

Passages from the Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response



"Catholic teaching begins in every case with a presumption against war and for peaceful settlement of disputes. In exceptional cases, determined by the moral principles of the just war tradition, some uses of force are permitted."
#A.1

The arms race is one of the greatest curses on the human race; it is to be condemned as a danger, an act of aggression against the poor, and a folly which does not provide the security it promises.
#C.1

Peacemaking is not an optional commitment. It is a requirement of our faith. We are called to be peacemakers, not by some movement of the moment, but by our Lord Jesus. The content and context of our peacemaking is set not by some political agenda or ideological program, but by the teaching of his Church." #C.5

"The human person is the clearest reflection of God's presence in the world; all of the Church's work in pursuit of both justice and peace is designed to protect and promote the dignity of every person. For each person not only reflects God, but is the expression of God's creative work and the meaning of Christ's redemptive ministry." #15

"As disciples and as children of God, it is our task to seek for ways in which to make the forgiveness, justice and mercy and love of God visible in a world where violence and enmity are too often the norm." #55

"Peace is both a gift of God and a human work. It must be constructed on the basis of central human values: truth, justice, freedom and love." #68

"The Church's teaching on war and peace establishes a strong presumption against war which is binding on all; it then examines when this presumption may be overridden, precisely in the name of preserving the kind of peace which protects human dignity and human rights." #70

"The Christian has no choice but to defend peace, properly understood, against aggression. This is an inalienable obligation. It is the *how* of defending peace which offers moral options." #73

"We believe work to develop non-violent means of fending off aggression and resolving conflict best reflects the call of Jesus both to love and to justice." #78

"The vision of Christian non-violence is not passive about injustice and the defense of the rights of others; it rather affirms and exemplifies what it means to resist injustice through non-violent methods." #116

"Retaliatory action whether nuclear or conventional which would indiscriminately take many wholly innocent lives, lives of people who are in no way responsible for reckless actions of their government, must always be condemned. This condemnation, in our judgment, applies even to the retaliatory use of weapons striking enemy cities after our own have already been struck. No Christian can rightfully carry out orders or policies deliberately aimed at killing non-combatants." #148

"Like a cathedral, peace must be constructed patiently and with unshakable faith." #200 JPPII

"These (recommendations) should be part of a foreign policy which recognizes and respects the claims of citizens of every nation to the same inalienable rights we treasure, and seeks to ensure an international security based on the awareness that the creator has provided this world and all its resources for the sustenance and benefit of the entire human family." #202

"Nonviolent means of resistance to evil deserve much more study and consideration than they have thus far received. There have been significant instances in which people have successfully resisted oppression without recourse to arms. Non-violence is not the way of the weak, the cowardly, or the impatient." #222

"Christ's own teachings and example provide a model way of life incorporating the truth, and a refusal to return evil for evil." #226

"We endorse the (Commission on Proposals for the National Academy of Peace and Conflict Resolution's) recommendation and urge all citizens to support training in conflict resolution, non-violent resistance, and programs devoted to service to peace and education for peace." #229

"Peace cannot be limited to a mere absence of war, the result of an ever precarious balance of forces. No, peace is something built up day after day, in the pursuit of an order intended by God, which implies a more perfect form of justice among men and women." #234 Paul VI

"We are living in a global age with problems and conflicts on a global scale. Either we shall learn to resolve these problems together, or we shall destroy one another." #244

"The arms race is one of the greatest curses on the human race and the harm it inflicts upon the poor is more than can be endured." #269 (Pastoral Constitution)

"The threats to the security and stability of an interdependent world are not all contained in missiles and bombers." #270

"If the protection of human rights and the promotion of human needs are left as orphans in the diplomatic arena, the stability we seek in increased armaments will eventually be threatened by rights denied and needs unmet in vast sectors of the globe. If future planning about conservation of and access to resources is relegated to a pure struggle of power, we shall simply guarantee conflict in the future." #272

Source: Peace Subcommittee, Diocesan Public Policy Committee, Rochester, NY, 2008