of justice and peace. Amen. (People’s Companion to the Breviary Vol. II p. 179)

### Readings:

#### Isaiah 2:4-5

- [Fratelli Tutti](#), Pope Francis #258b

At issue is whether the development of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and the enormous and growing possibilities offered by new technologies, have granted war an uncontrollable destructive power over great numbers of innocent civilians. The truth is that “never has humanity had such power over itself, yet nothing ensures that it will be used wisely”. [241] We can no longer think of war as a solution, because its risks will probably always be greater than its supposed benefits. In view of this, it is very difficult nowadays to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a “just war”. Never again war! [242] Read more... Paragraphs 255-262 (will include link to paragraphs)

- **Love Gives Everything** – We educate, advocate and act in collaboration with others for the dignity of life and the care of all creation.

- **USCCB: Rev. Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop of Dublin November 2003**

The Just War Doctrine: The section of the Catechism which deals with the strict conditions for legitimate defense by military force is headed “Avoiding war”. The treatment of the just war doctrine is introduced by the phrase (#2308) “all citizens and all governments are obliged to work for the avoidance of war”. It talks (#2307) about the “the evils and injustices which accompany all war”. Read more... <https://www.usccb.org/resources/theological-and-moral-perspectives-todays-challenge-peace>

(Take 5 or so minutes for contemplative silence.)

**Ponder and Share** - How are we being called to re-vision the “Just War Theory” and embrace Gospel Nonviolence and Just Peace?

## **Psalm 33** Psalms for Praying by Nan C. Merrill

Behold, the love of the Beloved is stronger than ten thousand bombs,  
More to be desired than the wealth of all nations.

Do we not know that to dwell in the heart of the Beloved

Is the promise to every nation, the birthright of all people, the journey to life eternal?

Our soul yearns for the Beloved, for peace, joy, and assurance.

Yes, our hearts are glad and sing songs of gratitude, praising the name of the Holy One!

May every nation come to live in the steadfast love of the Spirit of Truth!

May every people hope in Love Divine!

### **Related Videos and Articles:**

- **2009 Nobel Peace Prize Lecture by Barack Obama** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AORo-YEXxNQ>

And over time, as codes of law sought to control violence within groups, so did philosophers and clerics and statesmen seek to regulate the destructive power of war. The concept of a “just war” emerged, suggesting that war is justified only when certain conditions were met: if it is waged as a last resort or in self-defense; if the force used is proportional; and if, whenever possible, civilians are spared from violence. Of course, we know that for most of history, this concept of “just war” was rarely observed. Read full text here: <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2009/obama/lecture/>

- **“Why is the Catholic church moving away from just war theory?” by Terrence Rynne, National Catholic Reporter**

The Catholic church's ongoing move away from the just war theory as "settled teaching" to a more expansive call to proactive peacemaking was made clear in a global conference sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and Pax Christi International. The conference, "Nonviolence and Just Peace: Contributing to the Catholic Understanding of and Commitment to Nonviolence," gathered educators and activists from all over the world with the precise purpose of the conference is to more fully develop a vision of nonviolence and just peace for the Catholic church. Five reasons underlie this pivot to a positive vision of peace and a point of view that goes well beyond the just war theory:

Modern wars have made the just war theory obsolete;

The rise of a Christology "from below";

A clearer understanding of how the New Testament relates to contemporary problems;

A renewed appreciation of the way the early church practiced Jesus' teachings on peace;

The compelling history of nonviolent action over the 60 years since Gandhi.

Read more... <https://www.ncronline.org/news/world/why-catholic-church-moving-away-just-war-theory> and <https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/landmark-vatican-conference-rejects-just-war-theory-asks-encyclical-nonviolence>

- Michael Walzer – Just War Theory <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcBovmGZSPU>

(Take 5 or so minutes for contemplative silence.)

### **Ponder and Share**

1. Why should the “Just War Theory” be deemed obsolete today?
2. What governmental/societal structures are in place to keep the “Just War Theory” architecture?
3. What can we do to begin dismantling these structures?

### **Invitation to Action**

#### **Expressions of Peace**

Consider creating a poem, photograph, prayer, or other work of creative expression that highlights our commitment to challenge the validity and application of “just war theory?” Then notify Tim in the CP Shalom Office ([tdewane@ssndcp.org](mailto:tdewane@ssndcp.org)) so he can work with you on discerning the best way to share your artistic expression of peace with the province.

#### **Practice**

- 1) Commit to the [Declaration for Peace](#) at World Beyond War.
- 2) Advocate against nuclear weapons build-up through VoterVoice and other organizations
- 3) Discuss these ideas about the “Just War Theory” with your community, family, and friends.  
(Reference CP Corporate Stance on [Gospel Nonviolence and Just Peace](#) and/or [Fratelli Tutti](#))



➤ Prepared by the Shalom Peace and Nonviolence Committee