

EXPLORING THE POLARITY IN THE CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING ON PEACE AND JUSTICE: ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR PEACE IN CONTEMPORARY ERA

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The need to reexamine the sustainability of just war and nonviolence as means of resolving conflicts in this contemporary era has created an ethical dilemma between justice and peace. Some recent studies conducted in this regard tend towards nonviolence and advocate for a complete abandonment of the just war ethics because of its inability to protect innocent civilians. Consequently, this study aimed to investigate the polarity between the just war theory and nonviolence and their relevance to contemporary society. The research analyzed diverse literature and established that the just war theory is still relevant for just defense. However, to prevent using the just war theory to promote offensive wars, it has been affirmed that it should be renamed as 'ethics of peacebuilding,' which could support nonviolence and dialogue to achieve sustainable peace. Since the just war theory is well developed in Catholic theology, the study suggests further research on nonviolent communication which expands ethics of nonviolence and provides practical skills for dialogue.

INTRODUCTION

The idea that war is no longer a sustainable means of resolving conflicts is gaining more attention in Catholic social teaching (CST) because of the experiences from previous wars and the advent of nuclear warfare.¹ With these developments and the continuous rise of intrastate and interstate conflicts that have taken

¹ United Nations, "A New Era of Conflict and Violence," accessed September 5, 2021, <https://www.un.org/en/un75/new-era-conflict-and-violence>.

new dimensions,² it is important to consider how best to respond to conflicts. The Catholic church has a long tradition which promotes two approaches: the just war which provides criteria for just defence; and nonviolence, which promotes conflict prevention and resolution through dialogue and paying attention to human rights. John XXIII in *Pacem in Terris*³ invites all to engage in a new analysis of war and focus on conflict prevention and resolution through promotion of human rights and dialogue which focuses on what unites us as human beings.⁴

The invitation to engage in a new analysis of war has triggered a heated debate among theologians⁵ on whether to completely discard the just war tradition and embrace nonviolence or retain both approaches. However, these positions have created an ethical dilemma between justice and peace. Consequently, this research aims first, to investigate the polarity on peace and justice and their relevance for the contemporary era. Second, it aims to establish that just defence is still important for humanitarian reasons and demonstrate that a positive relationship between peace and justice could bring sustainable peace.

² William Robert Avis, "Current Trends in Violent Conflict," accessed September 5, 2021, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5cf669ace5274a07692466db/565_Trends_in_Violent_Conflict.pdf. See Stéphane Dosse, "The Rise of Intrastate Wars: New Threats and New Methods," *Small Wars Journal* (2010): 1-6. Sebastian von Einsiedel et al., "Civil War Trends and the Changing Nature of Armed Conflict," *United Nations University Centre for Policy Research Occasional Paper* 10 (2017): 1-10.

³ John XIII, "*Pacem in Terris* (April 11, 1963)," accessed September 5, 2021, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jxxiii_enc_11041963_pacem.html.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Johan De Tavernier, "Love for the Enemy and Non-Retribution: A Plea for a Contextual and Prudent Understanding of Peace," in *Swords into Plowshares: Theological Reflections on Peace*, ed. Roger Burggraeve and Marc Vervenne (Louvain: Peeters, 1991), 145-166. David Hollenbach, *Nuclear Ethics: A Christian Moral Argument* (Ramsy, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1983). The National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response, Pastoral Letter on War and Peace* (Washington, D. C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1983), and many other theologians.

FROM NONVIOLENCE TO JUST WAR

Establishing the background for the debate on nonviolence, Marc Vervenne asserts that promoters of nonviolence refer to the New Testament as their standpoint and support their position with Jesus' commandments such as "thou shalt not kill," if anyone strikes you on a cheek, let him strike the other one too (Lk. 6, 29);" "love your enemies and do good to those who persecute you (Lk. 6, 27)."⁶ The early Christians followed Jesus' counsel to love their enemies (Mt. 5, 45) because God provides rain and sunshine for the just and the unjust. According to Walter Wink, the early Christians refused for example to participate in military services and war.⁷ In addition, the early Christians were certain about the fulfilment of Jesus' basic commandments. During this period, Christians were bound by conscience to either remain faithful to Christ through baptism or remain bounded to an earthly Lord. Baptism played a central role in prohibiting Christians from participating in the army.⁸ De Tavernier observes that during the early centuries, Christians dutifully refused to participate in the army and resorted to martyrdom instead. From time to time, Roman emperors were sacralized. There was the question of the 'oath' and even 'worship' by Roman soldiers vis-à-vis the Emperor. This practice was unacceptable for Christians.⁹ Another reason for Christians' refusal to use violence was because of Christ's example, who willingly allowed himself to be crucified on the cross without resorting to violence.¹⁰ Hollenbach attributes early Christians' refusal to two factors. First, Christianity detests killings and

⁶ Mark Vervenne, "Introduction" in *Swords into Plowshares: Theological Reflections on Peace*, eds. Roger Burggraeve and Marc Vervenne (Louvain: Peeters, 1991), vii-x.

⁷ Walter Wink, *The Powers that be: Theology for a New Millennium* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 128-129.

⁸ De Tavernier, "Love for the Enemy and Non-Retribution," 147.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 148.

¹⁰ Mary Ann Cusimano Love, "Just Peace and Just War," *Expositions* 12, no. 1 (2018): 61-72. Kenneth R. Himes, "Peacebuilding and Catholic Social Teaching," in *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics, and Praxis*, eds. Robert J. Schreiter, Scott R. Appleby, and Gerhard F. Powers (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010), 265-299.

forcefulness; second, “Christians were not Roman citizens and thus ineligible to serve in the Roman forces.”¹¹ Although the latter argument is under discussion, the fact is that early Christians adopted a nonviolent way of life and in general refused to participate in military services.

The Christians gradually shifted from nonviolence to just war and participation in military services. The Roman philosopher Cicero (106-43 B.C) coined the concept “*Bellum iustum*” (just war).¹² For Cicero, people can only use war as a strategy for achieving justice whenever there is injustice rather than for their personal interests such as glory, honour, and power.¹³ The early Christians’ adoption of the just war theory and participation in the military began during the fourth century with the emergence of Constantine as the Roman emperor between 306-337. Following the edict of Milan in 313, some Christians, for instance, Lactantius, supported the military as a mandatory strategy for protecting one’s nation. In 314 Emperor Constantine created a law which mandated that “refusal of military service and desertion in times of peace be punishable by excommunication.”¹⁴ The series of wars the Roman Empire experienced during this period, led to the need to defend the Roman territory and the advancement of peace and war ethics. Consequently, Bishop Ambrose of Milan (378) returns to Cicero’s just war theory and linked it with the Old Testament’s violent tradition.¹⁵ Augustine of Hippo (354-430) gave a detailed explanation on when to resort to a just war. For him, Christians can join the military and contribute to warfare when the need arises. This period brought a strong connection between religion

¹¹ Hollenbach, *Nuclear Ethics*, 8-9.

¹² Andrea Keller, “Cicero: Just War in Classical Antiquity,” in *From Just War to Modern Peace Ethics*, eds. Heinz - Gerhard Justenhoven, and William A. Barbieri (Berlin and Boston: Walter De Gruyter GmbH & Co.KG, 2012), 9-29. See Kenneth R. Himes, “Pacifism and the Just War Tradition in Roman Catholic Social Teaching,” in *One Hundred Years of Catholic Social Thought: Celebration and Challenge*, ed. John A. Coleman (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 329-344, p. 330.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁴ De Tavernier, “Love for the Enemy and Non-Retribution...,” 149.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 149. Love, “Just Peace and Just War,” 65. See Hollenbach, *Nuclear Ethics: A Christian Moral Argument*, 9.

and military service.¹⁶ During the Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas in *Summa Theologiae*¹⁷ further expanded the just war tradition.¹⁸ For him, war is only legitimate after all peaceful means have been exhausted (last resort).¹⁹ The need to strengthen the relationship between church and state, defend the state against external attacks led to the shift from nonviolence to just war. The just war was only applicable after exhausting all nonviolent means. Having explored how the Christians moved from nonviolence to just war, next, is to examine the advancement from just war to conflict prevention.

FROM JUST WAR TO CONFLICT PREVENTION

During the twentieth and the twenty first centuries, especially from the early 1960s, the Church gradually moved from just war tradition to a conflict prevention approach. John XXIII and Paul VI had experiences of terrible war practices (the Great War and the Second World War), which influenced their views on the consequences of pervasive violence. Their questioning brought a shift in the Church's teachings on war and peace.²⁰ On April 11, 1963, *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth) emerged at the peak of the cold war and the Cuban Missile crisis and its global threat of using nuclear weapons.²¹ The document refers to the outrages of the second World War that led to the assembly of fifty countries to form an association of peace-keeping known as the "United Nations (UN)." The aim of the UN was to engage in peacekeeping, abolition of weapons of mass destruction and the promotion of human rights.²² *Pacem in Terris* visualizes a different world devoid

¹⁶ Ibid., 150.

¹⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II - II, 40.

¹⁸ Keller, "Cicero: Just War in Classical Antiquity," 9.

¹⁹ Ibid., 28.

²⁰ Himes, "Peacebuilding and Catholic Social Teaching," 279.

²¹ Heinz-Gerhard Justenhoven and Mary Ellen O'Connell, eds., *Peace Through Law: Reflections on Pacem in Terris from Philosophy, Law, Theology, and Political Science*, 50 (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 2016), 7.

²² "Pacem in Terris (1963) Historical Context - Catholic Australia," accessed March 11, 2019, <http://www.catholicaustralia.com.au/pdf/papaldocuments/pacemin>.

of war and capable of living harmoniously and appeals for an improved dedication to the UN, “human rights, disarmament, development, and international law.”²³ The above gives a background to examine John XXIII’s contribution to the current discussion on the movement from just war to conflict prevention.

In *Pacem in Terris* no. 109, John XXIII expresses his pain on the large production of arms by developed nations. He calls for disarmament, respect for human dignity, and declares that “nuclear weapons must be banned.” He advocates for a universal agreement on disarmament and a sustainable structure to control the program to prevent the arms race from thriving. John XXIII notes that in recent times, due to the experience of the horror of nuclear weapons, people are increasingly certain that they could resolve an interstate conflict through dialogue and consensus without resorting to arms. Consequently, he argues that “in this age, it no longer makes sense to maintain that war is a fit instrument with which to repair the violation of justice.”²⁴ John XXIII expresses his optimism that through negotiations that promote interpersonal and international connections, nations will gradually discover “love” that can bring them together in diverse ways and promote unity.²⁵ John XXIII’s appeal for complete disarmament and his condemnation of war as a means of seeking justice is a novel shift which opened the door for a discussion on just war and the move toward a just peace.

Commenting on John XXIII’s assertions, Himes notes that the above statements have received different interpretations. He argues that some interpreters see John XXIII as re-echoing Pius’s limited view on the lawful causes of war, while others perceive him as in favor of prohibiting war. However, John XXIII’s intention was not to repeat what had been said previously, neither did he appeal for a one-sided disarmament, but he worried about the possibility of further wars which could involve the use of nuclear weapons. John XXIII’s aim was to question why people easily choose war as a

²³ Justenhoven and O’Connell, eds., *Peace Through Law*, 7.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

means of resolving conflicts.²⁶ His assertion in *Pacem in Terris* number 127 signifies a point of departure in Catholic social teaching from the just war tradition to appeal for a nonviolent way of handling conflicts.²⁷ For John XXIII lasting peace cannot be achieved by a competition of amassing arms by various nations, but in shared conviction and negotiations.²⁸ Therefore, John XXIII's objective is to make a shift from the long tradition that has promoted war as a means of resolving conflicts and recover the nonviolent tradition which foster negotiations.

John XXIII's concern in *Pacem in Terris* was on practical peace, complete disarmament, and a different approach to conflict. Johan Verstraeten argues that *Pacem in Terris* should be understood in the viewpoint of the entire encyclical. The encyclical's attention is not mainly on war, although on circumstances for a workable peace emphasized in *Pacem in Terris* no. 114: "relations between states, as between individuals, must be regulated with the principles of right reason: the principles that is of truth, justice, vigorous and sincere co-operation,"²⁹ rather than amassing of nuclear weapons for deterrence. John XXIII's appeals for a complete disarmament are motivated because nuclear weapons could be used accidentally. Additionally, a considerable sum of money is plunged into amassing of expensive arms despite the high rate of global poverty. The idea that possessing equal arms will result into peace is not sustainable rather, nuclear weapons establish an atmosphere of fear and terror.³⁰ Consequently, the teaching of John XXIII in *Pacem in Terris* destroyed the edifices of the just war custom and subsequent

²⁶ Himes, "Peacebuilding and Catholic Social Teaching," 280.

²⁷ Drew Christiansen, "Commentary on *Pacem in Terris*," in *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretations*, eds. Kenneth Himes et al. (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2011), 217-243. See Eli S. McCarthy, "The Gospels Draw Us Further: A Just Peace Ethic," *Expositions* 12, no.1 (2018): 80-102.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 231.

²⁹ Johan Verstraeten, "Christian Priorities in the Politics of Peace," in *Swords into Plowshares: Theological Reflections on Peace*, eds. Roger Burggraeve and Marc Vervenne (Louvain: Peeters, 1991), 167-195.

³⁰ Christopher Hrynok, "Nothing but a False Sense of Security: Mapping and Critical Assessing Papal Support for a World Free from Nuclear Weapons," *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament* 2, no. 1 (2019): 51-81.

popes have continued to support the assertion that war is no longer an effective means of achieving peace.³¹ John XXIII's focus was thus on collaboration in achieving peace through complete disarmament and seeking alternative means of resolving conflicts instead of wars.

Crucial in the debate on just war to conflict prevention is whether John XXIII made any doctrinal intervention on just war and nuclear warfare. According to De Tavernier, *Pacem in Terris* makes no reference to the just war ethics which Pius XII promoted during his pontificate. His silence could be due to his belief that "war was no more an effective means of settling international conflicts."³² Himes notes that "John XXIII's silence about the right of national self-defence coupled with his opposition to nuclear war created a mood of questioning on the topic of warfare. With his death it was left for the council to take up the question in the ecclesial context of the papacy's growing disenchantment with the practice of war."³³ Furthermore, Fred van Iersel asserts that John XXIII made a weak distinction of nuclear warfare and nuclear deterrence.³⁴ He asserts that

"Pope John XXIII did not intervene at a doctrinal level by putting the just war theory aside or by proclaiming nuclear pacifism as its just application. Instead, he again took a pastoral perspective, by asking strategically what should be promoted for pastoral contextual reasons, namely the prevention of nuclear conflict. Nor Pope John XXIII in *Pacem in Terris*, nor the council after him in *Gaudium et*

³¹ Ibid., 60.

³² Johan De Tavernier, "Van rechtvaardige oorlog naar prudent pacifisme. Het kerkelijke vredesdenken van 1963 tot heden," in *Van rechtvaardige oorlog naar rechtvaardige vrede: Katholieken tussen militarisme en pacifisme in historisch-theologisch perspectief*, eds., Roger Burggraave, Johan De Tavernier and Luc Vandeweyer (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993), 156.

³³ Himes, "Pacifism and the Just War Tradition in Roman Catholic Social Teaching," 332.

³⁴ Fred van Iersel, "50th Anniversary of the Encyclical *Pacem in Terris*: Making Sense of Military Practice in a Globalizing World," *Lecture for the Conference of Apostolat Militaire Internationale 2013, Slovenia*, https://www.apostolatmilitaire.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/20_Lecture_Prof_Fred_van_Iersel.pdf.

Spes, put the just war theory aside, but they asked for its functioning in a specific context and they asked what actions were needed in face of the real doctrinal, challenges of the time.”³⁵

Additionally, *Pacem in Terris* does not fully discard nuclear deterrence but promotes putting an end to the arms race.³⁶ Hence, it seems that John XXIII did not condemn the just war, but rather, his focus was on conflict prevention because of the disproportionality of any future war.

The council fathers contribute to the question of war and conflict prevention by focusing on nonviolence, war, and deterrence. In *Gaudium et Spes* (GS) 78, they approve nonviolence by “prais[ing] those who renounce the use of violence in the vindication of their rights without injury to the rights and duties of the community itself.”³⁷ However, the community has the right to self-defence since a capable international authority does not exist. After exhausting all peaceful means governments have the legal right and responsibility to defend their followers through military action and with proportionate means. Nuclear weapons are no longer considered as proportionate means because they do not discriminate, and its usage always results in mass destruction. Consequently, the council analyses and condemns nuclear war like John XXIII requested in *Pacem in Terris*.³⁸ On deterrence, the council re-echoes John XXIII that stockpiling of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons is dangerous, unsustainable and a waste of money. They appeal for new and more humane ways of resolving conflicts, and a collaborative effort for disarmament. The council encourages peace education to enable all to engage in making peace.³⁹ Therefore, the council acknowledges two methods of preventing conflicts, the individual and the state approaches. They

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* Promulgated by His Holiness, Pope Paul VI on December 7, 1965,” accessed March 26, 2021, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

approve nonviolence for individuals and encourage states to uphold their responsibility to protect their citizens. Similarly, to John XXIII, the council condemned war and appealed for complete disarmament, new and more humane ways of resolving conflict.

GS has made substantial contributions to the mission of achieving global peace. GS promotes how the Church should relate with the world and engage in peacebuilding by fostering social justice. GS gives the Church a new analysis of war, permits self-defence according to the just war criteria, highlights and condemns the continuous rise of stocks of weapons, and declares their use as unlawful.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the Church tends to demonstrate two views on nuclear weapons.⁴¹ First, the competition of amassing nuclear weapons by diverse nations to balance power affects the economic, political relationships and fears of wars among nations. Second, the balancing of nuclear weapons by nations has reduced the insecurity among nations. Hence, disarmament should be a collaborative affair among nations.⁴² Moreover, “Vatican II endorsed the *Bellum Justum* tradition, by formulating its judgments in the context of the balance of terror of the 1960s and the strategic doctrine of mutual and assured destruction as a basis of stability in East-West relations. However, it rejects an application in extremis of this doctrine.”⁴³ De Tavernier argues that the Council engaged with the “*Bellum Justum*” tradition obviously in a manner different from Pius XII.⁴⁴ Therefore, the council gave a new analysis of war based on the just war tradition, condemned the use of nuclear weapons because of its inherent indiscriminate character, and encouraged collaboration in disarmament.

Pope Paul VI, who championed the conclusion of the council, advanced the discussion on war and conflict prevention by suggesting integral development as a strategy. Paul VI, through his

⁴⁰ Hrynkow, “Nothing but a False Sense of Security:” 61.

⁴¹ Petrus Johannes Teunissen, “The Debate in the Churches on War, Peace, and Disarmament,” *Studia Diplomatica* 36, no. 4/5 (1983): 435-483.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 445.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 447.

⁴⁴ De Tavernier, “*Van rechtvaardige oorlog naar prudent pacifisme.*,” 160.

encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (On the Development of Peoples),⁴⁵ explained the role of integral development in promoting peace among peoples. He asserts that the development that fosters peace must be integral, transcends economy to embrace a wholistic development of the human person. The development of the human person requires individual responsibility to cultivate his/her God's given talents through education to fulfil his or her mission effectively. The development also entails collaboration in building a lasting human society that will increase the wellbeing of both present and future generations.⁴⁶ He calls all nations to support eradicating the injustices, inequalities, poverty, and underdevelopment in developing countries through solidarity. He also argues that developed countries should endeavour to use some of their resources to help other developing countries.⁴⁷ Recognizing development as the new name for peace, Paul VI further asserts that the economic, social, and educational inequalities among nations promote envy and conflicts, which frustrate efforts for peace. A collaborative engagement with the poverty and inequalities of our contemporary era will foster well-being and integral development among peoples. In addition, global peace could be achieved through justice and a concerted daily effort to create global stability; also by supporting developing nations even though each nation is responsible for its own development. The aid and collaboration given by developed nations to poorer nations will support the poor nations in development.⁴⁸ For Paul VI, conflict is rooted in inequalities and underdevelopment. He views the integral development of the human person and societies and solidarity among nations as a means of preventing conflicts and achieving global peace.

As part of Paul VI's commitment to peace, in 1968 he introduced the World Day of Peace to be celebrated on every first day of the year and encouraged all to make efforts to preserve the

⁴⁵ "*Populorum Progressio* Encyclical of Pope Paul VI on the Development of Peoples March 26, 1967," accessed July 7, 2020, http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum.html.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 14-15 and 17.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 47-48.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 76-77.

global Peace Day. He invites all people to commit the peace day to “true peace, to just and balanced peace, in the sincere recognition of the rights of the human person and of the independence of the individual nations.”⁴⁹ He calls for an active peace which “proclaims the highest and most universal values of life: truth, justice, freedom, and love.”⁵⁰ He argues that history has revealed that human progress thrives only on peace, not on stress from forceful nationalism, or violent overthrow, or subduing others.⁵¹ Furthermore, he asserts that peace and human rights are two sides of the same coin. Peace creates a safe space for human rights, justice, and freedom to flourish. On the other hand, lack of peace endangers human rights.⁵² Genuine peace is rooted in respect for persons, and efforts for peace as a call for justice. Reaffirming John XXIII, he notes that “If you want peace, work for justice.”⁵³ Following his predecessor, he was committed to conflict prevention through promotion of human rights and negotiation and established the first day of the year as the World Day of Peace. To date, the Church still upholds the peace day’s tradition. After the period of Paul VI, the research shall further investigate how subsequent theologians advanced the discussion from conflict prevention to the rediscovery of nonviolence.

⁴⁹ “Message of His Holiness Pope Paul VI for the Observance of a Day of Peace 1 January 1968” accessed March 27, 2020, http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_p-vi_mes_19671208_i-world-day-for-peace.html.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² “Message of His Holiness Paul VI for the Celebration of the Day of Peace 1 January 1969: The Promotion of Human Rights, the Way to Peace,” accessed July 9, 2020, http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_p-vi_mes_19681208_ii-world-day-for-peace.html.

⁵³ “Message of His Holiness Pope Paul VI for the Celebration of the Day of Peace 1 January 1972: If You Want Peace, Work for Justice,” accessed July 9, 2020, https://w2.vatican.va/content/paulvi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_p-vi_mes_19711208_v-world-day-for-peace.html.

FROM CONFLICT PREVENTION TO THE REDISCOVERY OF NONVIOLENCE

Rediscovering the relevance of nonviolence and the need for self-defence, Pope John Paul II emphasizes education for peace “to reach peace, teach peace,” He asserts that to attain peace requires “all the energies of peace present in man’s heart.”⁵⁴ He argues that peace must go beyond words to embrace certain principles: “activities of the human person including conflicts should be resolved amicably and compassionately by dialogue, the needs of all the parties involved in conflicts must be considered and collaboratively search for the common good, use of violence must be avoided, and all solutions must be channelled towards the promotion of human rights.”⁵⁵ He further claims that these principles already exist in human conscience, and must be nurtured through education, which includes a review of history, peacebuilding, avoidance of violent language that foster criticisms and moralistic judgments, and encourage the use of language of the heart, which is the “language of peace.” He also encourages practical peace, teaching children and young people about peace and peace education for all.⁵⁶ In addition, John Paul II notes that Christians make efforts to stop warfare, while for the sake of justice people have the right and duty to defend themselves from an unjust aggressor through proportionate strategies. However, because of the existence of nuclear warfare, nations need to acquire skills for sustainable negotiation and creation of institutions for advancing justice and peace.⁵⁷ John Paul II shows a positive step from conflict prevention towards nonviolence. He advocates for dialogue as a

⁵⁴ “Message of his Holiness Pope John Paul II for the Celebration of the Day of Peace on 1 January 1979: To reach peace, preach peace,” accessed March 13, 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19781221_xii-world-day-for-peace.html.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ John Paul II, “Peace: A Gift of God Entrusted to Us, Message on the World Day of Peace, 1 January 1982,” accessed April 28, 2021, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19811208_xv-world-day-for-peace.html.

means of resolving conflicts and peace education for people to learn about peace and affirm self-defence with proportionate means.

To contribute to the current discussion, the US Bishops' Conference in 1983 issued a pastoral letter "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response."⁵⁸ The call of the pastoral constitution (*Gaudium et Spes*) to respond to "the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel," influenced the pastoral letter. The three signs of the times are: (1) the assertion of Pope John Paul II at the UN "the world wants peace; the world needs peace." (2) Vatican II's evaluation of the arms race, (3) the new challenges the nuclear arms race poses and how to use the traditional ethical guidelines in addressing it.⁵⁹ The Bishops assert that "if we are to evaluate war with an entire new attitude, we must be serious about approaching the human person with an entire new attitude. The obligation for all of humanity to work toward universal respect for human rights and human dignity is a fundamental imperative of the social, economic, and political order."⁶⁰ They highlight that the Catholic community is against war and encourage using peaceful means to resolve conflicts. The bishops, permit minimal use of force in specific situations according to the just war ethical guidelines. For example, while each country has the right to protect itself against enemy attacks, offensive wars are not ethically acceptable. Moreover, using atomic or conventional weapons without discrimination to destroy a whole city is prohibited. Killing innocent civilians intentionally is improper. They argue that the effort to defend a country from attackers can cause havoc that breaks the principle of proportionality and transcends legal defence.⁶¹ Similar to previous popes and the council, the bishops condemned war, support peaceful means of resolving conflicts and uphold self-defence. They warn against aggressive wars and

⁵⁸ The National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States, "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response, Pastoral Letter on War and Peace," *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* 15, no. 3 (1984): 244 - 251.

⁵⁹ The National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response, Pastoral Letter on War and Peace* (Washington, D. C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1983), 5-6.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, iii.

emphasize respect for the principles of proportionality and discrimination in situations where war cannot be avoided.

Analysing the presumptions against war and the principles of legitimate self-defence, the Bishops argue that Christians have the responsibility to protect peace against attack. It is a duty that cannot be overlooked, while the strategy for such a defence provides ethical options.⁶² They argue that the Catholic Church perceives nonviolence and the use of force as complementary methods to promote the common good. The Bishops provide the following guidelines in line with the Catholic just war standard for such defence: (1) war is allowed when there is a just cause to defend the innocent, secure peoples' wellbeing, and safeguard fundamental human rights. However, the horror of contemporary warfare no longer justifies such wars. (2) only a competent authority who has been entrusted with the duty to direct public order has the right to declare a war. (3) there must be comparative justice, due to the "destructive potential of weapons," the standard of comparative justice is being questioned if the rights violated warrants legitimizing killing. (4) right intention which has links with just cause, means having the motive to achieve peace, reconciliation, and refusal to engage in destructive behaviours and illicit conditions. (5) last resort: people can only resort to war after exploring all peaceful strategies. This standard is somehow problematic because some countries that enjoy and benefit from conflict may abandon a peaceful resolution instead of promoting it.⁶³ The foregoing shows that when resorting to war, there must be a just reason, permission from a legitimate authority, comparative justice, good intention, and war must be the last option. However, considering the recent Russia - Ukraine war and the present realities of nuclear weapons facing our contemporary world, relying on the above principles seems challenging. Hence the need to continue to promote a nonviolent approach to conflict as seen in theologians' recent reflections on conflict and peace.

The Bishops further upholds that before resorting to war, there must be probability of success. The aim of this standard is to

⁶² Ibid., 23.

⁶³ Ibid., 28-30.

discourage unreasonable use of force. Moreover, proportionality, which means that the harm caused must be equal to the benefits hoped for when resorting to arms must be respected. Owing to the present-day realities of globalization and interdependence, an internal conflict can affect the whole world. Consequently, a country cannot approve war without reflecting on how it will affect other nations. If a country must resort to war, there must be a scrutinization of the weapons involved and the protection of the innocents.⁶⁴ The Bishops analysed the just war criteria with a new attitude by highlighting the problems posed by some of the principles and encourage nations to weigh the pros and cons involved in the use of force for self-defence.

Explaining the value of nonviolence, the Bishops assert that from the early days of Christianity, some Christians followed Jesus' example and dedicated themselves to a life of nonviolence. They argue that "the vision of Christian non-violence is not passive about injustice and the defence of the rights of others; it rather affirms and exemplifies what it means to resist injustice through non-violent methods."⁶⁵ By this, they mean that the early Christians practiced both principled and pragmatic nonviolence, which involves embodying nonviolent principles which enables them to engage in a nonviolent way with unjust structures in the same way Christ did. The Bishops praise Vatican II for calling government's attention to the protection of those who consciously reject all wars. They emphasize their support "for Vatican II's teaching on pacifism and the reaffirmation that the Popes have given to nonviolent witness since the time of the council." The Bishops concluded by asserting that the just war doctrine and non-violence are different but complementary approaches to analysing warfare. The Bishops argue that both just-war and non-violence face the same challenge posed by atomic warfare. Therefore, ethical reflection must begin from here.⁶⁶ The Bishops reaffirm early Christian nonviolence and encourage active nonviolence which involves live experiences and engagement with unjust structures. While agreeing that some

⁶⁴ Ibid., 28-31.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 34-36.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 36-39.

aspects of the just war theory are still relevant and the growing need to actively promote nonviolence, it has been observed first, that the just war ethics is well developed in recent CST. Second, an aspect of nonviolence which promotes conflict prevention through integral development and solidarity is also well developed. However, the original attention of the early Church to nonviolence, which thrives with dialogue, negotiations, and a nonviolent communication skillset focusing on human needs and a deep-rooted feeling of aversion to any kind of violence, requires further advancement in the CST.

The Bishops' pastoral letter has received both affirmations and critical remarks from some theologians such as Hollenbach, Zahn, Finn, and Whitmore. David Hollenbach asserts that Pius XII was the first to convince governments on their duty to defend their citizens against unjust aggressors even if it entails using force. He affirms the pastoral letter's mediation of just war ethics and nonviolence by not seeing them as two different options.⁶⁷ Gordon Zahn affirms the Bishops' rediscovery of nonviolence and asserts that "the pacifism that once earned the worker a reputation for being "extreme" or even "heretical" is now accorded almost equal status with the just-war theory."⁶⁸ Zahn argues that the "new attitude" with which to analyse war is actually the "old attitude" which is the dedication to pacifism and nonviolence, which the early Christians practised.⁶⁹ He argues that using arms to protect the state is not justified anywhere in the New Testament or in the works of the early Church fathers. He affirms the Bishops for endorsing "evangelical pacifism as a legitimate option for Catholics, and its somewhat hesitant acknowledgement of the non-violent alternative and its potential." However, by privileging the just war

⁶⁷ David Hollenbach, "The Challenge of Peace in the Context of Recent Church Teachings," in *Catholics and Nuclear War: A Commentary on the Challenge of Peace the U. S. Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter on War and Peace*, ed. Philip J. Murnion (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1983), 3-15.

⁶⁸ Gordon C. Zahn, "Pacifism and the Just War," in *Catholics and Nuclear War: A Commentary on the Challenge of Peace the U. S. Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter on War and Peace*, ed. Philip J. Murnion (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1983), 119-131.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 120.

theory, the document lacks the “prophetic leadership” the Church needs during this terrible period in history.⁷⁰

While agreeing with Zahn that nonviolence is the early Christian approach to conflict and the way forward for contemporary Christians, Hollenbach’s alignment with the American Bishops on the complementarity of nonviolence and just war seems problematic and confusing because, no war is just. Placing just war side by side with nonviolence shows a Church that still values war as a means of resolving conflict.

Furthermore, James Finn notes that the two traditions (just war and pacifism) proposed by the Bishops’ document to Catholics, “are joined in such a way that they corrupt each other.”⁷¹ He argues that the supporters of the two proposals envisage peace, although they have different strategies to achieve such peace in this world.⁷² Todd Whitmore argues that in the Bishops’ letter, the just war tradition received more attention than the contributions of nonviolence. The priority and attention given to the just war theory is due to the Bishops’ desire to dialogue with those that do not have knowledge of the Bible. Finn’s assertion that the document placed nonviolence and just war side by side shows the need for a clear distinction of both approaches because they are not the same. For example, just war involves the use of violence to achieve peace while nonviolence involves using dialogue and other peaceful means. Saying that both are complementary implies that the two approaches should be kept.

In sum, the foregoing shows that both nonviolence and just war are relevant for peace and protection of innocent civilians although require further ethical analysis. Without the just war ethics, offensive wars may become pervasive without paying attention to the principles of proportionality and discrimination. The Bishops’ analysis of the just war criteria and their suggestions to respect the principles of proportionality and discrimination has

⁷⁰ Ibid., 130-131.

⁷¹ James Finn, “Pacifism and Just War: Either or Neither,” in *Catholics and Nuclear War: A Commentary on the Challenge of Peace the U. S. Catholic Bishops’ Pastoral Letter on War and Peace*, ed. Philip J. Murnion (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1983), 132-145.

⁷² Ibid., 143.

proven that resorting to war will be difficult because the just war theory is untenable. This untenability already suggests the difficulty involved in meeting the requirements of the just war criteria and prioritises the need to strengthen the pacifist view in public policies. Whitmore's response that the priority and attention given to the just war theory is because of the Bishops' desire to dialogue with those that do not have knowledge of the Bible provides additional answers to why the just war theory might still be relevant. One important thing that requires urgent attention and a concerted effort is the need to promote and strengthen nonviolence in contemporary politics. The next section shall further explore the advancement from just war to just defence.

FROM JUST WAR TO JUST DEFENCE

The discussion from just war to just defence emerged after the results of the 1990 - 1991 Gulf war. During this period, the international president of *Pax Christi*, Godfried Cardinal Danneels sent an invitation to the diverse Catholic universities, Catholic theological schools, and theologians in various countries to write down their thoughts on just defence and how Christians could respond to violence in their diverse background. The reflection paper is to follow the guidelines of *Gaudium et Spes*, which states that every state has the right and duty to protect its citizen through legal strategies, including protecting citizens from a foreign enemy. The reflection papers are to respond to "what are the elements of an adequate theory of just war/just defence in the context of political, social, economic and technological conditions in this final decade of the twentieth century?"⁷³ Brian Wicker notes that this project will continue to vivify the spirit of John XXIII and promote reflections on the realities of war and peace within the shifting context of 1993.⁷⁴ In addition, he asserts that Catholic Scholars have different views on how to understand war. Some are of the view that the traditional just war still has some advantages in the

⁷³Brian Wicker, ed., *Studying War – No More? From Just War to Just Peace* (Kampen – The Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1993), 7.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 11-21.

post-cold war era, while others argue that the idea of the traditional just war is no more relevant and should be discarded. The promoters of the just war tradition are mindful of its inability to reduce the terrors of contemporary warfare. However, they still attempt to explain some limited circumstances in which the just war theory is still relevant in contemporary military services. The promoters of nonviolence also realise the need to provide space for humanitarian intervention and peacekeeping when there is enormous violent intrastate conflicts and socio-economic crisis.⁷⁵ With the above background, the study will briefly examine the diverse views involved in the debate.

Some studies have shown that the just war criteria are relevant for just defence. Roger Burggraeve and Johan De Tavernier assert that one has the right to self-defence and protect others when an opponent tries to attack but should avoid using violent means by killing the enemy. If one must use violent means, it must be proportionate according to the just war criteria.⁷⁶ Just war, is

“a theory which is precisely based on the application of a certain vigilance, trying to put off the fatal intervention of violence. It is therefore a theory which on the one hand tries to delay war as long as possible, but on the other hand remains within a reality where human beings are truly the victims of an evil which cannot be tolerated. It does not escape from tension of this kind through reflection, prudence, and knowledge, to draw a demarcation line between the duty to help one’s neighbour and the right to integrity of one’s own community. Thus, the just war is well motivated by the Gospel’s demand for the love of one’s fellow human being and should not be rejected out of hand as an impoverishment of this radicalism.”⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Ibid., 13.

⁷⁶ Roger Burggraeve and Johan De Tavernier, “Radicalism and Realism of a Peace Ethic of Christian Inspiration in a World of Evil and Injustice,” in *Studying War – No More? From Just War to Just Peace*, ed. Brian Wicker (Kampen - The Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1993), 33-47.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 42.

The just war criteria provide a narrow opportunity for a particular war to gain justification, its aim is to eliminate war.⁷⁸ The strict application of the just war standard makes legitimate defence against oppression lawful when it is not for self-interest but for the common good. Defence becomes illegitimate when it inflicts more harm and endangers civilians.⁷⁹ The just war tradition does not automatically promote war and it could be interpreted as a strategy for condemning wars. The just war tradition has elements of Christian pacifism and offers tools to evaluate strategies for defence.⁸⁰ The traditional just defence and the Christian pacifism are contextual, as just war is not a fixed tradition but requires a continuous update.⁸¹ Thus, just war implicitly contains some elements of nonviolence. It provides guidelines for just defence and makes embarking on war a difficult option.

Some studies focus on analysing just defence, the need to discard just war and give priority to nonviolence. Van Iersel suggests that legitimate defence should be established on protection of human rights, and a critical hermeneutics of humanitarian intervention. In addition, the UN military involvement should be channelled towards prohibiting war and a redefinition of who is a 'competent authority.'⁸² Just defence also requires the responsibility to avoid recolonization, just intention means eradicating the promotion of war from transnational interactions, and the use of nonviolent strategies for transforming conflicts in international law.⁸³ The just war tradition should be jettisoned because of its inability to protect civilians from enemies, while just defence should

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁷⁹ Jacques Etienne, "Just War, Just Defence," in *Studying War – No More? From Just War to Just Peace*, ed. Brian Wicker (Kampen – The Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1993), 64-73, p. 70.

⁸⁰ Fred van Iersel, "On the Future of the Just Defence Tradition," in *Studying War – No More? From Just War to Just Peace*, ed. Brian Wicker (Kampen – The Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1993), 74-90, p. 74-75.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 76-79.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 83-84.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 84-85 & 89.

be established on nonviolent strategies.⁸⁴ The state's responsibility to use the military to defend non-combatants fosters Christians' war-making in contemporary society and the just war criteria serves as the standard for such wars.⁸⁵ Furthermore, the just war theory is a wolf in sheep's clothing, despite its criteria, the Roman Empire collapsed, the citizens suffered in such a way they would not if they have engaged in dialogue with the Visigoth King Alaric. Other examples are the bombings of Dresden, London, Hiroshima, killings in Panama in 1989, the Persian Gulf, Bagdad and Bosnia/Herzegovina. Even intervention carried out with positive aim has also resulted in abusing innocent civilians, for instance, "the Shiites in Iraq and Lebanon, the Vietnamese and the Cambodians."⁸⁶ Prioritizing nonviolence over just war is seeming convincing because it excludes the use of force. However, nonviolence becomes unpractical when innocent civilians are killed indiscriminately. Therefore, just defence based on the complementarity that exists between just war and nonviolence is important. After this period, the discussion advances to just peace.

FROM JUST DEFENCE TO JUST PEACE

With the pontificate of Pope Francis, the discussion advances to just peace and weaves together elements that promote conflict prevention and just defence as means of achieving it. In his 1 January 2014 message on the World Day of Peace Pope Francis highlights the relevance of fraternity which enables people to see themselves as brothers and sisters in peacebuilding and conflict prevention.⁸⁷ He emphasizes the role of the family in building fraternity, which enriches the whole world with love. In addition,

⁸⁴ Antonia Malone, "The Just War Theory: A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing? in *Studying War – No More? From Just War to Just Peace*, ed. Brian Wicker (Kampen - The Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1993), 91-97.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁸⁷ "Message of His Holiness Francis for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace (January 1, 2014)," accessed March 15, 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papafrancesco_20131208_messaggio-xlvi-giornata-mondiale-pace-2014.html

the interconnectedness of all human beings that promotes a circle of care is not so much promoted because of “globalization of indifference,” which fosters insensitivity to peoples’ needs.⁸⁸ Globalization has not been able to foster fraternity among people due to increased poverty and inequality.⁸⁹ Pope Francis urges all those who see their fellow human beings as enemies to be eliminated through military weapons to begin to see them as brothers and sisters to be approached with dialogue and justice.⁹⁰ He warns against all forms of corruption that threaten peace and urges all people to form a relationship of stewardship towards nature.⁹¹ Love and empathy are necessary conditions for fraternity and peacebuilding.⁹² Therefore, fraternity nourished by love and empathy are active ingredients in dialogue for justice, peace-making and conflict prevention.

Furthermore, Pope Francis outlines four principles that support justice, fraternity, and the importance of dialogue for peace. First, the principle of “time is greater than space” requires giving processes time to develop without seeking instant outcomes. This means taking time to look at issues, by allowing facts to evolve gradually. Second, the principle of “unity prevails over conflict,” this explains engaging with the conflict by making steps to resolve it through solidarity that seeks solace in mutuality and diversity. Third, the principle of “realities are more important than ideas,” this indicates that realities and ideas need to continue to interact with each other through practice, by allowing the word of God to bear fruits in works of charity and justice. Fourth, the principle of “the whole is greater than the part,” here, Pope Francis calls attention to caring for both local and global affairs and that the two

⁸⁸ Uri Friedman, “Refugees and the ‘Globalization of Indifference,’” accessed September 10, 2021, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/04/refugees-pope-francis-lesbos/477870/>.

⁸⁹ Pranab Bardhan, “Globalization, Inequality, and Poverty,” *Inter-American Development Bank, Integration and Regional Programs Department* (2006): 1-51.

⁹⁰ “Message of His Holiness Francis...”

⁹¹ Francis I, “Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home,” accessed September 10, 2021, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

⁹² “Message of His Holiness Francis...”

should be allowed to interact mutually so as not to prioritize one to the other.⁹³ Reaffirming *Pacem in Terris*' suggestion of dialogue as a means of achieving peace, Pope Francis through *Laudato Si'* highlights the role of dialogue in strengthening human and ecological fraternity. He demonstrates the relevance of dialogue as a sustainable approach to issues facing humanity and the entire creation.⁹⁴ Hence, paying attention to due processes, unity, theories put into practice, ardent concern for both local and global issues are essential for peace. Pope Francis' focus on dialogue in *Laudato Si'* is significant and it shows his commitment to advance the legacies of his predecessors as he gradually moves the discussion to just peace.

The discussion to promote just peace and active nonviolence intensified in 2016 through the call of the Roman Catholic Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and *Pax Christi* International.⁹⁵ The above named organizations organised a conference in 2016 which focused on 'active nonviolence' to support the Catholic Church to "develop a deeper understanding and commitment to nonviolence as the power of love in action; as the path to fuller truth; as a spirituality, way of life, and distinct virtue;" and as a practical approach to conflict.⁹⁶ The group appealed to the Church and Pope Francis to compose an encyclical to promote a nonviolent way of life through training, international dialogue to adopt just peace ethic and discard the use and teaching of 'just war' as Catholic strategy for responding to conflict.⁹⁷ *Pax Christi* International and more than eighty scholars comprising

⁹³ "Evangelii Gaudium: Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation," accessed March 15, 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.

⁹⁴ Overview of the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*," accessed March 15, 2019, <https://catholicclimatemovement.global/overview-laudato-si/>; See http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

⁹⁵ Pax Christi International, "Catholic Nonviolence Initiative," accessed September 11, 2021, <https://paxchristi.net/programmes/catholic-nonviolence-initiative/>.

⁹⁶ Eli S. McCarthy, "The Gospels Draw Us Further: A Just Peace Ethics," *Expositions* 12, no. 1 (2018): 80-102.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 81.

peace activists and officials defined the kind of just peace they are inviting the Church to promote: “A just peace approach which offers a vision and an ethic to build just peace as well as to prevent, defuse, and to heal the damage of violent conflicts.”⁹⁸ McCarthy adds, a just peace principle that is established on “the bible and Catholic social teachings.”⁹⁹ Therefore, active nonviolence and dialogue are the way forward to achieving just peace. However, the appeal to discard the just war theory seems unpractical since not everyone in the society appeals to the bible, and the state’s responsibility to protect the innocent. Without the just war ethics, defending the innocent might pose another problem.

Furthermore, Love notes that just peace’s principles involve a just cause of promoting human dignity and common good. The principles comprise accurate purpose for constructive peace; inclusion of all state and nonstate actors and all those at the grassroot. In addition, restorative justice, building social relationships, reconciliation and setting up structures for lasting peace.¹⁰⁰ Power and Hrynkow agree that Love’s concept of just peace is supportive from the propensity of some state leaders and policy originators, even though it does not illustrate the whole just peace’s package.¹⁰¹ They define just peace as a concept that integrates peace and social justice in creative and collaborative tension as described by the various papal teachings.¹⁰² The above definitions of just peace are commendable. Nevertheless, they seem too general because they lack well developed practical ethics that support just defence to protect innocent civilians after all peaceful means have been exhausted. The researcher argues for a just peace that pays attention to just defence and nonviolence which focuses

⁹⁸ Maria Power and Christopher Hrynkow, “Qualified Advocacy for Just Peace: The Popes’ World Day of Peace Messages (1968-2020) in Historical and Ethical Perspective,” *Peace & Change: A Journal of Peace Research* 45, no. 3 (2020): 399-368. See Marie Dennis et al., “An Appeal to the Catholic Church to Re-Commitment to the Centrality of Gospel Nonviolence,” in *Choosing Peace: The Catholic Church Returns to Gospel Nonviolence*, ed. Marie Dennis (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2018), 17-26.

⁹⁹ McCarthy, “The Gospels Draw Us Further: A Just Peace Ethics,” 81.

¹⁰⁰ Love, “Just Peace and Just War,” 62.

¹⁰¹ Power and Hrynkow, “Qualified Advocacy for Just Peace,” 343.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 344.

on dialogue to identify human needs and the peaceful strategies to fulfil the needs, and promotion of human rights.

Explaining the contribution of the conference to the discussion on just peace and nonviolence, Marie Dennis notes that the conference focused on nonviolence,

“but the just war theory was discussed with nuance and depth. Participants were committed to peace-making and nonviolence, but many were not opposed to the use of armed force or violence under any circumstances. In dialogue, participants challenged the centrality of the just war tradition and affirmed active nonviolent approaches to peace-making at all levels. Repeatedly, participants who live in areas of conflict said, “we are tired of war.” The need for the Church to promote nonviolence – to deepen its understanding of and commitment to nonviolence – seemed obvious and essential.”¹⁰³

The above suggests the need to pay more attention to nonviolence without neglecting just defence. Stressing the importance of a just peace, Kevin Dowling asserts that the Catholic Church is distancing itself from regarding war as “just.”¹⁰⁴ He appeals to moral theologians and ethicists to desist from referring to the guidelines guiding war as the just war theory because such name belittles the ethical command to create strategies for responding to conflict in a nonviolent way.¹⁰⁵ Additionally, when there is abuse of law and human rights, there is need to use nonviolent means to stop war and violence or reduce their consequences and strive to heal the people, restore their hopes and support them to spring back to life again at the end of war and violence.¹⁰⁶ Even though the notion of the just war has not been

¹⁰³ Marie Dennis, “Introduction: A Catholic Reflection on Nonviolence and Just Peace,” in *Choosing Peace: The Catholic Church Returns to Gospel Nonviolence*, ed. Marie Dennis (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2018), 7-15.

¹⁰⁴ Kevin Dowling, “An Appeal to the Catholic,” in *Choosing Peace: The Catholic Church Returns to Gospel Nonviolence*, ed. Marie Dennis (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2018), 17-36.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

formally discarded, no post Vatican II Pope has promoted war or justified any war.¹⁰⁷ If the just war standards are strictly observed, modern war may be condemned. However, the Catholic Church still permits a limited use of force for humanitarian intervention when there is a violation of human rights. Furthermore, the recent Catholic Church's formal declarations have been on the promotion of nonviolence and the condemnation of violent response to injustices.¹⁰⁸ Consequently, less attention should be given to the just war theory and it should definitely be refined as a Catholic social doctrine and exchanged with ethics of peacebuilding and just peace.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, we should stop legitimizing any war as a just war, and promote post-war restorative justice to help victims of war and exchange the just war theory with an ethics of peacebuilding and just peace.

Making a clarion call to the whole world in his message on the World Day of Peace on 1 January 2017, Pope Francis draws attention to "Nonviolence as a Style of Politics for Peace."¹¹⁰ He asserts that using violence to respond to violent conflicts will not bring peace; rather it leads people to relocate from their homeland. Most of the financial resources of many countries are spent on developing and sustaining the military instead of using it to care for peoples' needs. Furthermore, Jesus lived a life of nonviolence and invites His followers to do the same, by loving their enemies.¹¹¹ Nonviolence cannot be reduced to passivity, whereas it involves using love to respond to hatred, becoming a voice for the voiceless and fighting against injustice. Moreover, several contributions to engage with violence and injustice have been made by people from various religious traditions. Hence, living a life of nonviolence should begin within families where conflicts are resolved through

¹⁰⁷ Lisa Sowle Cahill, "Traditional Catholic Thought on Nonviolence," in *Choosing Peace: The Catholic Church Returns to Gospel Nonviolence*, ed. Marie Dennis (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2018), 105-118.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 107-108.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 118.

¹¹⁰ "Nonviolence: a Style of Politics for Peace," accessed March 15, 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20161208_messaggio-l-giornata-mondiale-pace-2017.html.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

dialogue. Pope Francis encourages all to eradicate all forms of violence, especially domestic violence and engage in peacebuilding through active non-violence¹¹² as he asserts:

“Peacebuilding through active non-violence is the natural and necessary complement to the Church’s continuing efforts to limit the use of force by the application of moral norms; she does so by her participation in the work of international institutions and through the competent contribution made by so many Christians to the drafting of legislation at all levels. Jesus himself offers a “manual” for this strategy of peace-making in the Sermon on the Mount, [specifically,] the eight Beatitudes (see Mt. 5:3-10).”¹¹³

With the above assertions, Pope Francis reiterates the need for Catholics to return to Christian nonviolence, which focuses on social justice and authentic living of the beatitudes. He encourages this transformation to begin in the family where members use dialogue as a strategy for settling their differences.

Affirming Pope Francis’ promotion of active non-violence, Rose Marie Berger *et al.*,¹¹⁴ posits that his World Day of Peace message of January 1, 2017, “has gone beyond previous papal statements in laying out a robust substantive theological and pastoral articulation of nonviolence.”¹¹⁵ Through this message, Francis calls for a genuine reconsideration of the foundations of

¹¹² “Active nonviolence is a spirituality, a way of life, a positive and powerful force for social change, and a means of building a more just, peaceful, and sustainable global community. Active nonviolence is a method for challenging and transforming the innumerable forms of direct, cultural, structural, and systemic violence; a path for resolving interpersonal, social, and international conflict; a way to protect the vulnerable without resorting to violence or lethal force.” Dennis, “Introduction: A Catholic Reflection on Nonviolence and Just Peace,” 10.

¹¹³ “Nonviolence: A Style of Politics for Peace,” accessed March 15, 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20161208_messaggio-l-giornata-mondiale-pace-2017.html.

¹¹⁴ Rose Marie Berger *et al.*, eds., *Advancing Nonviolence and Just Peace in the Church and in the World* (Brussels: Pax Christi International, 2020), 1.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 85.

early Church's practices.¹¹⁶ In addition, Pope Francis did not base his teachings on the natural law theory, but on the Gospels, and refers to the Sermon on the Mount as the "manual" for nonviolent method of building peace.¹¹⁷ The call to "nonviolence: A Style of Politics of Peace" is not just an address to only Christians, but rather promoting the relevance and sustainability of nonviolence in societal politics as opposed to violence.¹¹⁸ Thus, Pope Francis more than his predecessors promotes the Gospel's nonviolence as a strategy for transforming conflicts.

Highlighting the relevance of social friendship in creating a just and peaceful society, Pope Francis returns to the concept 'fraternity' through another encyclical, "*Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship*," issued on October 4, 2020, when he visited Assisi. The encyclical fosters global longing for fraternity and social friendship among all humans who originate from the same source as brothers and sisters.¹¹⁹ It highlights fraternity and social friendship as the most effective means of creating a just and peaceful society through collaboration.¹²⁰ Furthermore, *Fratelli Tutti* highlights truth, justice, and mercy as promoters of building peace. All violent actions done to a person are harming humanity's flesh; all violent death reduces people, violence multiplies violence, hatred promotes hatred and death promotes death. Hence, sincere effort is needed to stop such cycle that seems unavoidable.¹²¹ Inclusive peacebuilding is essential for conflict prevention, while "Incorporat[ing] into our peace processes the experience of those sectors that have often been overlooked. This will enable

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 86.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 86.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 87.

¹¹⁹ Presentation Sisters, "*Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship*," accessed January 19, 2021, http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html.

¹²⁰ CathNews New Zealand, "*Fratelli Tutti: Summary of Francis Encyclical - On the Fraternity and Social Friendship*," accessed January 20, 2021, <https://cathnews.co.nz/2020/10/05/fratelli-tutti/>.

¹²¹ Francis I, *Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship*, The Holy See, 2020, no. 227, accessed January 12, 2021, http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html.

communities themselves to influence the development of a collective memory.”¹²² This implies including women in peace processes because they bear the brunt of violence during conflict, although they are often excluded during peace processes.¹²³ Similar to his predecessors, Pope Francis condemns all forms of violence. He highlights the importance of inclusive peace processes and emphasizes fraternity in achieving a just and peaceful society.

Furthermore, “war and the death penalty” are not effective solutions to problems, rather they create fresh problems that erode the universal society.¹²⁴ The circumstances that promote wars continue to increase. War denies human rights harms the environment. Universal integral development implies refraining from intrastate and interstate wars. Consequently, dialogue, mediation and peace-making according to the UN charter seems supportive.¹²⁵ The UN charter is an epitome of justice and a medium for achieving peace, if genuinely followed. On the other hand, the charter could be detrimental when neglected.¹²⁶ Pope Francis has again condemned war and death penalty as means of resolving conflicts and emphasizes resorting to dialogue.

The just war theory has been misused according to Pope Francis. Lately, all kinds of war have been regarded as just. The just war criteria as described in the Catechism of the Catholic Church support using the military in legal defence after satisfying all the

¹²² Ibid., no. 231.

¹²³ United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1325 (2000): Adopted by the Security Council at its 4213th Meeting, 31 October 2000,” accessed January 20, 2021, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/720/18/PDF/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement>.

¹²⁴ Francis I, *Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship*,” no. 255.

¹²⁵ “The Charter of the United Nations was signed on 26 June 1945, in San Francisco, at the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on International Organization and came into force on 24 October 1945. The Statute of the International Court of Justice is an integral part of the Charter” United Nations, “Chapter VII: Action with Respect to Threats to Peace, Breaches of the Peace and Acts of Aggression,” <https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-vii/index.html>.

¹²⁶ Francis I, *Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship*,” no. 257.

difficult ethical requirements.¹²⁷ In contrast, the Catechism's assertion could be unreasonably interpreted and used erroneously to support "preventive" attacks or acts of war that can hardly avoid entailing "evil and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated."¹²⁸ The availability of atomic, chemical and biological weapons creates the impossibility of controlling the destruction of non-combatants. Re-echoing *Pacem in Terris* and *Populorum Progressio* Francis notes that war is no more a sustainable means of resolving conflicts because it creates more problems than it tends to solve. Consequently, "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!"¹²⁹ He suggests tackling nuclear weapons' threat requires international collaboration established on mutual trust, sincere dialogue that promotes the

¹²⁷ "The strict conditions for legitimate defence by military force require rigorous consideration. The gravity of such a decision makes it subject to rigorous conditions of moral legitimacy. At one and the same time: the damage inflicted by the aggressor on the nation or community of nations must be lasting, grave, and certain; all other means of putting an end to it must have been shown to be impractical or ineffective; there must be serious prospects of success; the use of arms must not produce evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated. The power of modern means of destruction weighs very heavily in evaluating this condition. These are the traditional elements enumerated in what is called the "just war" doctrine. The evaluation of these conditions for moral legitimacy belongs to the prudential judgment of those who have responsibility for the common good." Catechism of the Catholic Church, "Safeguarding Peace," accessed January 20, 2021, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/___P81.HTM.

¹²⁸ Here, Pope Francis is referring to Obama's speech where Obama asserts that war can be justified on humanitarian grounds. Where terrorism continues to increase, peace requires responsibility and commitment. Obama argues that as a head of state charged with the responsibility to protect the nations, he cannot stand idle and watch the threats that face Americans. He will not make any mistake about it because evil does exist in the world. He argues that nonviolent movements could not afford to Hitler's armies, negotiation cannot convince Al-Qaida's leaders to lay down their arms, and sometimes the use of force is needed. The instruments of war do have a role to play in bringing peace. He argues that we must begin by acknowledging a hard truth. We will not eradicate violent conflicts in our times. There will be a time when we will be together to find the use of force morally justified. Barack Obama, "2009 Nobel Peace Prize Lecture," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AORo-YEXxNQ> [accessed May 5, 2021].

¹²⁹ Francis I, *Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship*, no 258.

good of all. The money invested on weapons and military should be put together as global money to solve the problems of hunger, promote development in poor nations to protect their citizens from violence, and support them so that they cherish and live a meaningful life in their countries.¹³⁰ Interestingly, Pope Francis offers more clarity that the military should only apply the just war criteria after exhausting all peaceful means. Consequently, he joins his voice to his predecessors to condemn war, since the just war criteria can no longer satisfy the principles of proportionality and discrimination. He calls for dialogue, collaboration built on mutual trust as strategies for conflict prevention. Pope Francis' assertion that the just war theory has been misused corroborates Dowling's appeal to moral theologians and ethicists to desist from regarding the guidelines guiding war as the just war theory. In addition, Cahill's suggestion to exchange the just war theory with ethics of peacebuilding and just peace. It is important to note that even though Pope Francis condemned war generally, although he still upholds the need for just defence for humanitarian purposes.

Reflecting on Pope Francis' contribution to Catholic peace thinking, Linda Karten,¹³¹ asserts he calls for compassion for migrants and asylum seekers who left their communities due to war, hunger, persecution, and poverty. His teachings echoes all over the globe and in the United Nations' General Assembly. For Francis, peace is the fundamental assignment for all Christians.¹³² Affirming his stance on just war and conflict prevention in *Fratelli Tutti*, Drew Christiansen¹³³ argues that he has established a milestone in dissociating the Catholic Church from the just war idea,¹³⁴ while *Fratelli Tutti* tends towards making the basis for just peace and

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 262.

¹³¹ Linda Karten, "Conference Examines Pope Francis' Teaching on Peace," September 6, 2019, accessed January 12, 2021, <https://www.shu.edu/diplomacy/news/conference-explores-pope-francis-teaching-on-peace.cfm>.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ Drew Christiansen, "Just War no More," in *Five Theologians on the biggest takeaways from 'Fratelli Tutti'*, eds. Vincent J. Miller et al., *America: The Jesuit Review*, accessed January 12, 2021, <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2020/10/07/catholic-theologians-takeaways-fratelli-tutti-pope-francis>.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

nonviolence clearer.¹³⁵ In addition, Francis open declaration that war insults peoples' self-esteem, creates opportunity for Catholics to accept nonviolence as an affirmative esteem for the dignity of the human person.¹³⁶ Reflecting further on Pope Francis' position, Drew Christiansen notes that

“Francis’ skepticism about “humanitarian” justifications for armed intervention prompts two questions: is the Catholic Church withdrawing its acceptance of armed (international) interventions to prevent humanitarian emergencies – including genocide in progress? Is it rejecting the principle of the responsibility to protect (R2P) embraced so clearly by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI in his 2008 address to the UN General Assembly?”¹³⁷

He argues that Pope Francis' aim for moving the Church away from the just war's notion is consequent of the observed and anticipated results from humanitarian interventions. Pope Francis captured this in *Fratelli Tutti* 261 when he appealed to readers to “touch the wounded flesh of victims,” especially murdered non-combatants whose deaths were regarded as “collateral damage.”¹³⁸ With Christiansen's analysis, one may ask if Pope Francis' view is different from that of his predecessors and if he has jettisoned humanitarian intervention. Pope Francis did not say anything new, instead, he reaffirmed their positions and gave a new analysis of war based on the present realities. However, Pope Francis went further than his predecessors by appealing for a nonviolent means since it is impossible to protect non-combatants using the just war criteria. On humanitarian intervention, Pope Francis did not exclude it, instead, he appealed for its just application to ensure that non-combatants are sincerely protected. *Fratelli Tutti* has demonstrated

¹³⁵ Eli McCarthy, “Francis’ *Fratelli Tutti*’ Weaves the Threads of Nonviolence and Just Peace,” accessed January 12, 2021, <https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/francis-fratelli-tutti-weaves-threads-nonviolence-and-just-peace>.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Drew Christiansen, “*Fratelli Tutti* and the Responsibility to Protect,” *Journal of Catholic Social Thought* 18, no. 1 (2021): 5-14.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 8.

that the use of force is not sustainable because it demeans ethics of dialogue that supports protecting innocent citizens without using force.

CONCLUSION

The research examined the polarity in CST on peace and justice and their relevance for the contemporary era. It highlighted that early Christians followed the Gospel of nonviolence as an approach to conflicts and refused to participate in military services, partly due also to the sacralisation of the Roman emperor. In contrast, during the fourth century, Christianity became the state religion and Christians began participating in the military to defend the state. Consequently, just war theory was developed to provide guidelines for military service. In the course of time, people misused the just war theory to support political wars for self-interest, which is evident in the diverse historical wars. These experiences and the advent of nuclear warfare demonstrated the horrors of war and the need for an alternative approach to conflict. John XXIII with his *Pacem in Terris* rejected war and set the motion for a new analysis of war. He appealed for alternative means of resolving conflicts and invited all to engage in dialogue to identify what unites us as human beings and the promotion of human rights. Subsequent popes and theologians have continued in his footsteps and have given a new analysis to war, by investigating the sustainability of the just war theory and the nonviolent traditions.

Most of the theologians agreed that war is no longer an effective means of resolving conflicts because of the inability to satisfy the principles of proportionality and the protection of innocent civilians. As a result, some theologians appealed for a complete abandonment of the just war theory, while some argued that it should be retained as ethics of peacebuilding. This study supports retaining the principles for the purpose of just defence which is still very relevant for humanitarian reasons. This implies a just defence that respect the principles of proportionality and discrimination. The just war theory which now bears the name 'ethics of peacebuilding' can complement nonviolence to achieve sustainable peace. This indicates that justice is relevant for peace.

Prominent in the debate is the need for just defence and the call to return to the Gospel nonviolence which thrives on dialogue and promotion of human rights. However, this study did not highlight how to further develop the ethics of nonviolence and dialogue. For further research, it is important to focus on developing nonviolent and dialogue skills that focus on human needs. Individuals and groups can embody the skills because nonviolence begins with the individual and extends to groups. Consequently, this study suggests further research on nonviolent communication which provides practical skills for dialogue that focuses on human needs, conflict mediation, and peacebuilding ethics.

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