Earthly Destruction: Catholic Social Teaching, War, and the Environment

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

EARTHLY DESTRUCTION:
CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING, WAR, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN THEOLOGY

BY
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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
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As the greatest of Christian theologians, Saint Thomas Aquinas, once remarked, “every ingratitude is a sin.” In these pages, which I have eagerly anticipated writing for many years now, I firmly intend to avoid adding to my quite lengthy list of sins! There are so many people responsible for my growth as a scholar and person that I am moved to be able to mention here.

As a junior in high school, on the eve of the 2003 United States invasion of Iraq, I attended a lecture at Fairfield University delivered by Rev. G. Simon Harak, S.J. In the span of that unforgettable hour of heartbreaking stories and even more heartbreaking pictures of Iraqi children killed and maimed by violence in their homeland, my mind and heart turned to the issue of warfare. While in graduate school, I began believing that our lack of care for ecology must play a part in the destruction of war. And so, this study emerged.

Many people and institutions supported this study in a variety of ways. For the latter stages of my writing, I must thank the Louisville Institute for bestowing upon me their Dissertation Fellowship for the academic year 2015-16. This generous funding allowed me to finish the dissertation in a timely fashion. I am most grateful for their confidence in me and for the graciousness they showed the entire cohort of fellows in the February 2016 seminar.
The three individuals who deserve the most thanks for my finally arriving at this point are my committee members. My advisor, William French, has been a constant source of support since I first arrived at Loyola University in August, 2010. Even at that point, I was sure that Bill was the person with whom I most wanted to work. His commitment to joviality in a profession that sometimes can get caught up in seriousness has been a constant source of consolation for me. My many visits to his office – filled with laughter – have been a source of strength for me, especially in many trying moments. Since I wrote these pages remotely, our phone calls and emails often kept this dissertation afloat when it otherwise would have sunk. Many thanks, Bill.

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The three aforementioned people are among a long list of productive scholars and wonderful professors with whom I have studied at Loyola, Boston College, and Fordham University. I wish to name a few who have shaped my thought in a particular way: Rev. John Baldovin, S.J., Lisa Sowle Cahill, Christophe Chalamet, James Fisher, Rev. Roger Haight, S.J., Jeannine Hill-Fletcher, Rev. Kenneth Himes, O.F.M., Christine Firer Hinze, Rev. David Hollenbach, S.J., Rev. James Keenan, S.J., Michael Lee, Rev. Richard Lennan, Rev. Thomas Massaro, S.J., Jon Nilson, Stephen Pope, Tisha Rajendra, Susan

I save three remarkable teachers for last because they have modeled for me what it means to be an educator. When I was a senior at Fordham, I was having a conversation with a fellow theology student when Elizabeth Johnson, C.S.J. walked past us. She turned around, quipping, “It is such a joy to see two future theologians conversing.” Those words, along with her many insights, have remained with me during many long days in the years since that encounter. The late Rev. Daniel Harrington, S.J. (d. 2014) was a scholar and teacher par excellence. His love of Scripture was inspiring. His scholarship is a goal no one can emulate, but one which I will always recall with fondness and admiration. Finally, no person in the academy has supported me as much as Rev. Mark Massa, S.J. For over a decade now, he has been my teacher, mentor, friend, and dinner companion as well as a constant endorser of my work. I vividly recall attending the Eucharistic liturgy at the Fordham University Church commemorating the Solemnity of Christ the King in 2007, at which Mark presided. After Mass, he asked how my discernment was coming for my graduate study. Before I could even answer, he informed me that the upcoming days would be “Dan Cosacchi Week” in his office. By the end of that week, we had my future mostly figured out. Since then, it has gone very much like what he suggested in those days. Every student should be lucky enough to have Mark championing them. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

At Loyola Chicago, Catherine Wolf and Mariamne Wolfe shepherded me through the vagaries of the doctoral program from the time I arrived on campus until now. Evelyn White ensured this process came to a conclusion. I thank them.
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In particular a few friends stand out for their fidelity. To my Loyola friends, who have pushed me in many ways to get this thing done, I am very grateful. Especially, I thank Aly Capp, Wendy Crosby, John Crowley-Buck, and Dan Dion. Jason Renken made
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To Sarah Fetterhoff, Gigi Herrmann, Jim Keane, and Maggie Stahl (and your respective significant others): you have been with me since my first days at Fordham, and have truly changed my life. As Saint Paul wrote to the Philippians, “I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now” (1:3-5).

To Brendan Coffey, n.S.J.: I will never forget the many nights we spent in our room in college pondering many of the topics covered in this study. As Isaiah proclaims, “How beautiful upon the mountain are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news” (52:7a).

To Joe Blankenship: From proclaiming each other “Mr. President,” to spending so many late nights at Pugsleys that we were given the honor of having the “Guy Special” named after us, to logging countless miles around the parade grounds, to talking for literally thousands of hours on the phone since college, I am profoundly grateful to have you in my life. I am equally grateful for the relationship we both share with Rev. Joe Currie, S.J., who has been an example in the faith for both of us. Truly the holiest (and physically strongest) person I have ever met, he is the stuff gospels are made of!
To the Goodes, Mike and Lauren: Mike, since our freshman year at Fairfield Prep, we have been inseparable. Even though you may not be very interested in the content of these pages, I know of almost nobody who is as interested in their author. You have no idea how much your support has helped me to finish this project. At once the funniest person I have ever met and the most loyal, I have no clue where I would be without you in my life these last 16 years. As I have mentioned once before, the Proverb reads accurately in our case, “A true friend sticks closer than a brother” (18:24).

My family has always been constantly supportive of me, even since before I can recall. On the Cosacchi, Palinkas, Waldrop, Powers, and Hardings sides, I have always felt love coming my way, even across many miles, as the case often was! I must say a word here about my Uncle K.P. (Kevin Palinkas). In the truest sense of the word, he has been most avuncular. As both my Godfather and Confirmation sponsor, he has been a guide for me in my faith, for which I remain eternally thankful. He has probably woken up at 3 A.M. to drive me to the airport more times than he cares to remember, but I will certainly never forget his selflessness when it comes to my wellbeing. In turn, I have tried to hand on what he has taught me to his son, Dylan Palinkas, for whom I am most honored to serve as Godfather, Confirmation sponsor, and rebounder of basketballs.

As I conclude these reflections, I wish to mention the seven people without whom this dissertation would have been impossible. First, I mention my beloved grandparents. One of the greatest gifts my parents ever gave me was a relationship with them. Bill (d. 2010) and Maureen Palinkas, and Christine (d. 2003) and Joseph Cosacchi have been veritable fonts of God’s grace in my life, from days even before I can remember. What I can remember, of course, are many hours of conversations, ice cream cones, yelling at
various athletes on television, rounds of golf, basketball cards, political debates, being tucked into bed as a child, games of checkers, and the unconditional love they bestowed upon me at literally every turn of my life. Their lives, which have been models of love and faithfulness, are beautiful in my eyes.

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As the dedication attests, this dissertation has been written for my magnificent parents. Brian and Kathy Cosacchi have always made sure that I took my education seriously. I am sure that when they dropped me off for my first day of preschool and I was crying uncontrollably, they could scarcely imagine that more than 27 years later, I would still be going to school…and loving it! At some point, thanks to their constant love and motivation, I realized that to learn anything is such a wonderful gift. They have always been my biggest fans and my most ardent supporters. Because I have always been able to confide openly with both of them, I have always been treated to the most
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No two people I know have exhibited the three theological virtues of faith, hope and love
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Scriptures constantly remind us, nothing is impossible for God, whom I have felt so close
to me over the years, especially in the Eucharist. Often in these years, I have reflected
upon the following rendering of Psalm 119 by one of my heroes and an eminently faithful
Christian, Rev. Daniel Berrigan, S.J. (who passed away five days after I defended this
dissertation). At times when I thought that this study was the end-all, be-all of my
existence, these words reminded me of my “first love,” indeed:

A double heart be far from me, Lord
I love your commands
my hope is your promise

A lying tongue be far from me
I love your promise
my hope is your law

Far from me a violent will
your will is my hope
I love your commands

To witness your law
to love your commands
be my first love.

I am most grateful to be able to write these words on the day we commemorate
our salvation, at a place I love very much.

Easter 2016

Rose Hill

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To Mom and Dad
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ABSTRACT

For more than 1700 years in Christian theology, there has been a chasm between just war thinking and pacifism. Advocates of these two ideological positions have attempted to bridge this divide in a number of ways through the centuries. Some, such as Glen Stassen, have brought together thinkers on both sides of the divide to propose a just peacemaking theory. Others, such as Michael Schuck, Mark Allman, and Tobias Winright, have added new stages to just war thinking in order to make that existing tradition more robust. Some groups may identify as contingent pacifists. These would generally accept the criteria of the just war theory, but would not ever acknowledge violent force to be justified under certain conditions. This dissertation argues that, while it may not be possible to overcome the impasse between pacifists and adherents to just war thinking, it is possible for the two factions to work together for peace. One of the main areas in which this goal may be advanced is through common care and respect for the natural environment. In this study, the author examines the development of the Catholic social tradition on the topics of peace and ecology, including a careful reading of Pope Francis’s social encyclical, Laudato si’. The dissertation introduces a new type of contingent pacifism: ecological pacifism. Ecological pacifism argues against any type of violent intervention that will harm the earth, on the basis of earth’s sacredness as God’s creation. The dissertation maintains that both pacifism and just war thinking in Catholic social thought will be enhanced by this addition.
INTRODUCTION

What would happen if there were a summit concerning war and the environment in the year 2016 between Jesus, Pope Francis, and John F. Kennedy? Although it may seem like it, I am not presenting an insoluble riddle here. Instead, I propose a thought experiment that could well serve as a primer for the following study. Allow me to explain using each figure in turn. First, the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth are central to this dissertation, as they must be to any work in the field of Christian ethics and theology. I try to maintain a respectful outlook on the study of sacred scripture throughout these pages, reading it not as statements to be taken as literally true in a fundamentalist way. Rather, Jesus’ teachings in the gospels and Paul’s interpretation of that message in his canonical epistles are foundational in discussing the two controversial topics – war and the natural environment – that hold this work together. Even though I am generally wary of the commercialized bracelets that read “W.W.J.D?” (What would Jesus do?), I nonetheless believe that it is incumbent upon the Christian ethicist to ask this question of him or herself while conducting research by holding the teachings of Christ and the newsworthy events of the world in tandem and attempting to interpret both simultaneously.

Next, the figure of Pope Francis undergirds this project in a very particular way. His pontificate, which commenced on 13 March 2013, has been a truly revolutionary time in the church’s treatment of ecological issues. In the days after he was elected as the
successor to Saint Peter, there was much public interest regarding the motivation for his chosen name. As a member of the Society of Jesus, many commentators believed that he had taken the name in honor of Saint Francis Xavier, one of the original members of the new pope’s own religious congregation. Instead, Pope Francis confirmed the name had come from the saintly man of Assisi. Why did the pontiff choose this figure for his patron? In the early days of his papacy, he explained the rationale for such a decision: “For me, [Francis of Assisi] is the man of poverty, the man of peace, the man who loves and protects creation; these days we do not have a very good relationship with creation, do we? He is the man who gives us this spirit of peace, the poor man … How I would like a Church which is poor and for the poor!”¹ This explanation is crucial for this dissertation. Francis sees a clear link between war and the need for the protection of all of God’s creation. Furthermore, the preferential option for the poor, a tenet of Catholic social teaching, is inseparable from the connection between war and the natural environment. This connection leads to new directions in Catholic social thought.

The third member of this trio, John F. Kennedy (1917-1963), served as the thirty-fifth president of the United States until his assassination on 22 November 1963. Only five months earlier, Kennedy delivered one of the most remarkable presidential addresses in the history of his office at the Commencement of American University. In that address, Kennedy understood that at that particular moment in history, less than a year after the United States and the Soviet Union found themselves at the edge of nuclear warfare

during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, it was incumbent upon him to make a stand for peace. Over fifty years ago, Kennedy already saw the clear connection between avoiding nuclear war and care for the planet. During that address, he remarked that total war “makes no sense in an age when the deadly poisons produced by a nuclear exchange would be carried by the wind and water and soil and seed to the far corners of the globe and to generations unborn.”

The result of Kennedy’s landmark address that day was the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty with the Soviet Union, upon which the two nations and the United Kingdom agreed less than two months later.

To these three historical figures I will add another two, whose significance to the present study cannot be underestimated: Pope John XXIII and President Barack Obama. Pope John XXIII, about whom I will say more in chapter one, was crucial in shaping not only President Kennedy’s mindset but also in presenting a vision of global governance as a whole. On 11 April 1963, Pope John promulgated the single most important papal encyclical of the twentieth century, *Pacem in terris*. Pope John’s death only one week before President Kennedy’s American University address signaled the end of a pontificate that was focused on bringing about world peace and fashioning human rights for all people. Kennedy, himself a Catholic, was deeply influenced by this pope and his writings. The Russian translation of *Pacem in terris*, too, was made available to Soviet President Nikita Khrushchev, with whom Pope John had already developed a close

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working relationship. Based on Pope John’s call for civil leaders of the world to present warfare as a moral issue to their citizens, Kennedy delivered the aforementioned address which has become known as his “peace speech.” Instead of listing the necessary actions that the Soviets had to take, Kennedy called for Americans to be self-reflective and understand their role in building up world peace. This was directly echoing Pope John’s clarion call for peace: “Men are becoming more and more convinced that disputes which arise between States should not be resolved by recourse to arms, but rather by negotiation.”

There is little doubt that the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty of 1968 stems directly from the aforementioned Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. The insights of John’s encyclical were deeply congruent with emerging views in the United States and Russia regarding the folly of using nuclear weapons and of spreading radioactive materials via the atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons.

Another watershed encyclical was promulgated on 24 May 2015 by Pope Francis. In producing *Laudato si’*, Pope Francis framed the planetary ecological crisis in the realm of a moral crisis, just as his predecessor John did with nuclear warfare more than a half-century earlier. This is where President Barack Obama joins the narrative. Just as his predecessor John F. Kennedy found himself leading the nation at a time of grave danger

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4 Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in terris* (11 April 1963), in David J. O’Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, eds., *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), no. 126. Hereafter, I will cite simply by using the paragraph number of hierarchical and magisterial documents, as is customary in citing these documents. Also, unless otherwise noted, I will rely on the translation provided by O’Brien and Shannon for all magisterial documents found in their documentary reader.

5 The pope and political leaders were responding to scientific concerns about the spread of the radioactive “strontium 90.” For more on this phenomenon, see Barry Commoner, *The Closing Circle: Nature, Man, and Technology* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), 51-7.
for the world, so too does Obama find himself serving as president at a time when the world is facing crisis. Obama and his immediate successor, along with the leaders of every other nation on the planet, will have the prophetic words of *Laudato si’* to remind them in the coming years that, “The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all.” President Kennedy encouraged his audience in 1963 that the cause of peace was possible: “Our problems are manmade – therefore they can be solved by man.” Like Kennedy, Pope Francis points us to our own possibilities today, in the face of great ecological destruction, much of which has been caused by human beings: “The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us. Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home.” Just as we have avoided nuclear destruction, so too we can avoid ecological destruction.

Sadly, however, maintaining a clear separation of the two issues in question – war and the environment – is no longer possible in any meaningful way in the modern world. The two issues, in practice, are inextricably linked with one another. Steady weapons advances ensure that in many cases of modern war we see widespread damage being done to natural ecosystems and the species they sustain. Likewise ecological degradation – from deforestation, aquifer depletion, or soil erosion – and climate change sometimes cause food shortages, social conflict, and war. Looking to the future, this phenomenon

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7 Kennedy, “Commencement Address at American University.”

8 Pope Francis, *Laudato si’*, no. 13.
may even become more widespread. In the present study, the thesis I am advancing is that striving towards ecological renewal in the twenty-first century will necessarily require a renaissance in the debate between just war thinking and pacifism. The lens through which I am entering into this examination also stems from the legacy of Pope John XXIII. That saintly pope introduced the ecclesial terminology “signs of the times.”

The Fathers of Vatican Council II further clarified the role of the church as having “the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel.”

I begin in the first chapter with an overview of the relationship of the Roman Catholic Church to warfare. I trace the evolution of thinking on war and peace during the early centuries of Christianity, focusing on the tendency toward pacifism as expressed by Tertullian, Origen, and some early Christian martyrs. I likewise examine Saints Ambrose and Augustine, the “fathers” of just war thinking. The most recent magisterial developments in just war theory are expressed in the 1983 Bishops’ letter, *The Challenge of Peace*, which articulates the basic “presumption against war” that permeates the Christian understanding of war and peace. I attend closely to this document and its sources, particularly *Gaudium et spes*, to emphasize the centrality of the presumption against war to Catholic social teaching.

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9 See Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in terris*, nos. 126-129. While the term does not appear in the text proper, it is the given title for the section including those four paragraphs numbers.

10 Vatican II, *Gaudium et spes* (7 December 1965), no. 4. I will cite this particular passage more than once throughout the forthcoming text as a means of reorienting the reader and reminding her or him of its significance in framing the study.

As my overarching objective in this first chapter is to highlight the common ground surprisingly shared by pacifists and adherents of just war thinking, I also describe the evolution of the just war criteria and position the just war theory alongside the contingent category of personal pacifism, a stance advocated by both Ambrose and Augustine. Personal pacifism, the belief that violence in personal self-defense is not permitted, does not rule out the possibility of killing others in warfare to protect our innocent neighbors and to defend the common good and therefore can be located directly within the lineage of the just war theory. Thus, the supposed incommensurability of pacifist thinking and just war thinking is proven false. I argue that the proper use of just war thinking actually creates conditions under which actual recourse to warfare is so rare that just war proponents and pacifists often have a great deal in common practically, if not philosophically. I explore ways that proponents of both these philosophical and theological systems can unite to promote peace and justice for all creation.

The second chapter examines two burgeoning areas in war and peace studies that are essential to a discussion of the importance of ecology in this realm of thought. One area, the “Just Peacemaking” movement, is crucial because it includes both adherents to just war thinking and pacifists alike, thus reinforcing the existing bridge between these camps that I mention in chapter one. The other area, *jus post bellum* (justice after warfare)\(^\text{12}\), opens up dialogue between just war theorists and pacifists by wondering, “can good fruit come from a bad tree?” *Jus post bellum* is so important because it calls for attention to the responsibilities of the “victorious” nation once a war has ended and

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explores what that nation owes to the vanquished nation. Embracing the proposal that the environment is a significant concern for postwar justice, I refute the commonly held anthropocentric view that justification for warfare need only concern itself with the protection of human life.

The third chapter turns to the present Catholic social teaching on the environment and argues that the church must work together with environmental scientists in bringing about a newfound solidarity with all of creation. I discuss and lament the fact that the Catholic hierarchical teaching on the natural environment has been a late addition to other work by both Christian and secular thinkers. In addressing global climate change in particular, Barry Commoner notes this chilling fact: “In the short span of its history, human society has exerted an effect on its planetary habitat that matches the size and impact of the natural processes that until now solely governed the global condition.”

Commoner’s point is that human beings, at the time of his writing, were oblivious to the effects of their actions on the environment. The Catholic church has made some attempts to call our attention to these effects, but more work remains to be done. Finally, I turn to Saint Thomas Aquinas’s “Great Chain of Being,” which is, as William French notes, “a vision of reality with ancient and Medieval roots holding that all levels of Being are good, related one to another, and together make up what Aquinas called ‘the perfection of the universe.’”

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13 Barry Commoner, *Making Peace With the Planet* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1990), 6. The first edition of this book was released in 1975, which is important because it predated by some 15 years the first utterance of human care for the natural environment by Pope John Paul II.

In the fourth and final chapter, I consider the relationship between the moral status of nature and the chronological stages of the just war theory. I extend and elaborate upon the episcopal discussions of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. I also reexamine *jus post bellum* and introduce a fourth stage, *jus ante bellum*, heeding Allman and Winright’s call that the Christian just war theorist “be a vigilant peacemaker *ante bellum* and a strict adherent to the norms of *jus ad bellum*, *jus in bello*, and *jus post bellum*.”

This chapter also introduces “ecological pacifism” as a new type of Christian pacifism. I contend that the twenty-first century will witness the emergence of a number of ecological pacifists as a response to the increasingly dire environmental circumstances our world faces due to war and other forms of destruction and depletion. My argument emerges from the convergence of two strands of the Christian ethical tradition: the position held by absolute pacifists that there is never justification for recourse to violent force, and the tradition of care and respect for creation, which is witnessed in saints from the earliest generation of Christians.

My goal in the course of this project is to break down the wall that has separated warfare and the environment in Catholic social teaching. In some ways, Pope Francis has begun this work in *Laudato si’* and during some of his addresses in his 2015 apostolic pilgrimage to the United States. In other ways, however, the church desperately needs to move forward in the effort to confront both of these threatening issues together. As Michael Walzer observes in his classic treatise on warfare, *Just and Unjust Wars*,

The first principle of the war convention is that, once war has begun, soldiers are subject to attack at any time (unless they are wounded or

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And the first criticism of the convention is that this principle is unfair; it is an example of class legislation. It does not take into account that few soldiers are wholeheartedly committed to the business of fighting. Most of them do not identify themselves as warriors; at least, that is not their only or their chief identity; nor is fighting their chosen occupation. Nor again, do they spend most of their time fighting; they neglect war whenever they can. 

Indeed, how much more can we criticize the war convention when we consider that during war, not only soldiers but also noncombatants, despite any efforts of the warmaking nations, are subject to attack even though such aggression is technically outlawed by the *jus in bello* criterion of discrimination? And it is not only noncombatant human beings that suffer irretrievable losses, but also dogs, cats, cattle, birds, plants, and the very water, soil, and air that allows all of these creatures to live and thrive. Catholic social teaching has the resources to address this issue. In the following study, I intend to engage and integrate some of these resources.

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CHAPTER ONE

PACIFISM AND JUST WAR IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC TRADITION

The relationship between pacifism and just war theory¹ has always been a tenuous one in the Christian community. On one side, the teachings of Jesus Christ seem to point to an absolute rejection of any type of violence, though on the other, the majority of the Christian community has acknowledged that there are times – unfortunate as they are – where the causes of justice and right order cry out to be protected by the use of violent force. This chapter will briefly introduce the relationship between war and peace in the Christian tradition. I begin with this introduction here so as to lay the groundwork for a discussion of a new form of contingent pacifism for the twenty-first century: ecological pacifism. Ecological pacifists I define as a group of people who, like other types of contingent pacifists, do allow for the possibility of using violent force in some circumstances: for instance, ecological pacifists may well believe that an individual may

¹ Throughout this study, I will use the terms “theory,” “doctrine,” and “tradition” to describe just war thinking. There is some debate over which is the proper term, and many respected thinkers have used one or the other of the terms exclusively. For instance, John Howard Yoder explains, “It is appropriate to speak rather of a ‘tradition’ than of a ‘doctrine’ or a ‘theory,’ for there is no one official statement of this approach to which all would subscribe” (17) in his When War is Unjust: Being Honest in Just-War Thinking (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing, 1984). On the other hand, the magisterial documents of the Catholic Church almost always refer to the criteria as a “doctrine” (e.g. Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2309; Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no. 500; and The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response, no. 80). Elsewhere, a great many Christian ethicists have used the terminology “theory” to describe just war thinking. While I am sympathetic to being rhetorically consistent, I am also cognizant of the fact that the variety with which scholars (many of whom will be directly cited in these pages) define just war thought would make it impossible to use only one of these terms consistently. Therefore, in the pages that follow, I use the three terms interchangeably, in order to identify the general belief of some thinkers that in some cases, warfare may be justified.
use violence in legitimate self-defense. These circumstances, however, cannot include the use of violent force that harms the natural environment in any significant way. Therefore, this new type of contingent pacifism simultaneously calls for two important measures in ethical thought: first, that the just war theory be expanded from its current criteria to account adequately for the role of the natural environment as a victim of warfare; and second, that the introduction of the explicit category of ecological pacifism expands the role of active nonviolence in the church’s tradition. I do not mean to say that this group does not already exist; however, I hope to explicate their fundamental approach to warfare in a systematic way.²

Furthermore, I here study the Catholic community in the United States. In doing so, I rely especially on the most important document that the American Catholic bishops have ever drafted on issues of war and peace: The Challenge of Peace. Since this document was not without its detractors, I also examine the response of one such commentator, George Weigel, who represents a counter to The Challenge of Peace and puts forth an alternative understanding of Catholic teaching on this issue.

I readily acknowledge that this study is neither the first nor the last to deal with war and peace in the life of the church. What I do claim, however, is that this study responds to the call of the Fathers at Vatican Council II by taking up the mantles of “scrutinizing the signs of the times, and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel.”³ I do so by applying the question of war and peace to the particular moment the world faces in the twenty-first century. For the United States bishops writing The Challenge of Peace

² I will focus more particularly on this type of contingent pacifism in Chapter Four of this study.
³ Vatican II, Gaudium et spes, 1965 (hereafter GS), no. 4.
in 1983, the preeminent world challenge they faced was that of nuclear weapons. Surely, these and other weapons of mass destruction remain a crucial problem today; however, Christians and others now understand clearly that these weapons pose a threat to more than simply human communities. These weapons represent the potential destruction of the entirety of God’s creation. They were a unique historical reality in 1983 when the pastoral letter was written; they remain a unique historical reality in our present moment; and they will continue to be important in the future. I propose continually reading the signs of the times in light of the continued threat posed by nuclear weapons.

In the course of this study, and especially in this chapter, I use the word “pacifist.” I take the definition proffered by Lisa Sowle Cahill: “Christian pacifism is essentially a commitment to embody communally and historically the kingdom of God so fully that mercy, forgiveness, and compassion preclude the very contemplation of causing physical harm to another person.” Accordingly, pacifists, if they do not even contemplate causing physical harm, will never directly intend to harm another living thing. At other times in these pages, as I have already done above, I also refer to various forms of “contingent pacifism.” Contingent pacifists are those who disparage violence whenever certain circumstances are met. To continue using Cahill’s thinking, contingent pacifists would contend that a particular violent practice would always “preclude the very contemplation of causing physical harm to another person.” They, however, are not “pacifists” in the

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4 Lisa Sowle Cahill, Love Your Enemies: Discipleship, Pacifism, and Just War Theory (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 2. In other studies, this term may be read as “absolute pacifism” or some such identifier. For the purposes of this study, “pacifism” shall be sufficient to denote the definition given here. In a few cases, it will be necessary to use “absolute” and “contingent” as identifiers to differentiate between the two perspectives.
classical sense alluded to above. Even though they are not strictly pacifists based on these definitions, the label of “contingent pacifist” remains a fair representation of their beliefs.

As I explain throughout this chapter, contingent pacifism has assumed a number of forms throughout Christian history. For example, there have been “personal” or “private” pacifists; for these persons, the contingency rests in violent self-defense, which they believe is not allowed on the basis of Christ’s admonition to “turn the other cheek.” Nevertheless, personal pacifism is also not classical pacifism because despite this stance against violence in the case of personal self-defense, personal pacifism still may allow the tragic necessity of warfare in cases where the defense is not of oneself, but of the common good.

Simultaneously, I recognize that in the Roman Catholic tradition, pacifism is not the only accepted understanding of the church’s relationship to instances of war and peace. In fact, although it has been officially accepted through papal teaching as a legitimate way of approaching the tragic cases of violence for at least fifty years, pacifism remains a minority position among Roman Catholics. The more widely accepted doctrine is the just war tradition. It is my argument that, much like pacifists, adherents to the just war theory should also make a concerted attempt to live out their moral stance by seeking to create situations of authentic justice. This chapter will examine the Roman Catholic understanding of just war alongside its counterpart of pacifism. The United States Catholic bishops have advanced the argument that these two ideologies can and should be held in tandem in the church. Members of both sides in this debate should be able to work together for peace and justice.
I have decided to examine the debate between pacifism and adherence to just war theory in this dissertation in large part because the United States bishops entered this debate during a time in American history that was particularly engaged with the looming specter of nuclear destruction. During the course of their drafting of *The Challenge of Peace*, the bishops received responses from many government officials who “said repeatedly and candidly that nuclear war cannot be won or lost in any recognizable sense.” As those prelates drafted their pastoral letter in the midst of the Cold War, there was at best a tepid sense of security among their faith communities. The threat of a nuclear holocaust, however, was not enough to keep a number of Roman Catholic commentators from criticizing the bishops for being influenced too heavily by this threat. Foremost among these critics is George Weigel. Essentially, this chapter serves as a foray into this debate. I also provide a thoroughgoing commentary on the distinctions between pacifism and the just war tradition, specifically emphasizing that these traditions can exist in tandem with one another. This work functions as both a historical summary of the bishops’ project and the factors that influenced and critiqued them as well as a continuation of their project to read persistently “the signs of the times.”

The chapter will proceed in five sections. It begins by focusing on the watershed document published by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response*. In particular, I focus on the bishops’

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insistence that there be a “presumption against war.” Second, the chapter examines how the bishops have applied this terminology in the pastoral letter as a part of the Catholic tradition, which evolved from a strict commitment to nonviolence in the earliest days of the church. I then provide a brief overview of the just war theory and its relationship with pacifism. The chapter will, fourthly, consider George Weigel’s critique of *The Challenge of Peace* and his argument that the bishops have abandoned the just war tradition of the church. Finally, Chapter One concludes with a response to Weigel and a discussion of a realistic variety of pacifisms for the twenty-first century, including what the defining characteristics of such types of pacifism must be. I consider this new mode of pacifism alongside a realistic just war theory. As I demonstrate, there are ramifications of this realism in both the pacifist and the just war approach. Among the most important ramifications are the ability for adherents on both sides of the debate to be in a more productive dialogue with each other.

The United States Bishops and the “Presumption Against War”

When Bishops P. Francis Murphy and Thomas Gumbleton made interventions at the 1980 Fall Assembly of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops to ask that their brothers in the American episcopacy consider drafting a pastoral letter on war and peace, the ball was set in motion for one of the most important documents ever published by a

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7 Ibid., nos. 70-79.

8 A common critique of pacifism has always been that it is overly idealistic and does not adequately understand the real problems that face human beings in the world today. As such, a theologically robust pacifist stance must be characterized by a realism that many commentators relegate to just war doctrine alone. I argue that this shared realism is key in the ethical pluralism that results from the dialogue between the two traditions.
group of United States religious leaders.\(^9\) Over the next three years, a committee of five U.S. bishops formed the group who drafted the pastoral letter, *The Challenge of Peace*.\(^10\) This letter was so important because it not only interpreted but also developed official church teaching on war and peace. It remains the most comprehensive statement on war and peace that has been released by any Roman Catholic national episcopal conference. In drafting this document, the U.S. bishops do not merely waver between just war theory and pacifism. Instead, as David Hollenbach suggests, “The American bishops state their openness to ongoing dialogue with these views. But their letter is no middle of the road document that seeks to split the difference between the views found within the church today.”\(^11\) The clearest proof of this fact is the pastoral letter’s insistence on the presumption against war. In claiming such an insistence, the bishops are firmly in line with authoritative Catholic teaching on war and peace since the time of Saint Ambrose. From the first days of justified warfare in Christianity, the burden of proof always fell squarely on the shoulders of those who would argue that war was necessary.

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\(^10\) In addition to Gumbleton (auxiliary bishop of Detroit, MI), the committee was comprised of Joseph Cardinal Bernardin (archbishop of Chicago, IL) who served as committee chair, George Fulcher (bishop of Columbus, OH), John O’Connor (auxiliary bishop of the military vicariate), and Daniel Reilly (bishop of Norwich, CT). A number of experts also advised the bishops in the drafting. The committee staff were Rev. J. Bryan Hehir and Edward Doherty of the United States Catholic Conference. The principal consultant was Professor Bruce Martin Russett of the Yale University political science department; other consultants included Rev. Richard Warner, C.S.C., and Sister Juliana Casey, I.H.M. Among these figures, the influence of Hehir was overwhelming in successive drafts and in the final product.

In *The Challenge of Peace*, the bishops make a key statement as they introduce the term “presumption against war.” They write: “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.”

There are three parts of this description that I will unpack. First, the presumption is “binding on all,” which includes those in governmental authority and those in the military; second, the presumption may be overridden in official Catholic doctrine, which introduces the criteria for a just war; and third, the just war is one that is fought to bring about peace. The bishops also argue that it is altogether possible for pacifist individuals to hold an even stricter presumption against war than do adherents to just war thinking; however, both “share a common presumption against the use of force as a means of settling disputes.”

With their endorsement of pacifism as a legitimate stance in the Catholic debate on war and peace, the bishops followed in the footsteps of the Fathers of Vatican Council II, who advanced one of the most important developments of Catholic doctrine in the last century. In the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, the Council fathers wrote: “It seems right that laws make humane provisions for the case of those who for reasons of conscience refuse to bear arms, provided, however, that

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12 *CP*, no. 70.

13 The term “official Catholic doctrine” when referring to war and peace is not only limited to the criteria found in *CP*. Rather the conditions for a just war are also spelled out (in slightly modified language) in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed., hereafter *CCC* (1997), no. 2309, and also the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2003), no. 500.

14 *CP*, no. 121.
they accept some other form of service to the human community.”

The American bishops claim that this conciliar teaching “was the first time a call for legal protection of conscientious objection had appeared in a document of such prominence.” In point of fact, Gaudium et spes represents an authoritative development of doctrine and a change of course from the 1956 Christmas radio message of Pope Pius XII. In that address, Pius XII stated clearly:

If therefore, a body representative of the people and the government – both having been chosen by free election in a moment of extreme danger decide, by legitimate instruments of internal and external policy, on defensive precautions, and carry out the plans which they consider necessary, they do not act immorally; so that a Catholic citizen cannot invoke his own conscience in order to refuse to serve and fulfill those duties the law imposes.

Not only was Gaudium et spes the first prominent magisterial document to support the right to individual conscientious objection, it was also an extraordinary development in church teaching in a short period of time.

For pacifists, the presumption against war is without exception; there could be no reason, however noble, for killing another human being. There were also groups who were contingent pacifists. The most popular form of contingent pacifism during the drafting of The Challenge of Peace was “nuclear pacifism.” A number of the bishops who were in active ministry during the publication of The Challenge of Peace were

15 GS, no. 79.
16 CP, no. 118.
numbered along the scale of pacifists, both contingent and absolute.\textsuperscript{19} Along with Gumbleton and Murphy were Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen, Bishop Carroll Dozier, Bishop Leroy Matthieson, Bishop Walter Sullivan, and Bishop Michael Kenny. There is no doubt that this group of bishops, along with others who were sympathetic to their worldviews, shaped a key section of the pastoral letter which praised the witness of those in the church who were committed to nonviolence. The bishops reflect: “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.”\textsuperscript{20} This statement means that those who hold an exceptionless presumption against war are not neglecting their Christian duties by refusing to fight in just wars; rather, they are legitimately responding to the duties of the Christian gospel, which are founded in commitments to peace and especially to justice, without which there is no grounds for peace. The bishops place those groups of Christians committed to nonviolence in a long line of praiseworthy witnesses for peace.\textsuperscript{21} It is to this line of Christian witnesses for peace and nonviolence that I now turn.

\textsuperscript{19} Of course, all Catholic clergy must be pacifists in the sense that they may not use violence. What is unique about these particular bishops is that they believed that it was either not permissible for any Catholic to wage a just war, or that it was not permissible to possess nuclear weapons.

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{CP}, no. 116. This statement is part of an entire section of the pastoral letter, entitled, “The Value of Non-violence,” nos. 111-121.

\textsuperscript{21} See \textit{CP}, nos. 111-115; 117. The bishops explicitly mention Jesus, St. Justin, St. Cyprian of Carthage, St. Martin of Tours, St. Francis of Assisi, as well as twentieth century figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, Dorothy Day, and Martin Luther King Jr. The examples of Gandhi and King are particularly important, since they exemplify that the cause of nonviolence is ecumenical and interreligious in nature.
“So Great a Cloud of Witnesses” to Nonviolence

Scriptural Exegesis Regarding Violence

Adherents to one or another variety of pacifism have often taken as motivation for their lives the scriptural passage from the Letter to the Hebrews, where the author writes these words:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart (Heb 12: 1-3).

Those in the Christian community who have taken on pacifism have almost always taken Jesus as their exemplar and model. An interpretation of his words regarding violence is crucial for this study.

Since Jesus was “the perfecter of our faith,” he is the principal witness. The pericope that pacifists most frequently cite in favor of Jesus’ own commitment to nonviolence is his Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7). Within these three chapters of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus proclaims, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Mt 5: 9). Moreover, his antitheses also seemingly call the Christian disciple to strict nonviolence, even in the most difficult of situations. Jesus proclaims that not only is murder unacceptable, but also “if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment” (Mt 5: 22). Furthermore, Jesus continues to call his followers to perfection: “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a

22 Unless otherwise noted, all scriptural references will be taken from the NRSV and cited parenthetically.
tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also” (Mt 5: 38-39). The capstone of the teaching, however, is Jesus’ remarkable “hard saying,” “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you…Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5: 43-44; 48). Finally, Christian perfection also entails forgiveness: “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Mt 6: 14-15). For those Christians committed to nonviolence and universal forgiveness for wrongdoings, there is solid teaching from scripture.

The words of Jesus as recorded in scripture have been cause for much discussion and debate over the course of the last two millennia. While there is certainly no unanimous consensus on what Jesus’ teaching on nonviolence means for his followers, there are various worthwhile exegeses to consider. In his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, Daniel Harrington, S.J. concludes that the Sermon on the Mount “is not addressed only to a Christian elite, nor is it so impossible to practice that its only function is to remind people of their status as sinners and their need for God’s grace.”23 According to Harrington, then, the speech is especially poignant because the principles laid down therein are practicable by Jesus’ followers. With regard to the antithesis on non-retaliation (Mt 5:38-39), Harrington notes, “The setting of the saying is personal relations on a smaller scale. Whether it can be transposed to the social or political realms is a

matter of ongoing debate.” Based on this reading, at a minimum, Jesus calls his followers to personal (or private) pacifism, which precludes the use of force in self-defense.

The ongoing debate to which Harrington refers is summarized by two opposing arguments. The first is that the personal pacifism which Jesus preached in the Sermon on the Mount must always be extended even to larger situations where there is a temptation to use violent force in the defense of all people’s rights. The opposing view is that sometimes, experiences of human suffering make it tragically necessary to use violence in order to limit the damage that would befall many people.

Coming down on the former side of this argument is Richard B. Hays. In *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* Hays argues that active nonviolence is a lifestyle that the entire church must take upon itself. Within the tripartite paradigm of his study, Hays argues that nonviolence is scripturally advocated on the basis of the community-cross-new creation model. Hays uses these three images throughout his study to interpret the various ethical messages brought to the fore in the New Testament. In the case of nonviolence, Hays believes that each of these three images calls the Christian community to an unwaveringly nonviolent lifestyle. Particularly in looking to Jesus as the foremost among the “cloud of witnesses” though, we should take note of Hays’s account of “the paradoxical wisdom of the cross (see 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5). Not only the teaching but, more importantly, the example of Jesus is determinative for the community of the faithful. The

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24 Ibid., 88.
passion narrative becomes the fundamental paradigm for the Christian life.”

Hays makes it clear that the entire People of God are called to strict nonviolence, both individually and collectively.

The scripture scholar Gerhard Lohfink takes Hays’s interpretation even a step further. Lohfink places Jesus’ teaching specifically within the context of gathering Israel to announce the reign of God: “For according to Jesus, God does not want Israel to be a people that fights, like all others, to assert itself as a nation. God wants a people in which the peace of God and God’s kind of rule become reality.”

Lohfink responds to the question of the oft-cited “warrior-God” of the Hebrew scriptures by reminding us of the call to nonviolence from the prophetic tradition. It was this tradition that inspired Jesus’ practice of nonviolence in his own life and teaching: “He used no violence at all. He took the sword from Peter’s hand (Matt 26:52). He preferred being a victim to using violence. And by that very fact he initiated in the world an unexpected and ongoing influence. It still goes on, and no one can say where it yet may lead.”

While Lohfink is correct in noting that Jesus’ influence of nonviolence still reverberates in some sectors of the church, he also may be a bit too optimistic, since there is another strand of exegesis on


27 Ibid., 187. Lohfink makes it clear that nonviolence was not the only aspect of the prophetic tradition. He compares it to “an orchestral piece with many voices. It is not always easy to hear the principal voice in the polyphony it plays, among the accompanying voices, counter-melodies, and dissonances” (187). Therefore, Lohfink is clear that nonviolence is not the only part of the prophetic tradition, but it is the part that Jesus has exclusively adopted for his own ministry; therefore, this choice should have a clear impact on Jesus’ followers.
the Sermon on the Mount, which takes the other side in the debate to which Harrington refers.

The other argument in this debate maintains that even admitting the Matthean principle of non-retaliation to be personally important does not mean that this principle extends to societal acceptance of nonviolence. In other words, even if a Christian may accept the teaching that personal non-retaliation is important on an individual level, that same Christian may not accept widespread nonviolence for a nation. One scholar in this category is Charles H. Talbert. For this camp, strict adherence to these teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount is unfaithful to the larger message of the New Testament. Talbert notes, “The Matthean Jesus placed love and mercy as the overriding concerns in terms of which everything else is to be interpreted. If so, then love for the neighbor would override the value of non-retaliation.”28 It is clear that Talbert and his intellectual adversaries on this point are in clear disagreement regarding the relationship between neighbor-love and the use of violent force. For Hays and Lohfink, it would be unthinkable for “love” to be expressed through violence in the ethic of the Matthean Jesus. On the other hand, Talbert laments, “There may be occasions when love of neighbor trumps one’s commitment to non-retaliation. Confronted by an evildoer, the disciples, whose character incorporates both love of neighbor and non-retaliation but privileges the former as more basic, would likely respond if necessary to defend, protect,

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28 Charles H. Talbert, Reading the Sermon on the Mount: Character Formation and Decision Making in Matthew 5-7 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 91-2.
and vindicate the neighbor.” This position, of course, appears in the work of Augustine, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Paul Ramsey, among others.

One fascinating aspect of the debate over whether war is ruled out by Jesus’ preaching in the Sermon on the Mount is the morality of Christians serving as soldiers in the military. An offshoot of Talbert’s argument is that the Sermon on the Mount certainly does not exclude serving in the military, since retaliation is sometimes necessary in order to love one’s neighbor. Talbert cites Hays on the topic of Christians serving in the military, though I consider his to be a misreading of Hays’s view: “Thus, of the texts we have examined that might seem to stand in tension with the New Testament’s central message of peacemaking, these narratives about soldiers provide the one possible legitimate basis for violence in defense of social order or justice.” However, Hays makes it abundantly clear that he does not believe that Jesus supports such a career for his followers. According to Hays, since we do not know how the soldiers go on to live their lives after their encounters with Jesus, we may not make a final evaluation about this occupation. Hays reminds the reader that Jesus likewise conversed with prostitutes, tax collectors, and other sinners, yet there is certainly no argument to suggest that Jesus recommended these paths to his followers. In summation, the debate over the Sermon

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29 Ibid., 92. Next, Talbert asks a version of the perennial question “What would the Good Samaritan have done if he had arrived before the beating of the man had taken place?” Talbert then notes that the fact that neighbor-love is primary in the life of a disciple is the major reason for the just war tradition. In n.96 (pp. 92-3), Talbert then summarizes just war thinking as presented in The Challenge of Peace.

30 Talbert makes the argument, in summarizing the just war tradition, that love of neighbor is “privileged” as “more basic” than non-retaliation for the Christian (92).

31 Ibid., 93, citing Hays, The Moral Vision of the New Testament, 335-6. Hays, of course, is not without other detractors. Other detailed opposition, for example, comes from Nigel Biggar. See his In Defence of War (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 40-59.

on the Mount leads to the conclusion that scripture does not offer a final verdict acceptable to all believers on the permissibility of warfare from a Christian standpoint.

The Problem of Violence in the Early Church:

Tertullian, Origen, and Justin Martyr

The issue of membership in the Roman army was a pivotal aspect of the debate in the early church over whether or not the Christian must be committed to a life of strict nonviolence. It is widely agreed that in the pre-Constantinian Christian community, pacifism was the normative way for the church to live out its communal life. The two most prominent Christian thinkers of this period who supported nonviolence were Tertullian of Carthage (160-220) and Origen of Alexandria (185-254). It is not until the end of the second century that there is any evidence for Christians taking up membership in the Roman army. Until that time, strong evidence supports the likelihood that Christians were strongly opposed to the military. This opposition rests on five areas of consideration: hatred for Rome and opposition to the military seal (which was opposed to their baptismal seal, and involved taking the military oath); expectation of an imminent end of the present age; resistance toward idolatry; the immoral lifestyle associated with membership in the military; and an abhorrence of bloodshed.

Even the ethical practices of these first Christians are open to debate on historical interpretation. One scholar of the period, John Helgeland, has been primarily responsible

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33 This study does not present the space necessary to summarize the arguments laid forth by these two thinkers. For a helpful summation of their thought on the issue, see Cahill, *Love Your Enemies*, 41-54.

for noting the inaccuracies in the reporting that all early Christians were pacifists
because of a pure motive of nonviolence. More to the point, Helgeland claims that the
reason for opposition to warfare was often centered on problems with idolatry. In
particular, Helgeland reports that what was so idolatrous in the first few centuries of
Christianity was the “death culture” that encompassed the whole of society.35

What has remained a constant since the earliest days of the church has been the
fact that scriptural exegesis has been largely based on the political outlooks of the groups
of Christians who are interpreting the scriptural passages in question. As Helgeland has
maintained in no uncertain terms, the idea that the earliest Christians were pacifists out of
a strict adherence to the ethic of nonviolence as it is recorded in the teachings of Jesus is
due largely to the work of two interpreters: C. J. Cadoux36 and Roland Bainton.37
Helgeland makes a fair argument concerning the “pacifist perspective” of the early
Church Fathers created by Cadoux and Bainton. He notes, “This interpretation has a host
of lesser lights who followed them like the dogs that followed the wagon trains across the
prairie. Many of these followers satisfied themselves with mining Cadoux and Bainton as
though they were primary sources.”38 Helgeland’s point here is one that should not be
overlooked: the pacifist biases of Cadoux and Bainton shaped the material they produced,

35 See John Helgeland, “The Early Church and War: The Sociology of Idolatry” in Reid, Peace in a
Nuclear Age, 46-7. Helgeland argues that the “death culture” came about because Rome had taken violence
to new levels, even making games out of executions.
36 C. J. Cadoux, The Early Christian Attitude to War (London 1919; repr., New York: Seabury Press,
1980).
38 Helgeland, “The Early Church and War,” 35.
and the result was “that they quoted the Fathers out of context and cared to learn only a few aspects of the Roman military system.”

In his own review of the recent scholarship on war and peace in early Christianity, David Hunter explains that Helgeland suffers from the same weaknesses as do Cadoux and Bainton. Like his two interlocutors, Helgeland does not reveal his own biases when it comes to the topic of war and peace. As a means of summarizing the debate of the early church on the issue of military service, it would be important to acknowledge what Hunter refers to as the “new consensus” on the question. To accept this “new consensus” is also to accept that there is no concrete answer to the question of whether the early Christian community believed it was morally licit to serve in the military. Both sides of the debate today likely reflect the biases of those making the arguments. What does remain evident is that the tradition of pacifism has continued to remain a vocal minority in the church in the centuries after the reign of Constantine. I will now consider how the tradition of Christian nonviolence has evolved.

The figures in the early church that are at the heart of the debate between Helgeland and Cadoux/Bainton are primarily Tertullian and Origen; however, a few other people figure prominently in the pacifist strand of Christianity in these first few centuries.

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39 Ibid., 35.
40 See Hunter, “A Decade of Research on Early Christians and Military Service,” 87-89. I should note that Hunter is especially critiquing Helgeland’s work in conjunction with R. J. Daly and J. Patout Burns, Christians and the Military: The Early Experience (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1985), although Hunter also claims that this is a critique of Helgeland’s earlier work. In my estimation, it is also a fair reading of the essay cited above.
41 See ibid., 93. This “new consensus” argues two points mentioned above, namely, numerous factors contributed to Christian antipathy toward military service; and, Christians begin appearing in the military by at least the end of the second century. The third point is that the post-Constantinian Christian just war theory “stands in fundamental continuity with at least one strand of pre-Constantinian tradition” (93).
after the death of Christ. One such figure is Justin Martyr (c. 100-165). His own testimony claims a significant shift in the whole persona of the Christian of his time: “We who formerly killed one another not only refuse to make war on our enemies but in order to avoid lying to our interrogators or deceiving them, we freely go to our deaths confessing Christ.”⁴² Here we see three major factors that remain something of a constant throughout the pacifist tradition in Christianity. The first factor is explained when Justin notes such a prominent shift in the Christian’s personal character – a profound conversion of heart – the profundity of which could never be overstated. Secondly, being a Christian does not simply mean that one does not use violence in any circumstance (although apparently it means at least that), but that this type of behavior is part of a larger lifestyle that avoids all immorality such as lying and deception in an effort to “be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5: 48). Third, and finally, pacifism accepts the ultimate sacrifice of death instead of inflicting this penalty on even an enemy.

As I noted above, one of the reasons for Christians avoiding service in the military was the clear opposition between the baptismal oath and the military oath. Tertullian expounds this point, noting the full significance it has for Christians serving in the military:

There can be no compatibility between an oath made to God and one made to man, between the standard of Christ and that of the devil, between the camp of light and the camp of darkness. The soul cannot be beholden to two masters, God and Caesar…Indeed how will [a Christian] serve in the army even during peacetime without the sword that Jesus Christ has taken away?”⁴³

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Tertullian’s point here is that it is not carrying out violence within battle that is forbidden for Christians, but even merely being a part of the army, and taking a military oath. It is worth noting that in a later writing, Tertullian changes course on this thought, noting that a nonviolent role in the military could be permissible for an individual who converts to Christianity. From a practical standpoint, Tertullian changes his mind on this issue because, as Swift reports, “desertion was a capital offense” and also because it was altogether possible for individual soldiers to carry out nonviolent careers in the military.  

It seems relatively clear, as a whole, that Tertullian was convinced of the immorality of Christian membership in the military based on not only scriptural teaching but also the concern about idolatry and the opposition between the military oath and the baptismal oath.

Like Tertullian, Origen presents one of the most fervent Christian arguments against serving in the military. Also like Tertullian, Origen points to the example of Jesus’ teaching: “[Jesus] considered it contrary to his divinely inspired legislation to approve any kind of homicide whatsoever.” As Swift chronicles, Origen was the first Christian to take on squarely the problem of violence in the Hebrew Scriptures and what this violence means for Christians, whom he believes should profess nonviolence. He explains the allegorical nature of these scriptural battles:

Unless those carnal wars [i.e. of the Old Testament] were a symbol of spiritual wars, I do not think that the Jewish historical books would ever have been passed down by the Apostles to be read by Christ’s followers in their churches…Thus, the Apostle, being aware that physical wars are no longer to be waged by us but that our struggles are to be only battles of the

soul against spiritual adversaries, gives orders to the soldiers of Christ like a military commander when he says, “Put on the armor of God so as to be able to hold your ground against the wiles of the devil” (Ephes. 6.11).46

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of the early Christians’ tradition of the first two centuries, and especially the writings of Tertullian and Origen, in the development of the Christian strands of pacifism. While Swift believes Origen was “the most articulate and eloquent pacifist in the early Christian Church,”47 there is no questioning the impact Tertullian had as well. Their influence on later pacifists in the church (both Western and Eastern) is undeniable.

Personal Pacifism: Ambrose and Augustine

Clearly there is not adequate space here to deal with all of the significant pacifist voices since the promulgation of the Edict of Milan by Emperor Constantine in the year 313 c.e. It will suffice to consider only a few examples of Christian pacifism in the centuries since this time. First, it is incumbent upon such a study as this to note that in the post-Constantinian period, Christianity did not become suddenly bellicose in nature. Rather, the figures that are usually looked upon as being the “fathers” of the just war tradition were actually interested in upholding order and peace. The two most prominent of this class are Saint Ambrose of Milan (ca. 339-397), and Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430). Both of these men, due to their claims that sometimes warfare is a tragic necessity, may also be placed in the category of contingent pacifism, particularly in the personal, or private realm. It is worth noting that neither Ambrose nor Augustine believed

46 Origen, Homilies on Joshua, XV.1, cited in Swift, Early Fathers on War and Military Service, 59.
47 Swift, Early Fathers on War and Military Service, 60.
it was ever licit for clergy to bear arms. What resulted was a two-tiered ethic that placed clergy on a higher tier than laity (who could bear arms to defend the common good). Clerical pacifism was personal and public, while the laity were not expected to be anything other than personal, or private, pacifists.

For his part, Ambrose writes, “Indeed, even if a man comes up against an armed thief, he cannot return blow for blow lest in the act of protecting himself he weaken the virtue of love…But Christ who sought to cure everyone through his own wounds did not want to be protected by doing harm to his persecutors.”

Like Ambrose, Augustine could also be categorized as a personal pacifist. He also finds it to be an injustice for a private citizen to use violent force in self-defense: “I do not approve of killing another man in order to avoid being killed oneself unless one happens to be a soldier or public official and thus acting not on his own behalf but for the sake of others, or for the city in which he lives.”

As Robert L. Holmes puts it, “To kill another person in defense of this earthly life represents an inordinate desire to cling to those things one ought not to love.” While “the virtue of love” was of paramount importance for Ambrose, Augustine also focuses on the importance of order and the common good in his own thought contra self-defense. In both cases, the two saints fall into the category of “private” or “personal” pacifism, which fundamentally claims that the contingent basis on which pacifism would always be

the appropriate lifestyle is in instances of self-defense; it is never morally licit, according to the concept of “personal” pacifism, to use violent force to protect one’s own person.

Franciscan Pacifism

Falling into the category of pacifism is one of the most beloved figures in the history of Christianity: Saint Francis of Assisi (1182-1226). This is significant not only because Francis is the object of countless acts of popular piety, but also because he founded the Order of Friars Minor, a religious order of priests and brothers, and inspired a contingency of laypeople known as third order Franciscans. Francis’s call to pacifism is limited only to his brothers in the Order; however one could very well understand his admonishments to his confreres to constitute a literalist reading of the gospel. Such a reading would fall in line with the directives he gave the friars in the remainder of The Earlier Rule. His instructions for the itinerant ministries of his religious congregation are almost an exact replica of Jesus’ instructions to the seventy disciples in the Gospel of Luke (10: 1-12): “All my brothers: let us pay attention to what the Lord says: Love your enemies and do good to those who hate you for our Lord Jesus Christ, Whose footprints we must follow, called His betrayer a friend and willingly offered Himself to His executioners.” For his part, Francis is also one of the first figures in Christianity to link the issues of care for all of creation and peacemaking in his well-documented Canticle of the Creatures. In support of pacifism, Francis writes, “Praised be You, my Lord,

53 This will be a topic of discussion in Chapter Four.
through those who give pardon for Your love, / and bear infirmity and tribulation. /
Blessed are those who endure in peace / for by You, Most High, shall they be
crowned." In reading the work of Francis on the issue of pacifism, it is doubtful that his
motives were anything other than gaining eternal life; nonetheless, the strict adherence to
a life of nonviolence is a *sine qua non* for all Franciscans.

Twentieth Century Catholic Pacifism in the United States:

Day, Berrigan, and Douglass

In the twentieth century, three Roman Catholics from the United States have
embodied three different, but not mutually exclusive, methods of living out their
commitment to pacifism: Dorothy Day, Daniel Berrigan, S.J., and James W. Douglass. In
the case of Day (1897-1980), her life of faith lives on in the Catholic Worker movement
and the newspaper by the same name, both co-founded by Day with her companion Peter
Maurin. Since the earliest days of the movement, the Catholic Worker has espoused strict
nonviolence and an attitude of non-participation in the works of warfare. Day carried out
her pacifism primarily by organizing the Catholic Worker movement, although she also
participated in acts of (nonviolent) civil disobedience and produced prolific writings.
While the Catholic Worker reached great levels of popularity in its infancy, the watershed
moment for Day’s insistence on pacifism came with her consistent call for nonviolence
during World War II: “We are still pacifists. Our manifesto is the Sermon on the Mount,
which means that we will try to be peacemakers. Speaking for many of our conscientious

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objectors, we will not participate in armed warfare or in making munitions, or by buying government bonds to prosecute the war, or in urging others to these efforts.”

World War II was such an important moment for Day for two reasons. First, World War II was considered by a huge percentage of Americans to represent a justified war. What is less clear is how these Americans considered it justified. It seems that many Americans were what John Howard Yoder calls “blank check” people in the case of war: “The value of the nation is not debatable, the authority of national government is not subject to critique, and the moral value of their leaders is such that no questions are to be put to them when they command.” In continuing to advocate for pacifism, Day positioned herself, as well as those members of the movement who supported her, squarely in the very small minority. Second, the popularity of the war caused many supporters of the Catholic Worker movement to distance themselves from Day’s persistence in the cause for nonviolence. As Day’s biographer Jim Forest recounts, “They could see no other effective means apart from war to combat Hitler and his rapidly expanding Third Reich. Neither could they accept that Dorothy’s personal convictions on such an issue should be presented as the position of the entire movement.” As with all other pacifists, Day’s unwavering insistence on nonviolence was a sometimes-divisive

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57 Jim Forest, All Is Grace: A Biography of Dorothy Day (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 161. It is important to note that the work of the Catholic Worker movement continued during these lean years: “Half the Catholic Worker houses of hospitality remained open during the war, despite small staffs and fewer people in need. Apart from a half-year retreat taken during the war, Dorothy traveled from house to house and spoke in public wherever there was a willingness to hear her. Even in the midst of war, many invitations were offered” (163).
element of her persona, particularly among the Catholic Worker community that was flourishing.

Both Berrigan and Douglass were greatly shaped by Day’s influence. Berrigan (1921-2016), entered the Society of Jesus at age 18 and first gained fame for participating in actions of nonviolent civil disobedience on 17 May 1968, when he, his brother Philip (then a Josephite priest), and seven other activists known as “The Catonsville Nine” used homemade napalm to burn draft files in Catonsville, Maryland. Following a time “underground” – that is, on the run from the F.B.I. – Berrigan was apprehended on Block Island while hiding at the home of his friend William Stringfellow. Like Day, Berrigan was not limited to these types of actions (although he would commit over a hundred anti-war actions over the next 45 years). He is widely regarded as the most accomplished Jesuit poet of his time, and has written widely in the genres of prose and drama. Berrigan has also held leadership roles in the anti-war movement, and has ministered as a hospice chaplain to those dying of AIDS.

In explaining what could accurately be considered his manifesto of a consistent ethic of life, Berrigan writes of a need for a renewal of order that “includes in the nature of things, such neglected virtues as compassion and justice toward the needy, the outcast and victimized.” He continues: “And above all, and first of all, ‘Don’t kill. Have no part in killing, either enemy or criminal or the aged or the disabled or the unborn.’ Everything

58 The remaining activists were: Brother David Darst, Thomas Melville, Marjorie Melville, George Mische, Mary Moylan, John Hogan, and Thomas Lewis.

depends on this.”

Everything depends on this, Berrigan insists, because “this”—nonviolence—is the heart of the gospel. As with Day, it is impossible for Berrigan to look past Jesus’ teaching of nonviolence, resulting in a very simple Christian ethic. Also, like Day, Berrigan has made a good many adversaries, both among his Jesuit brothers, and among the rest of the clergy and the lay faithful. He has made a decision, for good or ill, to assert his strong beliefs in society as a whole and has been unapologetic for “breaking the law.” In this way, he has been important for United States history as the first member of the Roman Catholic clergy who consistently practiced civil disobedience. He is also important for church history as he embodies a new way to be Catholic in public.

Like Berrigan, who has been known primarily for participating in actions of nonviolent civil disobedience, and Day, who was known primarily for her leadership role in the Catholic Worker movement, James W. Douglass (b. 1937) has also taken part in those two aspects of the peace movement in the United States. Douglass, however, is best known for his work in advancing the cause of pacifism from the academic side of the issue. While Berrigan and Day both wrote prolifically, they both admitted that they did not strive to write academic theology. Douglass, on the other hand, is a trained theologian who taught at the university level for many years before moving full time into a Catholic Worker community in Birmingham, Alabama. Douglass points to the relationship

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60 Berrigan, Testimony, 17.

61 Berrigan appeared on the cover of Time magazine with his brother Philip (7 June 1968), and has frequently been a subject of mainstream national news, both print and television.
between violence and suffering in his writing. According to Douglass, these are opposites, but neither leads necessarily to God:

Power is revealed not as violence, which destroys, nor even simply as suffering, which endures, but as Truth, which resists injustice through voluntary suffering, and as Love, which in that suffering resistance opens victim to executioner and thus raises their relationship from the level of objects, passive and active, to that of persons, confronting and confronted.\(^{62}\)

In the worldview of Day, Berrigan, and Douglass, the innocent must sometimes suffer injustice in order for the ideal of pacifism to be met. For this view, adherents to the just war doctrine since Augustine and Ambrose have taken issue with pacifism. The views of three contingent pacifists of the twentieth century will be illustrative of this point. It is helpful to recall that all contingent pacifists, by the very nature of their ideological positions, maintain a fundamental trust in just war theory, but with a particular nuance.

Twentieth Century Catholic Nuclear Pacifism:

John XXIII, Merton, and Hollenbach

The most developed variety of contingent pacifism in the twentieth century has certainly been nuclear pacifism. As mentioned above, many of the bishops who drafted *The Challenge of Peace* were nuclear pacifists. As far as presenting nuclear pacifism to the American church, however, three individual Catholics stand out: Pope John XXIII, Thomas Merton, and David Hollenbach, S.J. While Pope John XXIII (1881-1963) was not from the United States, it is unquestionable that his influence as pontiff (1958-1963) was a turning point for the universal church. Clearly, John was best known as the pope who convened Vatican Council II, which John O’Malley has called “quite possibly the

biggest meeting in the history of the world.”

However, John’s importance for American Catholics, or for the universal church, should not be limited to convoking this massive assembly. On 11 April 1963, John promulgated his encyclical *Pacem in terris* (hereafter *PT*), which would later be called his last will and testament since it came only months before his death in June of that year. The encyclical itself touches on a number of issues but, “the topic of *PT* is peace,” according to Drew Christiansen, who concludes that John’s understanding of peace is inseparable from his understanding of human rights.

Nuclear pacifism is defined as the belief system that maintains that nuclear weapons may never be used under any circumstances within warfare. John spurred on such an ecclesial mindset with these bold words from *PT*:

> Justice, then, right reason and consideration for human dignity and life urgently demand that the arms race should cease, that the stockpiles which exist in various countries should be reduced equally and simultaneously by the parties concerned, that nuclear weapons should be banned, and finally that all come to an agreement on a fitting program of disarmament, employing mutual and effective controls.

Such a clear message of peace from the pope encouraged the peace movement. Many of those who had committed themselves to a life of pure nonviolence in light of the gospel believed that *PT* was a sign that Roman Catholic acceptance of the just war doctrine had come to an end. Not even seven years earlier, the aforementioned Christmas Message of Pope Pius XII had reminded individual Catholics that it was never licit for them to

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64 Drew Christiansen, “Commentary on *Pacem in terris* (Peace on Earth),” in Himes, *Modern Catholic Social Teaching*, 223.
65 Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in terris*, no. 112.
practice conscientious objection to a given war, even if the conflict did not meet the
strict conditions for a just war.

In convening Vatican Council II, John was also instrumental for the church in the
United States. In Gaudium et spes (hereafter GS), the council fathers write clearly about
the evils of total warfare. They authoritatively proclaim, “Any act of warfare aimed
indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or of extensive areas along with their
population is a crime against God and man himself. It merits unequivocal and
unhesitating condemnation.”66 In the nearly five decades since GS was promulgated,
however, the issues of abortion, artificial birth control, and same-sex marriage have
received more attention from the American episcopacy of the Roman Catholic Church
than has the issue of warfare. In point of fact, nowhere in the entire corpus of conciliar
documents can one find a single statement about any of those three moral issues receiving
such a resoundingly negative diagnosis. To be sure, this is the closest the fathers ever
come to issuing an anathema during the four sessions of the council. Charles E. Curran
refers to it as “the strongest condemnation in all of Vatican II.”67 This condemnation, no
doubt, had its origins in the strong anti-nuclear rhetoric of PT and the prophetic
pontificate of John XXIII.

For as crucial as John XXIII was in spreading the message of nonviolence and
especially opposition to nuclear weaponry, there was a Roman Catholic who was even
more instrumental in the American church: Thomas Merton (1915-1968). Merton’s

66 GS, no. 80.
67 Charles E. Curran, Catholic Social Teaching, 1891-Present: A Historical, Theological, and Ethical
conversion account, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, was and continues to be a bestseller among religious and non-religious readers alike. It was Merton’s writing against the Vietnam War and nuclear weapons in particular which garnered the attention of the Catholic peace movement in the United States. As a Trappist monk, Merton was bound to obey his evangelical vow of obedience to his legitimate religious superior. After writing a series of articles challenging nuclear proliferation that had been published in the early 1960s in *Commonweal* and *The Catholic Worker*, Merton was forbidden by his superior from writing further on the subject: “On April 27, 1962, Dom James Fox handed Merton a letter from Abbot General Gabriel Sortais, requesting that Merton no longer write on the issues of war and peace, particularly on nuclear weapons.”68 One volume that Merton worked on during his silencing, *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*, remained in mimeograph form for nearly fifty years until it was finally published in 2004. It remains a testament to Merton’s understanding of his monastic vocation, as well as his nuclear pacifism.

Like John XXIII, Merton was not a pacifist who denied the just war doctrine out of hand. As Lisa Cahill puts it,

> It would be possible to interpret Merton either as a just war theorist who was rigorously faithful to the exclusions of violence implied by his criteria and to the presumption that violence is a sinful solution; or as a pacifist at heart who felt accountable to the parameters outlined by his hard-won Catholic faith, and who, as Zahn suggests, could allow a margin for violence at the theoretical level that he could never really envision in practice.69

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While it may be a matter of debate as to the ideological camp in which Merton belongs, there is no ambiguity whatsoever regarding his disgust with nuclear weapons. He believed that continuing to create these weapons was a surefire way to destroy God’s world, and lamented, “The free choice of global self-destruction, made in desperation by the world’s leaders and ratified by the consent and cooperation of their citizens, would be a moral evil second only to the crucifixion.” There is little doubt that Merton’s writings on the issue of nuclear war encouraged the American Catholic peace movement, and this encouragement continues to this day.

From a more properly academic point of view, David Hollenbach (b. 1942) has presented a most coherent nuclear pacifism that is grounded in his understanding of Catholic social teaching. It is also based on a theological vision of human rights that regards human beings as created by God in the divine image and likeness. More than just a theological argument, however, Hollenbach also presents an argument for public policy with respect to the development and use of nuclear weaponry. Recognizing that human beings would be most directly, negatively, and unjustifiably affected by the use of nuclear weapons, Hollenbach sees a clear interrelation between Christian ethics and political discourse on this issue. He boldly declares, “I think the conclusion is clear: no to the use of nuclear weapons; and no to the plans and schemes for their use. Negotiations

1971), xviii. The suggestion as cited by Cahill: “Finally, even at the level of theory one can find hints of inconsistency in his discussions of pacifism and the just war which suggest that his heart really did belong to the former and his fervent protestations to the contrary were largely a matter of semantics” (220, n. 56). I am in no position to make the assertion that Zahn makes, and so I maintain that it is pertinent to take Merton at his word, and at least agree that he believed violence could be justified in theory from the perspective of Christian ethics.

and strategies must all be bent to this end. This is the moral-political challenge to Christians in our time.”71 This writing only very closely preceded *The Challenge of Peace*, so Hollenbach’s words were prescient in giving a foretaste of the episcopal opposition to the use of nuclear weapons, and also the building of nuclear weapons with the intent of using them as a deterrent to mutually assured destruction. Both Hollenbach and the bishops believe that deterrence is only helpful insofar as it is able to prevent the actual use of the weapons.

For Hollenbach, the U.S. Bishops have done a service to both the church and society in general with *The Challenge of Peace*. He believes that the letter marks a moment of historical importance in that it is “at once more forceful and more nuanced than any of the documents produced by the popes or the council in the years since World War II.”72 As the bishops themselves note in the pastoral letter, their teachings do not carry the same moral weight as do other ecclesial pronouncements. This point notwithstanding, Hollenbach clearly believes that the document places the bishops squarely within a tradition that tries to analyze war from a morally sophisticated level. They are heirs to the intellectual legacy of Augustine on the question of war and peace: “As good practitioners of Augustinian moral theory, they seek to transform and redeem a broken polis by seizing those opportunities for peace, order, and justice that history has

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72 Hollenbach, “*The Challenge of Peace* in the Context of Recent Church Teachings,” 12.
given us today.” For Hollenbach, nuclear pacifism falls within a fair reading of Augustinian ethics.

**Doing Good to Those Who Hate You? A Reading of the Christian Just War Tradition**

If the earliest days of the Christian community were marked by a total commitment to nonviolence, the development of certain criteria that could be met for warfare to be considered morally justified would certainly leave its mark on Christianity for all of the centuries since the doctrine’s inception. Despite the fact that Saints Ambrose and Augustine practiced personal and clerical pacifism, they believed that certain conditions would always necessitate the use of violent force from an organized army. As Cahill puts it, “Augustine was willing to commend the use of violence if undertaken at the behest of a legitimate civil authority (understood to have authority from God), if necessary to punish crime or to uphold the peace, and if the combatants intended to establish justice rather than hatefully to inflict suffering on their enemies.” In this section, I will trace the impact of three key thinkers on the Roman Catholic just war doctrine: Ambrose of Milan, Augustine of Hippo, and Thomas Aquinas.

As one might expect, the just war theory was not a systematic and comprehensive checklist of conditions in its infancy. At first glance, it would appear that Ambrose’s and Augustine’s formulations of these criteria for justified warfare are totally out of step with the early Christians discussed above; however, Augustine certainly thought himself to be

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74 Cahill, *Love Your Enemies*, 58.
in continuity not only with the burgeoning Christian tradition, but also with the teachings of Jesus. As noted above, there is no unanimous agreement on the meaning of Jesus’ teachings on violence and resistance to violence. Additionally, it is also important to recall that Augustine correctly saw Christian moral thought in a constant state of development. Even in the fourth century, Augustine was noting the signs of the times and attempting to respond accordingly to the needs of the community.

The Foundation of Ambrose

As the mentor for Augustine, Ambrose signaled through explicit writings a shift within Christian thought on war and peace. As Swift explains, “One must keep in mind that Ambrose’s election as bishop in 374 A.D. occurred while he was enjoying a distinguished public career…It should come as no surprise, then, that his attitudes on war and violence were much influenced by Roman sentiments of justice, loyalty, courage and public responsibility.”75 Whereas his predecessors had largely carried a hatred for Rome as an occupational force and a source of persecution, Ambrose’s perspective on Rome was one of kinship. Ambrose felt at home within the church and the empire to a degree that his predecessors would not have enjoyed.76 Ambrose’s sense of dual citizenship is key to understanding his own stance on this issue.

Despite the earlier explanation of Ambrose’s personal pacifism, it is clear that this private ethical imperative did not extend to the public realm of war. In his treatise On the Duties of the Clergy, Ambrose makes the following broad argument: “Everyone believes

75 Swift, The Early Fathers on War and Military Service, 98.
76 Although Ambrose felt at home within church and state, it is still instructive to recall that “he makes it clear that the Christian must live by a standard which will be sometimes at odds with worldly wisdom” (Cahill, Love Your Enemies, 59).
it is much more commendable to protect one’s country from destruction than to protect oneself from danger and that exerting oneself for one’s country is much superior to leading a peaceful life of leisure with all the pleasures it involves.”\textsuperscript{77} As with Ambrose’s more comfortable position within both the Roman empire and the church, it is also clear that there is no longer a general abhorrence of shedding blood, which was of foremost importance in the writings of his predecessors who argued more stringently along the lines of renunciation of warfare. For Ambrose, there is an introduction of the idea that not only is war sometimes tragically necessary, but also that service in the army is a point of commendation for Christian soldiers. Ambrose also offers to the Christian community an interpretation of the Roman principles of warfare, which are also the origins of what we now understand as the Christian just war theory.

One origin of the just war theory in particular is the oft-cited Christian practice, “love the sinner; hate the sin.” What results from an authentic implementation of this practice is an ethic that makes it possible to love the enemy, while still fighting that enemy in battle. Speaking of the Psalmist, Ambrose writes, “You should interpret the words as meaning that he hated evil itself rather than evildoers, who, despite their actions, are subject to conversion through the preaching of the gospel.”\textsuperscript{78} This is a tremendous statement, because the result of such a belief is that the gospel can actually be preached while on the battlefield. This shift in Christian thought is significant, to say the least. Despite Ambrose’s willingness to justify war in certain cases, these cases remain


limited, which to this day remains a hallmark of the just war tradition. As Swift notes, Ambrose believed that “a war that is designed to punish wrongdoing or is defensive in nature is justified, as is one undertaken to gain possession of territory that has been promised by God.” When the United States bishops cite a traditional presumption against war, they surely take to heart Ambrose’s instruction on the church’s role in conflict: “The church, however, does not conquer the forces opposed to it with temporal arms but with the arms of the spirit, which are capable in the sight of God of destroying the fortresses and heights of spiritual wickedness (cf. II Cor. 10.4)…The Church’s weaponry is faith; the Church’s weaponry is prayer, which overcomes the adversary.”

The Significance of Augustine

In Augustine’s particular case, there is evidence that these needs of the community played an important role in his own development of the Christian justification for violent force in the matter of defense of a state. As Thomas Massaro, S.J. and Thomas Shannon helpfully note, “In his years as Bishop of Hippo, Augustine lived in North Africa, and this province of the Roman Empire was in danger of being invaded by the Vandals. Only the Roman Army stood between them and the destruction of the empire.” Here, it is important to note that there is a serious shift in the thought of Augustine from the early Christian figures noted above.

Unlike many of his predecessors, Augustine views the time in which he lived as important in itself and not merely an indicator of a future providential society that is

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entirely free of violent conflict. In spite of the lack of systematic development in Augustine’s just war theory there are some key elements of his thought which demand close study, particularly because of their importance when considering the development of the tradition in the centuries since Augustine’s writing. In what follows in this section, I will discuss these elements as they appear in three distinct stages of Augustine’s thought. In particular, I divide Augustine’s thought on war into three stages, where one work from each stage will be emblematic of his general thinking at that time. As R. A. Markus writes, “The one thing which has emerged from almost all serious studies of Augustine…is that whatever can be said about almost any aspect of his thought is unlikely to be true of it over the whole span of his career as a writer and thinker.”

In the first stage of Augustine’s thinking on war, the act of warfare is punishment to restore order. This is the stage of Augustine’s life when he is in philosophical dialogue with his critics on the question of free choice of the will. It is crucial to understand that Augustine consistently portrays a positive view of peace. In other words, peace is always the construction of communities where people flourish in right order. To this extent, I would agree with John Langan, S.J., who asserts that these thoughts constitute “a set of ideas which show a reasonable constancy and coherence in Augustine’s view of war and which manifest interesting connections with larger themes in his theology and his moral theory.” In this first stage, however, we can see Augustine’s view come out clearly in The Free Choice of the Will, written in 388 c.e.

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Augustine’s early thought on war establishes a special concern about the evil of self-defense that never truly leaves the Augustinian corpus. In an exchange in *On Free Choice of the Will*, Augustine’s interlocutor, Evodius, shows concern for the presence of *libido*, an inordinate desire for material goods, to be a problem for the soldier in warfare. After denouncing violent acts committed in self-defense, Augustine hears Evodius make a further distinction about violence in warfare: “E: The law of the people deals with acts it must punish in order to keep peace among ignorant men, insofar as deeds can be governed by man…A: I praise and approve this distinction that you have made.” This distinction that Augustine is so fond of is of great importance for his thinking on war for two reasons. First, Augustine makes a connection between earthly and heavenly peace. In a social context, it is up to human beings to create peace. War may only be waged for peace, and may only be done to restore God’s order. The second theme here, as Swift notes,

is that an assailant can take from his victim only those things (including life itself) which the latter will inevitably relinquish at some time in the future and over which he has no ultimate control. It is precisely because the soldier or magistrate acts on behalf of others that he is free of such desire and is thus allowed or even obligated under certain conditions to take another’s life.

Basically, the first stage of Augustine’s development can be summed up by a question for the warrior: “Are you honestly seeking God’s will or your own agenda?”

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84 Incidentally, this evil is at the heart of Augustine’s personal pacifism, noted above.
86 Swift, *The Early Fathers on War and Military Service*, 134.
Augustine’s second stage of development may be seen well in his *Answer to Faustus, a Manichean*, written between 386 and 390 c.e.\(^87\) In this stage of his thinking, Augustine considered war to be a fulfillment of prophecy. Augustine writes that the actual act of killing in itself is not the punishable offense of war. Rather, the punishable offense is “the desire to do harm, cruelty in taking vengeance, a mind that is without peace and incapable of peace, fierceness in rebellion, the lust for domination, and anything else of the sort – these are the things that are rightly blamed in wars.”\(^88\) Again, this is a major tenet of Augustine’s thinking that remains consistent throughout his writings. What is particularly emblematic of this particular stage of his thought, however, is Augustine’s notion of legitimate authority: “And at the command either of God or of some legitimate authority, good men often undertake to wage wars against the violence of those who resist so as to punish these things in accord with the law.”\(^89\) War, in certain instances, is a divine commandment and it thus becomes incumbent upon Christians to carry out such just wars.

Of particular poignancy in Augustine’s writings against Faustus the Manichean is his use of the Hebrew Scriptures, and especially the figure of Moses. Augustine notes, Slanderous ignorance…criticizes Moses because he waged war. For he ought to have been criticized less if he waged war on his own initiative than if he did not wage war when God commanded him to. But to dare to criticize God himself because he commanded such actions, or not to believe that the just and good God could have commanded such actions is – to put it mildly – the mark of a person unable to grasp that, for divine


\(^{88}\) Augustine, *Answer to Faustus, a Manichean*, XXII.74, 351.

\(^{89}\) Ibid.
providence, which extends from the highest to the lowest, what comes to be is not new and what dies does not perish, and each individual thing gives way or comes along or remains in the proper order of natures or of merits.  

It is not simply a coincidence that Augustine deals with the authority of the God of the Hebrew Scriptures, as this was a critique made by the Manicheans who saw a clear difference between that God and the God of early Christianity. For Augustine, the Christian attitude to war is really about the Christian’s relationship with God. As Langan writes, “Not merely is the kingdom of God ultimately what we are to aspire to in our desires and attitudes; but the authority of God is our ultimate guarantee of the righteousness of what we do.” God’s authority is not only the same throughout history, but such divine authority also has human representatives on earth. In the Hebrew Scriptures, Moses was such a representative; in Augustine’s time the representative was the emperor.

The prologue to the third phase of Augustine’s thinking on war and peace provides the historical context for his writings. The City of God began appearing in 413 C.E., as Augustine began the project in the final stage of his life. In addition to drawing on his years of learning and ministry, Augustine could also point to the events that were happening around him during his writing to inform his thought. As one biographer puts it, “the whole context of his life and thought was forever obliterated by the Vandal invasion

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90 Augustine, Answer to Faustus, a Manichean, XXII.78, 354.

91 Langan, “The Elements of St. Augustine’s Just War Theory,” 23. This, of course, doesn’t solve the problem of the unjust king or ruler. As Langan correctly portrays Augustine, this was a nonissue for Augustine. We cannot overlook such an ethical stumbling block.
of North Africa.” The agenda of The City of God was a theological one, but the point of writing it at the time in which he did goes beyond the intellectual argument contained therein. As Peter Brown explains, “It is particularly superficial to regard it as a book about the sack of Rome…What this sack effected, was to provide Augustine with a specific, challenging audience at Carthage.”

Still, The City of God is informed by this event from 24-26 August 410. As another biographer of Augustine, James J. O’Donnell, puts it, “Death and destruction on a scale unparalleled in the city since the sack of the city by the Gauls exactly 800 years earlier were shocking.” Regardless of one’s judgment concerning the importance that the sack of Rome had on Augustine’s writing of The City of God, it is clear that the problems of heresy and paganism were at the forefront of Augustine’s mind. These problems caused disorder in the Roman Empire, disorder that Augustine despised. As Brown notes, “[Augustine’s] whole perspective implied a belief in the resilience of the Empire as a whole. Corrective treatment fails in its purpose, if it exterminates its subject:

94 James J. O’Donnell, Augustine: A New Biography (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 228. The next few lines of O’Donnell’s description are confusing, however. He continues, “but the episode lasted only three days and the city and its inhabitants then went on very much as before” (228). O’Donnell then contrasts the immediate responses of Augustine, who remained very stoic throughout the sack, and Jerome, who wrote, “I was so distressed that it was like the old proverb: I didn’t even know my own name” (228). In any case, it is relatively clear that O’Donnell does not believe that the 410 sack of Rome had much impact on Augustine in his writing of The City of God. In the interest of transparency, O’Donnell’s account has been critiqued by reviewers as a biography belittling its subject (Augustine), although in this case, I am not at all convinced that O’Donnell’s take on Augustine has anything to do with his understanding of Augustine’s reaction to the sack of Rome in 410. Perhaps the best way of putting the sack of Rome in context for Augustine comes from Carol Harrison: “The fall of Rome seems to have provided the catalyst, but not the inspiration or ideas for the City of God.” See Harrison, Augustine, 197.
Rome, in his mature view, had been ‘punished, but not replaced.’ War, then, is the creation of order and unity where there had once been chaos and disunity.

This historical note brings us to the third and most mature phase of Augustine’s thinking with regard to warfare which comes through most vividly in Books XV and XIX of *The City of God*. Here, Augustine treats war primarily as a tragic necessity. The single most important departure in this phase from the previous two stages is that now, for Augustine, there is some possibility that a Christian may decide legitimately to become a pacifist. In this latter stage, there is little doubt that Augustine sees warfare as lamentable: “Let every one, then, who thinks with pain on all these great evils [wars], so horrible, so ruthless, acknowledge that this is misery. And if any one either endures or thinks of them without mental pain, this is a more miserable plight still, for he thinks himself happy because he has lost human feeling.” For Augustine, part of being human is to shun violence if at all possible. Any occasion that necessitates a violent response in warfare is a time for sorrow. Any sort of pleasure that one may feel because war is being waged is actually inhuman according to Augustine.

Perhaps the most striking thing to take from Augustine’s third stage of thinking on war is the idea that war must only be waged as a means of peace. There should be no ulterior motives in the fighting of war. Augustine writes, “The things which this [earthly] city desires cannot justly be said to be evil, for it is itself, in its own kind, better than all other human good. For it desires earthly peace for the sake of enjoying earthly goods, and

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95 Brown, *Augustine*, 293. The sack of Rome was a punishment for the evil that the Roman had carried out in their own individual and communal lives.

it makes war in order to attain to this peace.”

For Augustine, the “earthly city” is composed of the ungodly, while the “heavenly city” is made up of holy people. Because of the clear distinction between the two cities – earthly and heavenly – the reader must be clear about Augustine’s emphasis that true peace may only be found in heaven. Cahill succinctly analyzes Augustine’s position on the two cities: “Every analogy builds both on similarity and on difference, both on derivation and on discontinuity, and this is true of Augustine’s comparison of earthly to heavenly peace.”

Even though pure justice on this earth is impossible, Augustine believes that the Christian at least must strive for such a just world.

One thing that is especially important to note is that the presumption against war is a theme that recurs and is maintained throughout all three of the stages of development in Augustine’s thinking. Augustine is clear that war is never truly a good. He writes, “To carry on war and extend a kingdom over wholly subdued nations seems to bad men to be felicity, to good men necessity.” Here, it is clear that Augustine wishes to make a distinction between those just warriors who fight to preserve justice for all and those who we might consider warmongers, who have ulterior motives in waging wars. For the latter, warfare is used to gain power or prestige, wealth or honors, rather than to secure the common good and to protect the rights of all human beings. For Augustine, this may be

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97 Augustine, *The City of God*, XV.4, 481.


99 Cahill, *Love Your Enemies*, 65. This is part of a larger, and quite helpful exposition, under the subheading, “Kingdom and History: The Two Cities,” 61-66.

100 Augustine, *The City of God*, IV.15, 123.
the only concern. When applying the criteria for a just war, even in the 21st century, such a crucial distinction must be at the forefront of such an application.

I should recall the importance that Augustine places on the interior disposition of the warrior or the ruler who declares war against another nation. He expounds on such interior virtues in a letter to the imperial commissioner, Marcellinus: “We must always have benevolence in the will so that we do not return evil for evil…If this earthly state keeps the Christian commandments, even wars will not be waged without goodwill in order more easily to take into account the interests of the conquered with a view to a society made peaceful with piety and justice.”

This is certainly a complex statement that yields a number of important insights. The first is an affirmation of the element explaining the interior disposition of the just warrior. This extends to other areas as well. For instance, this exemplifies Augustine’s own personal pacifism. The violence that a nation exerts in war is not to protect individuals, but rather to protect a society.

Therefore, their disposition may be one of “benevolence.” Furthermore, Augustine introduces what we might understand today as concern for justice after warfare, or *jus post bellum*. He expresses a care for the vanquished in war and what will befall them in the future; he yearns for “a society made peaceful with piety and justice.”

One of Augustine’s most impassioned pleas to test all the waters of nonviolence before waging war is found in a letter to Count Darius, who possessed the authority to


102 Elaborated above in the dialogue between Augustine and Evodius.

declare war: “But it is a mark of greater glory to slay wars themselves by the word rather than human beings by the sword, and to win and obtain peace by peace, not by war...But you were sent in order that no one’s blood would be spilled; others, then, are under that necessity, but you have this good fortune.” Elsewhere, Augustine has not denied the valid and important role of the soldier as one who is to protect earthly peace. Augustine’s principal message is to that legitimate authority who has the power to wage war. This is vitally important for Augustine’s thinking on the just war because it places a serious responsibility on the shoulders of those in power. Declaring war is not something to be taken lightly; rather, Augustine contends that such a duty is of utmost importance. Here, the presumption against war takes the form of warfare being a last resort for the authority whose responsibility it is to decide whether to enter into war. For Augustine, the idea of a just war is not something that can only exist in theory, but is rather something that is practical for rulers who are faced with the possibility of engaging in such conflicts.

Finally, it is important to understand Augustine’s thinking about the type of peace that may come from a just war. The goal of any just war is peace, and Augustine explains that peace is a delight to all human beings: “For peace is a good so great, that even in this earthly and mortal life there is no word we hear with such pleasure, nothing we desire with such zest, or find to be more thoroughly gratifying.” Of course, such an earthly

106 Augustine, The City of God, XIX.11, 686.
peace must be of great import, or else it would not necessitate killing countless people to attain it. For Augustine, however, it is a mistake for human beings to prize this earthly peace absolutely. There is a peace that is promised to believers that is far greater than any peace that war may attain for them on this earth. Augustine explains, “The place of this promised peaceful and secure habitation is eternal, and of right belongs eternally to Jerusalem the free mother.”\textsuperscript{107}

Eternal life is the only authentic peace, but that does not mean that human beings should ignore the earthly life entirely. Because our earthly existence is important we must try to imitate the heavenly existence of eternal life. Human beings are called to strive for an earthly peace, which is an imperfect image of heavenly peace. Robert Holmes’s study of Augustine suggests that Augustine falls short in adequately attending to this earthly peace from a Christian perspective, which calls for followers of Christ to view the world differently, by following Christ’s teachings: “But under Augustine these teachings, so far as they pertain to violence and the taking of human life, reduce \textit{in practice} to little more than what is conventionally accepted.”\textsuperscript{108} For his part, Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) also dealt with the relationship between the peace of this world and that of God’s kingdom. It is to Thomas that I now turn.

The System of Thomas

In discussing Thomas’s understanding of violence in the Christian tradition, it would be most helpful to focus on three particular questions that he poses in his \textit{Summa}

\textsuperscript{107} Augustine, \textit{The City of God}, XVII.13, 595.

\textsuperscript{108} Holmes, \textit{On War and Morality}, 145. Emphasis in original. Holmes presents a helpful yet critical reading of Augustine, ultimately implying that if Christianity had “clung to the nonviolence of the early Church, much of the war and destruction the Western World has known in the past fifteen hundred years could not have taken place (145). As we have seen, Augustine was one of the most crucial figures in this shift.
In examining these three topics that Thomas addresses, I will show how Thomas further lays groundwork for the United States bishops in their effort to compile a list of criteria that must be met before a war may be considered justified. In what follows, I first address Thomas on the topic of peace; next, I turn to Thomas’s understanding of the individual’s right to violence in legitimate self-defense; finally, I focus on Thomas’s understanding of warfare in particular.

Like Augustine, Thomas maintains the fundamental belief that peace is a goal of all human beings: “Whoever desires anything, desires to attain, with tranquility and without hindrance, to that which he desires: and this is what is meant by peace which Augustine defines the tranquility of order.”¹⁰ The ultimate goal of warfare is not so that human beings should perish in battle; rather, Thomas suggests, like Augustine before him, that “those who seek war and dissension, desire nothing but peace, which they deem themselves not to have…Hence all wars are waged that men may find a more perfect peace than that which they had heretofore.”¹¹ Furthermore, as a response to the divine commandment to love one’s enemies, Thomas makes it clear that there is a proper type of love in this case. He claims that it is totally improper to “love our enemies as such,” since that would mean loving the sin that is in them. From an individual standpoint, Thomas acknowledges that it is impossible to love each enemy in her or his own right, but “that we should be ready to love our enemies individually, if the necessity were to occur.” Thomas believes, simply, “we should not exclude our enemies from the love given to our

¹⁰ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Bros., 1948). In these notes, I will cite the work as *ST*, followed by the textual citation.

neighbor in general.”¹¹² In a particular way, then, Thomas’s understanding of the love of one’s enemies falls in line with his understanding of peace because “charity causes peace precisely because it is love of God and of our neighbor...[and] there is no other virtue except charity whose proper act is peace.”¹¹³

The Christian call to be a peacemaker, for Thomas, is crucial to developing in wisdom:

Now a peacemaker is one who makes peace, either in himself, or in others: and in both cases this is the result of setting in due order those things in which peace is established, for peace is the tranquility of order, according to Augustine...The reward is expressed in the words, they shall be called the children of God. Now men are called the children of God in so far as they participate in the likeness of the only-begotten and natural Son of God...Who is Wisdom Begotten. Hence by participating in the gift of wisdom, man attains to the sonship of God.¹¹⁴

It is clear through Thomas’s arguments noted here and above that, as for Augustine, peace holds an important role. For Thomas, there is an intimate connection between the theological virtue of charity (caritas) and peace. As Eberhard Schockenhoff explains, “Because human beings love themselves by charity in its orientation to God as their uniquely fulfilling good, joy and peace are its most noble effects (nobilissimus effectus), which are immediately united with the possession of the highest good.”¹¹⁵ Since peacemaking is so closely connected with the highest good (union with God), peace maintains a place of great importance in Thomistic thought.

¹¹² The discussion on love of enemies is found in Aquinas, ST. Ila IIae, q. 25, a. 8.
¹¹³ Aquinas, ST. Ila IIae, q. 29, a. 4.
¹¹⁴ Aquinas, ST. Ila IIae, q. 45, a. 6. Emphasis in original.
While Thomas and Augustine both had similar understandings of what causes peace, they differ widely in their appropriations of how that peace may come about in interpersonal relationships. Particularly, on the issue of private self-defense, there is some disagreement between the two thinkers. As I noted above, Augustine’s personal pacifism was a hallmark of his own thought on violence and in some senses is at odds with his own just war doctrine. Thomas, on the other hand, explains that it is licit for a lay person to defend oneself against an attacker even if this results in the attacker’s death through what would later come to be known as the principle of double effect: “Nothing hinders one act from having two effects, only one of which is intended, while the other is beside the intention.”\footnote{Aquinas, \textit{ST.} Ila IIae, q. 64, a. 7.} In the case of personal self-defense, the victim of an attack is justified in attempting to save his or her own life from the hands of the assailant, which is a good action (saving one’s life). The other effect of such an action may be the death of the assailant in question (which is evil in itself), and must never be the intent of the victim. Thomas notes, “If a man, in self-defense, uses more than necessary violence, it will be unlawful: whereas if he repel force with moderation his defense will be lawful.”\footnote{Ibid.} Therefore, it seems as though the use of moderate force in self-defense, which by the definition of moderation must stop short of killing the attacker, is justified. For Thomas, the intention of the actor is key. Likewise, in the case of warfare, intent is an important point. I will now consider Thomas’s explanation of justified force in warfare.
It is helpful to consider the initial question Thomas poses on the subject of justified warfare: “Whether it is always sinful to wage war?” The inclusion of the word “always” in this question means that it is at least often sinful to wage war. As David Hollenbach puts it, “The just-war theory, properly understood, rests on the conviction that violent warfare should be presumed to be morally unacceptable and even sinful.” That Thomas has a strong presumption against violent warfare should come as no surprise and is not unique within the tradition. In fact, as I noted above, this presumption is a matter of importance in Augustine’s own understanding of justified conflict. From the earliest days of the just war doctrine in the Christian church, there has always been a presumption against warfare. It is only natural, then, that the United States Catholic bishops would highlight such a vital aspect of the Christian thinking on warfare in The Challenge of Peace.

To be sure, Thomas’s presumption against warfare was not absolute. In the answer to the question he posed above, Thomas establishes three criteria for a war to be considered just. In other words, once these three criteria are met, the strict presumption against war is overridden: “First, the authority of the sovereign by whose command the war is to be waged…Secondly, a just cause is required, namely that those who are attacked, should be attacked because they deserve it on account of some fault…Thirdly, it is necessary that the belligerents should have a rightful intention so that they intend the advancement of the good, or the avoidance of evil.” Martin Rhonheimer suggests that

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118 Aquinas, *ST*. IIa IIae, q. 40, a. 1.
119 Hollenbach, *Justice, Peace, and Human Rights*, 130. As Cahill notes, the phrasing of the question, “already puts the enterprise of war on dubious footing” (*Love Your Enemies*, 84).
120 Aquinas, *ST*. IIa IIae, q. 40, a. 1.
there is significant overlap between Thomas’s thought on killing in self-defense and killing in battle. In both cases, the victim, “does not will the death of the attacker, but only to render him harmless, in order to fend off the assault.”

A final point to consider in Thomas’s understanding of justified warfare is his prohibition on the clergy’s participation in battle. Thomas provides two reasons why he considers the clergy unfit for military service:

The first reason is a general one, because, to wit, warlike pursuits are full of unrest, so that they hinder the mind very much from the contemplation of Divine things, the praise of God, and prayers for the people, which belong to the duties of a cleric…The second reason is a special one, to wit, all the clerical Orders are directed to the ministry of the altar, on which the Passion of Christ is represented sacramentally…Wherefore it is unbecoming for them to slay or shed blood, and it is more fitting that they should be ready to shed their own blood for Christ, so as to imitate in deed what they portray in their ministry.

In clarifying the role of the clergy vis-à-vis warfare, Thomas is placing himself in a long line of thinkers on the issue, dating back to the initial thought of Ambrose and Augustine. The ecclesiastical prohibition on members of the clergy serving as active-duty (non-chaplain) members of the armed forces remains in place to this day. There is some question, particularly among pacifists, as to whether this standard to which

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122 Aquinas, ST. IIa IIae, q. 40, a. 2.
123 For example, see Ambrose of Milan, On Duties of the Clergy, 1.35.175: “We [clergy] are concerned with matters of the soul rather than of the body, and our activity has to do not with weapons but with peaceful deeds.” Cited in Swift, The Early Fathers on War and Military Service, 108. In fact, the prohibition of the clergy participating as active member of the military was officially solemnized at the Council of Chalcedon.
ordained Roman Catholic clergy are held remains logical. With a new understanding of the relationship between the clergy and the laity since the promulgation of *Lumen gentium* in 1964, it is unclear to many opponents of all warfare why such a Thomistic separation of clergy and laity with regard to warfare would remain in place.

In sum, *The Challenge of Peace* is indelibly marked by the influence of the three thinkers discussed in this section. Many others also influenced the formulation of the bishops’ just war doctrine, but Ambrose, Augustine, and Thomas were clearly the most crucial in formulating the criteria currently in place. However, not all analysts of *The Challenge of Peace* believed that the bishops were faithful to the Augustinian tradition laid out in this section. The most outspoken of these detractors is George Weigel, whose disputes with the bishops I consider later in this chapter.

Twentieth Century Just War Theory in the United States:

Ford, Murray, and Hehir

Before moving to Weigel’s critique of *The Challenge of Peace*, I wish to focus briefly on the work of three adherents to just war teaching in the twentieth century: John C. Ford, S.J., John Courtney Murray, S.J., and J. Bryan Hehir. The work of these three

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124 Eileen Egan provides a thoroughgoing critique of this two-tier ethic throughout her *Peace Be With You: Justified Warfare and the Way of Nonviolence* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000). This shift is not only a twentieth-century phenomenon, however. In his *Christianity and the Political Order: Conflict, Cooptation, and Cooperation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2013), Kenneth R. Himes, O.F.M. notes, “Francis of Assisi, in the beginning of the thirteenth century, called on the lay members of his movement to abstain from war and violence because of his belief that all Christians, not just an elite minority, were called to live the gospel ethic” (324-5).

125 For a complete discussion of the just-war criteria, see *CP*, nos. 80-110. The *jus ad bellum* (before war) criteria are: just cause, competent authority, comparative justice, right intention, last resort, probability of success, and proportionality. The *jus in bello* (during war) criteria are proportionality and noncombatant discrimination. The *ad bellum* criteria are not meant to be read merely as a checklist that must be completed before war may be considered justified; rather, as I have indicated, the bishops stressed the long-standing tradition of a presumption against warfare. I will focus more on some of these criteria in later chapters, when I discuss the *jus post bellum* and *jus ante bellum* stages of the question.
theologians has influenced the majority position in the church today. The just war legacy, however, has entered a new stage of its history. In the twentieth century, these three Roman Catholic priests in the United States had a particular impact on how just war theory would be practiced in theological discourse. Their own impact on the tradition is unquestioned now.  

I first turn my attention to John C. Ford, S.J. (1902-1989). In some quarters of moral theology, Ford – a professor at Weston College and Catholic University of America for many years – is best known for his pioneering work on the topic of alcoholism; in other quarters, he is known for his staunch support of *Humane vitae* and the traditional Roman Catholic teaching opposing artificial birth control. His most influential single article, however, appeared in *Theological Studies* in the midst of World War II and dealt with a topic that was of utmost importance to the Church and the world: saturation bombing. As his inclusion in this section betrays, Ford himself was firmly entrenched in the just war tradition. He wrote about the proper expression of American patriotism and its crucial role during World War II, which he supported as a justified

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126 There is, however, one point of clarification to make before this chapter proceeds: why are these figures not listed among the nuclear pacifists in the previous section of this chapter, even though their work often grappled strongly with nuclear weapons? I have elected to examine these figures in light of just war theory because their work focuses more sharply on the realities of that (just war) tradition in the context of the times, rather than directing its energies primarily toward nuclear weapons, as do Hollenbach and Merton, for instance.


128 John C. Ford, S.J. “The Morality of Obliteration Bombing,” *Theological Studies* 5, no. 3 (September, 1944): 261-309. I have elected to place Ford in the “just war” section of this chapter because his thought is very much based on the traditional just war doctrine that is described in these pages. In this light, he is especially distinct from Merton and Hollenbach, and to a lesser degree, also Pope John XXIII.
war. However, Ford also upheld the rights of Catholics to be conscientious objectors to all warfare or to practice selective conscientious objection to unjustified wars.

Ford’s article itself is quite important both contextually and theoretically. Contextually, the article is situated in the midst of World War II, and in it Ford responds to the “obliteration bombing” of German cities. Of these operations, he explains: “The target is a large area, for instance, a whole city, or all the built-up part of a city, or at least a very large section of the total built-up areas, often including by design residential districts.” Since Ford wrote during the midst of such a destructive period of world history, his writings are obviously affected by these actions. However, the events also gave Ford the opportunity to highlight the two _jus in bello_ criteria as identified by the United States bishops some 40 years later: noncombatant immunity (discrimination) and proportionality.

A key point throughout the consideration of the justice of war in certain cases throughout this chapter has been the “presumption against war.” For his part, Ford admits that the starting point for Catholic theology on this point has always been, “Thou shalt not kill.” Perhaps the greatest contribution of the essay is that Ford puts in no uncertain terms the exhaustive list of people that are almost always noncombatants. It is

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132 See ibid., 272-286; 298-305.
133 Ibid., 282.
134 See ibid., 283-4. This list is quite remarkable and worth viewing. It ranges from undertakers to actors, and hospital patients to librarians. The list itself includes 108 types of people and workers.
especially poignant that Ford uses the principle of double effect to test the morality of obliteration bombing. Another version of this principle is used to justify warfare, since double effect can explain the decision to override the presumption against warfare. However, Ford concludes that using the principle to justify such bombing techniques “is an unwarranted application of the principle of the double effect.” Without ever changing his opinion on the just war theory, Ford determines that obliteration bombing fails both *jus in bello* criteria, and therefore is not ever morally acceptable. This is one of the greatest contributions to just war theory of the twentieth century and consequently was vital to the bishops’ pastoral letter. The principle of double effect, in Ford’s view, must be carefully utilized as a moral – not a mathematical – principle. Finally, he concludes, “the principle is not an ultimate guide in difficult cases, because it is only a practical formula and has to be applied by a hand well practiced in moral principles and moral solutions.”

A colleague of Ford’s was John Courtney Murray, S.J. (1904-1967). Among twentieth century Roman Catholic theologians in the United States, however, Murray had very few peers. Instrumental in drafting the Vatican II document *Dignitatis humanae*, Murray is perhaps best known for his writings on religious freedom. This point notwithstanding, Murray’s corpus of writings is a veritable tour de force. Furthermore,

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135 Ibid., 289. Ford summarizes this principles as follows: “The foreseen evil effect of a man’s action is not morally imputable to him, provided that (1) the action in itself is directed immediately to some other result, (2) the evil effect is not willed either in itself or as a means to the other result, (3) the permitting of the evil effect is justified by reasons of proportionate weight” (289).

136 See ibid., 308-9.

137 Ibid., 290.

138 For the two best examples, see John Courtney Murray, S.J., *We Hold These Truths: Catholic Reflections on the American Proposition* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1960) and J. Leon Hooper, S.J. ed., *Bridging*
the secondary literature dealing with Murray’s thought is much more far-reaching than that concerning Ford.\textsuperscript{139} Murray’s thought concerning war and peace, for its part, had an enormous influence on the United States bishops.\textsuperscript{140}

Murray’s most famous work is undoubtedly \textit{We Hold These Truths: Catholic Reflections on the American Proposition}, a compilation of his classic essays on various topics of theological inquiry. One such essay, “The Uses of a Doctrine on the Uses of Force: War as a Moral Problem,” has been crucial in forming what currently stands as the majority Catholic teaching on justified warfare.\textsuperscript{141} In this article, Murray is clear from the outset that his view considers that “relative pacifism” (what I refer to as contingent pacifism in this study) “is not to be squared with the public doctrine of the Church.”\textsuperscript{142}


\textsuperscript{140} Murray is cited twice by the bishops in \textit{CP} (notes 31 and 36).


\textsuperscript{142} Murray, \textit{We Hold These Truths}, 228.
Next, Murray explains that it is also forbidden to support “preventive” or “pre-emptive” warfare.\(^\text{143}\)

Murray’s own understanding of just war doctrine in 1959 when he wrote this article is not unlike that put forth by the United States bishops some 24 years later. In Murray’s exposition of just war theory, he notes four conditions: the war is a response to an unjust attack, and thus a right intention; the war is the last resort; proportionality (and the noting of the probability of success as part of this criterion); and the limited use of force.\(^\text{144}\) It is worthwhile to note that Murray cautions between two extremes that create “false dilemmas”: “a soft sentimental pacifism and a cynical hard realism.”\(^\text{145}\) Murray notes that these dilemmas can be solved through a proper understanding of the relationship between war and peace, which very few Americans are able to grasp:

The basic fallacy is to suppose that “war” and “peace” are two discontinuous and incommensurable worlds of existence and universes of discourse, each with its own autonomous set of rules, “peace” being the world of “morality” and “war” being the world of “evil,” in such wise that there is no evil as long as there is peace and no morality as soon as there is war. This is a common American assumption.\(^\text{146}\)

It would be an error to view Murray as overly bellicose, however. His contribution to the war and peace question in Roman Catholic theological circles in the United States brings forth an overwhelmingly important possibility of dialogue between

\(^{143}\) Ibid., 228. It is not altogether clear from the text whether Murray understood these terms to be synonymous; however it is clear that in contemporary, magisterial teaching, there is a distinction, which condemns preventive war, but allows for justified possibility of preemptive strikes. As Joseph Ratzinger stated in 2002, “the concept of a ‘preventive war’ does not appear in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.” Accessed April 2, 2016, http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/cardinal-ratzinger-says-unilateral-attack-on-iraq-not-justified.

\(^{144}\) See ibid., 236-8.

\(^{145}\) Ibid., 240.

\(^{146}\) Ibid., 243.
representatives of both camps. While the United States bishops eventually disagreed with Murray concerning the place of pacifists and contingent pacifists in the church, they unquestionably benefitted from his delicate treatment of the relationship between the two sides in such an argument. Without Murray’s contribution, it is unlikely that the bishops would have been able to position just war doctrine and pacifism as parallel options in Catholic thought. Murray encouraged those responsible for making the public policy to work toward establishing the possibility of limited nuclear war. One could reasonably expect that this has been accomplished through the nuclear deterrence policy, which the United States bishops reluctantly endorsed.

The bishops’ tentative endorsement of nuclear deterrence, as well as the vast majority of The Challenge of Peace as a whole, is largely attributed to one person: Rev. J. Bryan Hehir (b. 1940). Hehir, a priest of the Archdiocese of Boston, is currently the Parker Gilbert Montgomery Professor of the Practice of Religion and Public Life at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government. Hehir’s impact on the question of war and peace has gone far beyond the pastoral letter. He has written many articles on the topic that have been illuminating not only on the history of the question, but also on the future of a world where war often seems inevitable. What is particularly interesting

\[\text{\footnotesize 147 See ibid., 245.}\]

about Hehir’s perspective now, however, is that he believes that there has been a further shift in just war thinking since the publication of the 1983 pastoral letter.

This further shift is not altogether welcome, in Hehir’s estimation. The particular development in question is one worth noting here to the exclusion of the remainder of Hehir’s work, because its ramifications for Roman Catholic teaching on war and peace can be seen reasonably clearly, especially in light of papal statements on war and peace in the last three pontificates. Hehir points very clearly to this phenomenon in the papacy of Pope John Paul II, who “made clear early in his papacy that he would oppose all attempts to change conditions of injustice by resort to force. In each instance the pope made clear that unjust patterns of political and economic relations were to be vigorously resisted, but in no case did he yield on the prohibition against force.”  

Later, Hehir notes, John Paul did uphold the hypothetical possibility for the justified use of force, but when it came time to apply that in the case of the Gulf War, Hehir explains that John Paul’s resistance to intervention during the Gulf War (a resistance that was upheld a decade later during the waging of the Iraq War of 2003) and the publication of a controversial editorial in Civilta Cattolica in 1991 show a movement towards functional pacifism.

The term “functional pacifism” essentially means that, although a person or group (in this case, Pope John Paul II, or the magisterial church) claims to adhere to just war


149 Hehir, “Just War Theory in a Post-Cold War World,” 249.

150 See John Paul II, “Address to the International Conference on Nutrition,” Origins 22, no. 28 (24 December 1992). In that address, John Paul states that humanitarian intervention is “obligatory where the survival of populations and entire ethnic groups is seriously compromised” (475).

doctrine, their rhetoric betrays pacifism in almost every sense. This has been a critique levied especially against the last three popes; Hehir himself finds fault with John Paul II in this very regard. Hehir expressed that he was wary of the possibility that pacifism may become a majority position in the church thanks to the writings of John Paul II. More than 30 years after Hehir’s wariness was first expressed, however, there does not seem to have been a significant shift amongst the laity in this regard. Papal pronouncements notwithstanding, the just war theory remains the majority position in the Roman Catholic Church. One year before the pastoral letter that was marked by Hehir’s thought was published, Hehir wondered aloud of the relationship between pacifism and just war theory: “In the new state of the question, do we have moral complexity or simply contradiction in the two positions?” It is no small irony that the pastoral letter only made this question more difficult to answer with certainty. I contend that there is much common ground from which to work in this area, and Hehir has done much to provide this common ground, regardless of his own doubts.

**Excursus: Whatever Happened to the Holy War?**

Traditionally, there have been three paradigms through which to view the debate between war and peace: just war theory, pacifism, and holy war. The holy war paradigm reached its most prominent point during the crusades of the Middle Ages, where Christians believed that they were being commanded by God to go to war with

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152 Here, I certainly do not mean that most Catholics have interiorized the criteria for a justified warfare. Rather, I maintain that most Catholics believe that war can sometimes be justified. In point of fact, it is probable that most Catholics actually fall into Yoder’s category (cited above) of “blank check,” and are most willing to defer to the actions of their nation.


154 See Bainton, *Christian Attitudes toward War and Peace*. 
“heathens” or infidels in order either to convert them or maintain the purity of the Christian empire. As Mark J. Allman notes, “Properly speaking, it refers to a series of military raids by European Christians into Muslim-controlled territories in the Middle East and Asia Minor between 1095 and 1291.”

Although I do not have the space to enter into a lengthy discussion on the holy war paradigm, it is enough to note that Christianity has properly excised this understanding of international violence from its legitimate tradition. However, there is another line of thought on the subject of holy war that I will first consider. The Christian ethicist who has written most prolifically on the topic has been James Turner Johnson. He explains his position:

The pacifism-just war-crusade typology…is a misleading conceptual tool for understanding the developments I am describing, despite its wide currency and general acceptance. Holy war doctrine in the early modern period is fundamentally a form of just war doctrine inherited from the late Middle Ages, and it takes its bearings from the idea, at least as old as Augustine, that God himself inspires and commands some wars.

Johnson’s position that the holy war actually falls under the just war paradigm seems to be quite a stretch through twenty-first century eyes, yet he seems to be on solid ground in this judgment. For example, Frederick H. Russell notes that in Augustine’s thought it was of primary concern to pay what was due to God and it is possible that this could entail carrying out the divine command to participate in war. For his part, Johnson goes a

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step further than his original claim: “Holy war is not a single phenomenon, but a related group of phenomena. Nor can the Muslim theme of jihad be distinguished from the concepts of holy war found in Hebraic tradition and in the Christianized West.”

In the final analysis, however, a suspect understanding of the tradition of teaching on war and peace with regard to the “presumption” in question could very well cloud Johnson’s judgment. Johnson believes that the tradition, dating back to the writings of Augustine and continuing through Medieval thinkers, simply does not line up in favor of the United States Catholic bishops. He believes that, historically, there has been a “presumption against injustice” rather than a “presumption against war.” This is a key difference for Johnson. He believes that this shift in Catholic thought has led to the position of the church today: namely, that the idea of the holy war is no longer a part of the tradition. Regardless of whether or not one agrees with Johnson’s interpretation of why the holy war has been pushed out of the normative Catholic understanding on war and peace, it should be fairly simple to agree with him that there is no place in Christian ethics today for this teaching. Like the bishops, I contend that Roman Catholic teaching is clear that no country can have absolute justice on its side, and therefore, that no country can claim a divine command to carry out violent war on another country. One may agree with the bishops or with Johnson, but in either case, the conclusion is clear: there is no room for the holy war in any Christian concept of justified violence.


159 The holy wars between Catholics and Protestants at the turn of the seventeenth century also played a huge role in an intellectual movement away from the justification of holy wars. For more on this particular phenomenon, see Johnson, *The Holy War Idea in Western and Islamic Traditions*, 57-60; 112-115.
A Counterargument: The Bishops, Weigel, and the Augustinian Tradition

One of the most prolific voices concerning Catholic matters in the United States over the last three decades has been the self-proclaimed neoconservative commentator, George Weigel (b. 1951). Outspoken on the issue of war and peace, Weigel’s most influential foray into that debate is his 1987 volume, *Tranquillitas Ordinis: The Present Failure and Future Promise of American Catholic Thought on War and Peace.* In this section, I cannot attempt a survey of the entire project, but wish simply to highlight a few areas of Weigel’s discontent with some of the varieties of pacifism in the Roman Catholic theological tradition, as well as his disagreements with the American bishops who published *The Challenge of Peace.* These disagreements also make Weigel’s version of just war theory different than the standard doctrine advanced by the American episcopacy. Therefore, not only does Weigel find fault with different forms of pacifism, he also advances a non-traditional just war theory. Following this brief review of Weigel’s thought, I render a pacifist (both absolute and contingent) and just war response to Weigel.

For Weigel, pacifism has a somewhat tenuous relationship to the Roman Catholic heritage of understanding peace as Saint Augustine had described it: *tranquillitas ordinis,* the “tranquility of order.” In response to the authoritative teachings in *Gaudium et spes*

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that made it possible for individual Catholics to practice conscientious objection to
warfare, Weigel seems cautiously optimistic:

The Council’s affirmation of the moral claims of those who rejected personal participation in mass violence was overdue, and welcome. But the Church had no developed theory of pacifism – neither a theology of pacifism nor a means of relating pacifist personal convictions to the requirements of governance in a world that would always remain, in the main, nonpacifist.161

Part of the problem with the ensuing practice of allowing conscientious objection to warfare was the result that the clause would have in practice. Weigel laments what he believes to be the reality that “postconciliar American Catholic pacifism did not, in short, contribute to the necessary development of the heritage of *tranquillitas ordinis*, but was a prime mover in the abandonment of that heritage.”162 For Weigel, the heritage introduced by Augustine and confirmed and expounded by Thomas was actually harmed by the way the reforms of Vatican II were implemented in the United States.

Weigel also takes exception to pacifism by critiquing some of the particular forms of expression that pacifism takes in some of its principal practitioners. For the purposes of this study, I will focus on the individuals I mentioned earlier whom Weigel singles out for their activism. Of the group, Weigel is undoubtedly harsher in his criticism of Berrigan and Douglass than he is of Day and Merton. It is clear that Weigel is not blind to the positive contributions of each of the figures he studies. Of each of the figures, Weigel maintains that a certain apocalyptic worldview is an enduring aspect of their thought and subsequent activism on the ground. Of Day, Weigel writes, “Dorothy Day’s

161 Weigel, *Tranquillitas Ordinis*, 145.
162 Ibid., 248.
life and witness remains a powerful sign in modern American Catholicism, and the power of that sign derives in part from the pain she suffered out of commitment and love.”163 It is clear, however, that Weigel’s own theological outlook prevents him from endorsing the Catholic Worker movement in its entirety. This fundamental disagreement also leads him to an alternative reading on the lifework of Day.

Weigel expresses his disagreement with the Catholic Worker movement by maintaining that it delves too deeply into politics and “made many judgments: about the character of the American experiment, about the nature of conflict in the world, about the meaning and threat of totalitarianism, about the relationship between individual conscience and civic responsibility – and about the implications of all these for U.S. policy in the world.”164 Weigel does not believe that Day had erred in directing herself or the Catholic Worker movement into the realm of politics; his problem with Day was her insistence on criticizing American imperialism and never attending to the evils taking place throughout the rest of the world. Weigel writes: “The Catholic Worker approach to the problem of communism remained distorted by the apocalyptic horizon and its failure to distinguish relative evils. Dorothy Day claimed that she objected to Soviet nuclear weaponry and nuclear testing as much as she did to American weapons programs, ‘but the personalist way was not in name-calling.’”165

163 Ibid., 153.
164 Ibid., 152.
165 Ibid., 152. nb – The quote that concludes this citation leads to a footnote in Weigel’s text that points to a longer text from William D. Miller, A Harsh and Dreadful Love: Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement (New York: Liveright, 1973). It is unclear from where Weigel culls that direct quote, but it does not appear to come from either Miller or Day. In any case, it is similarly not clear the point Weigel is actually making here as he seems to admit that Day had no trouble engaging in “name-calling” against the United States, but not against the Soviet Union or Fidel Castro. Furthermore, Day was also never reticent to
Among Weigel’s profiles of pacifists in his study, that of Daniel Berrigan is the most scathing. As in his profile of Day, Weigel makes clear that Berrigan has had a significant influence on many American Catholics. Weigel argues that even more than Day, Berrigan and his followers used their apocalyptic worldview to enter into the political realm. Weigel again finds fault with this approach and he is disturbed by the intensified and dramatic manner in which Berrigan entered politics. Weigel laments, “Polarization was the order of the day. The times were too ‘inexpressibly evil’ to allow for the gentler political arts of persuasion, civil debate, compromise, and mutual agreement. Politics was about utility, and what was needed was not utility, but cleansing.” Since Berrigan’s political approach was not meant to unify but to purify, Weigel found fault with Berrigan’s philosophy. This philosophical difference is concretized in Berrigan’s unique practice of nonviolence and Weigel’s interpretation of this vis-à-vis “legitimate” nonviolence.

As I highlighted above, Berrigan’s first major foray into nonviolent civil disobedience involved using homemade napalm to burn draft files. The choice of napalm was no coincidence: United States soldiers in Vietnam were also using it. Weigel, among others, took offense that supposedly nonviolent activists would choose such “violent” means of carrying out their activism: “Classic Gandhian nonviolence – insisting on the prerogatives of just law, believing in the convertibility of the adversary who is also a seeker of truth, willing on principle to take the legal consequences of one’s acts of civil critique the personal lives of her disciples in the Catholic Worker movement, so it is unlikely that she was as averse to “name calling” as Weigel suggests.

166 Weigel, Tranquillitas Ordinis, 168.
disobedience for the sake of the law – was rejected.”\textsuperscript{167} In other words, only Gandhian nonviolence is truly “legitimate.” Moreover, Weigel accuses Berrigan of an imbalanced critique of the United States and an insufficiently critical position on the Viet Cong, the Weathermen,\textsuperscript{168} and the revolutionary movement in Latin America.\textsuperscript{169}

The influence of James Douglass went far beyond his own writings, according to Weigel’s critique. As with Day and Berrigan, Douglass’s theology has some major shortcomings, according to Weigel. Moreover, Douglass’s worldview is deficient for Weigel because, like Day and Berrigan, Douglass finds greater fault with the actions of the United States than he does with other nations and groups. In addition to Douglass seeming hypocritical on this front, Weigel also finds Douglass guilty of moving the church away from an intellectual approach to war and peace and towards an overly sentimental approach. After recounting a day-long retreat led by Douglass and his wife Shelley, Weigel recounts being “told by the Douglasses that the purpose of our time together was not to think analytically about the arms race, or the varieties of Catholic

\textsuperscript{167} Ibid. To be sure, however, Weigel would have still been opposed to the witness of Berrigan even if Berrigan had more neatly fit into the Gandhian model. Weigel suggests that Berrigan’s Christian commitment was “marked by extraordinary amounts of anger, self-righteousness, and arrogance” (169).

\textsuperscript{168} A group of anti-war students who moved toward the use of violence, with whom Berrigan had once been affiliated.

moral response to it, but, rather, to ‘get in touch with our feelings.’”\textsuperscript{170} Weigel makes it clear that this was the result of a misguided shift in careers for the professor-turned-activist Douglass.

The real crux of Douglass’s damage, according to Weigel, was the impact he had on the Catholic bishops of the United States, in particular his local ordinary in Seattle during the 1980s, Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen. Weigel reports, “Douglass’s tutelage led Archbishop Hunthausen to become one of the most prominent episcopal critics of U.S. deterrence strategy, a stance that helped pave the way for the 1983 pastoral letter, ‘The Challenge of Peace.’”\textsuperscript{171} Like Day and to a larger extent Berrigan, Douglass felt obligated to name the political implications of his theological understanding. Unlike Day and Berrigan, however, Douglass directly influenced a major player in the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and thus had some impact on the drafting of the peace pastoral letter.\textsuperscript{172} Weigel sees this influence as a major role in the larger abandonment of the heritage that comes to fruition in \textit{The Challenge of Peace}.

Weigel chronicles the years-long process of drafting \textit{The Challenge of Peace} and documents some of the themes that were common aspects of the episcopal debates during that time. Many of these themes seem to have been adopted from the writings and

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\item\textsuperscript{170} Weigel, Tranquillitas Ordinis, 170. On the following page, Weigel recalls sharing drinks with “a leading Catholic educator” after the conclusion of the retreat: “Staring into his beer, he mused on how the Church had probably invested half a million dollars in his education – and now he was being told not to think, but to ‘get in touch with his feelings’” (171).
\item\textsuperscript{171} Weigel, Tranquillitas Ordinis, 172.
\item\textsuperscript{172} Whatever the impact of Douglass, it would be impossible to discount the impacts that Berrigan, and especially Day, would have had on the bishops who wrote the document. In point of fact, the only living Roman Catholic pacifist mentioned by name in \textit{The Challenge of Peace} is Day. Along with Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., Day “has had a profound impact upon the life of the Church in the United States” (no. 117).
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activism of Day, Berrigan, and Douglass. For instance, Weigel notes, “An apocalyptic sense permeated their rhetoric. The bishops seem to have believed that they stood in an utterly unique historical moment…This in itself was an extraordinary claim for bishops who carried a fifteen-hundred-year-old heritage of thought on the moral problem of war and peace.”  

Likewise, Weigel argues that many of the bishops had been drawn into an anti-American ethos that unfairly criticized the United States for lapses in moral judgment, while seemingly turning a blind eye to other nations who were acting similarly. In Weigel’s estimation, the final version of the pastoral letter was even worse than no letter at all.

The Challenge of Peace spearheaded the tradition of what Weigel calls “abandonment of the heritage,” but Weigel presses beyond this point in his critical response to the document, noting that the letter “was a decisive moment in that process [of abandonment], because it involved the adoption, by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, of key themes of abandonment that had become pervasive in American Catholicism in the years following the Second Vatican Council.”  

Even more worrisome for Weigel is that American culture in general has influenced the bishops. He laments that the “claim that The Challenge of Peace has had a major impact on the American political culture could just as easily be inverted, and in a way that ought to provoke serious examination of conscience among bishops, social ethicists, publicists,

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173 Weigel, Tranquillitas Ordinis, 264.

174 Ibid., 280. Here, Weigel is referring to the themes mentioned above and their principal practitioners.
and the concerned Catholic population.” But what would the payout be in taking this message on war and peace seriously?

According to Weigel’s assessment, one of the key failures of the bishops in the letter was to pose pacifism and just war theory as complementary moral theories. Weigel contends, “The principled pacifist opposes all resort to armed force; the just-war theorist allows the proportionate and discriminate use of armed force in carefully defined circumstances. The confusion of these two positions leads to the corruption of both.” For Weigel, there is no legitimate way in which these two moral theories can be equated in the way the bishops maintain. The basic reason here is that Weigel is certain that the bishops have abandoned the heritage. In abandoning the heritage, the bishops adopt terminology such as “presumption against war” which does not align with the genuine tradition as Weigel understands it. As long as the bishops advance such an argument in the war and peace debate, Weigel believes, there is no way in which their “new” rhetoric on the issue will have any resemblance to the Augustinian understanding of peace as the “tranquility of order.”

It is clear that Weigel believes that the American bishops broke new ground in the debate on war and peace in the Roman Catholic tradition. Similarly clear is Weigel’s

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175 George Weigel, “The Bishops’ Pastoral Letter and American Political Culture: Who Was Influencing Whom?” in Reid, Peace In a Nuclear Age, 187.
176 Weigel, Tranquillitas Ordinis, 283. There are three points to be made in response to this objection to the pastoral letter: 1) This is part of a larger objection that attends to various criteria in the just war theory, however, this objection is most pertinent to our interests here; 2) Weigel is not alone in having this reaction to the document. It is shared by some pacifists and just-war theorists alike; 3) The objection does not preclude members of both parties working “together in the practical order on building international political community sufficient to sustain legal and political means of resolving conflict” (Tranquillitas Ordinis, 283).
diagnosis of this “groundbreaking”: “a tragically lost opportunity.” So what can we take away from Weigel’s displeasure with varieties of pacifism and The Challenge of Peace? I would argue there are three salient points moving forward: first, Weigel believes the bishops have abandoned the Augustinian tradition; next, he calls into question the bishops’ competency to address certain questions; finally, he wonders if it is even possible for an individual to be a nuclear pacifist.

The first of these is undoubtedly the most important from Weigel’s point of view: “the abandonment of the heritage.” As I have tried to show in this section, Weigel firmly believes that beginning with Saint Augustine and extending through the present day, the Christian tradition has staunchly defended the rights of nations to use force in defending themselves from unjust attacks. The tradition, as Weigel understands it, is based on moral and political questions regarding the use of violent force, and instead of approaching it as such, the bishops have taken nuclear weapons as their entry into the debate. According to Weigel, “This made the bishops vulnerable to intellectual currents and emotional passions that were not only external to their own tradition, but fundamentally opposed to its central claims.”

The bishops, then, have utterly failed at understanding their roles as interpreters of the tradition.

This unfortunate consequence of the letter brings us to the second problem from Weigel’s perspective: the competency of the bishops to address questions such as these in the first place. During the 1987-88 “American Search for Peace” seminar, Weigel

177 Ibid., 285.
178 Weigel, Tranquillitas Ordinis, 281.
179 This was a collection of theologians, ethicists, and other figures from within and outside of the Academy who “reflected a broad range of theological and political opinion on issues of ethics, war, and peace in the
offered a response to a presentation by David Hollenbach in which Weigel “argued that the way in which the churches had become involved in the peace and war debate was problematic. The churches claimed to come to the debate in a teaching and pastoral capacity. But they often wound up engaging in finely tuned policy analysis and prescription, a task for which they have no special competence.”\textsuperscript{180} Weigel claimed that the offshoot of the bishops acting in this way was threefold: they would lose their moral authority in general; they would slip into playing to one political party or another; and their analysis would continue to become overly psychological.\textsuperscript{181} For Weigel, there exists a very distinct line that the bishops must not cross in order to remain within their sphere of competency. Foremost among the issues that comprised this boundary line were issues of public policy as applied in times of war and peace. The payout of the bishops’ misunderstanding of their competency in this area was the “presumption against war” that \textit{The Challenge of Peace} proclaims to be the starting point for the just war theory.

Third, and finally, Weigel fails to see the validity of one particular type of contingent pacifism, namely nuclear pacifism. Instead, in a later essay he refers to this as “terminological imprecision.” He goes on:

\begin{quote}
What is termed “nuclear pacifism” is in fact a set of judgments (about either nuclear war or the threat of escalation to nuclear war from a conventional war between the superpowers) that is based, not on pacifist moral premises, but precisely on the just-war norms of proportionality \textit{ad}
\end{quote}

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\textsuperscript{181} Ibid., 269-270.
Bellum and in bello) and discrimination. I continue to suspect that the nomenclature “nuclear pacifism” was, and is, used on the assumption that identification with pacifism places one on the moral high ground, so to speak. Since this is, at best, a dubious position, I think we would all be better off if things were called by their proper names. “Nuclear pacifism” isn’t pacifism, and it shouldn’t describe itself as such.  

In all likelihood, this rejection of nuclear pacifism constitutes as well a broad rejection of the many varieties of contingent pacifism. This rejection results in Weigel lumping together all pacifists under a single belief system of absolute strictness in their objection to warfare. Weigel would differentiate between them by alluding to their tactics in how their pacifism plays out in the world. While it is not impossible for pacifists to have a de facto morally sound mindset, according to Weigel, it is crucial for them to be honest in what they call themselves. Even though Weigel fashions himself a Roman Catholic just war theorist, it is helpful to study that tradition to determine whether it would be appropriate to place Weigel squarely within it.

A Response to the Counterargument: Yoder, Weigel and a New Variety of Pacifism and An Updated Just War Theory

In this section, I first wish to respond to the three points raised at the end of the previous section. Having done so, I will conclude the chapter with an effort to sketch the necessary characteristics of a new and realistic understanding of pacifism to work alongside an updated just war theory in the twenty-first century. First, Weigel makes the sustained argument that the United States bishops have abandoned the heritage that they

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183 For instance, Weigel has a much more positive view of a pacifist such as Robert Pickus than he does of Daniel Berrigan. Weigel explains his preference because Pickus’s pacifism maintains a “politically responsible approach to the problem of war” (Tranquillitas Ordinis 170), whereas Berrigan’s does not.
are bound to advance through their episcopal office. This is a particularly serious
claim. There are three responses to this part of Weigel’s counterargument.

The first response to Weigel’s claim about the heritage being abandoned is that it
remains unclear what role in the heritage is occupied by the earliest Christians who
refused to serve in the military for the reasons listed above. While Weigel readily admits
that “St. Augustine of Hippo was not the first Christian to reflect on the moral problem of
war and peace,”184 he nonetheless fails to consider at any length some of the figures
mentioned above from the first few centuries of Christian practice who adamantly refused
to justify violent force in defense of rights. It is patently unfair to overlook this evidence
in the earliest days of the “heritage” and thereby claim that the heritage in question is one
that only advocates criteria for a just war. Pacifism surely has a legitimate role in the
heritage, and for the bishops to claim there is a presumption against war is to highlight a
well-documented aspect of the heritage, indeed.

The second response to Weigel’s claim focuses on the figure of Augustine. As I
noted above, Augustine advocated a stance of personal pacifism. This fact alone should
remind us that any understanding of Augustinian just war doctrine must be couched in the
reading of violence – even in defense of the rights of others – as rooted in evil or in the
privation of the good. Even though Weigel would argue that the presumption against war
was simply manufactured by the American bishops, it is difficult to read the origins of
Catholic just war thought without also noticing the clear desire to avoid the use of violent
force. Moreover, Augustine’s personal pacifism has a particular place in the tradition that

184 Weigel, Tranquillitas Ordinis, 26.
stands as a witness to the dignity of nonviolence. As the bishops explain, the justified war overcomes the presumption against violence in Augustinian thought: “Faced with the fact of attack on the innocent, the presumption that we do no harm, even to our enemy, yielded to the command of love understood as the need to restrain an enemy who would injure the innocent.”185 The presumption against war is the principal facet of the Augustinian just war theory that understands peace as the tranquility of order.

Finally, there is a third response worth exploring to Weigel’s accusation that the heritage has been abandoned: there must always be room for the development of any heritage. Since the time of Ambrose and Augustine, Christian thinking on war and peace has developed. Saint Thomas Aquinas is rightly credited with the most significant development of the heritage of Catholic thought dealing with war and peace. In point of fact, Weigel himself acknowledges this development at some length.186 Pope John XXIII (Pacem in terris) and the council fathers at Vatican Council II (Gaudium et spes) also developed this doctrine. As Hollenbach observes, “Only by a one-sided reading of tradition, recent discussions of war and peace among the Catholic theological and episcopal leadership, and contemporary political and military realities has Weigel been able to make a case for his thesis that the Catholic heritage has been abandoned.”187 By his “one-sided” reading of the heritage – only through the lens of tranquillitas ordinis –

185 CP, no. 81.
186 See Weigel, Tranquillitas Ordinis, 33-38. Of course, Weigel’s response to this accusation is that in moving to a greater concern for the common good, Thomas still remained within the Augustinian tradition of tranquillitas ordinis, whereas the U.S. bishops are abandoning this aspect of the tradition and forgetting what authentic peace actually is.
187 Hollenbach, “War and Peace in American Catholic Thought: A Heritage Abandoned?,” 717. It is worth noting that Hollenbach was referring explicitly to the ongoing dialogue between culture, broadly speaking, and the tradition. This, Hollenbach rightly notes, has been a hallmark of postconciliar thought.
Weigel has closed himself off from accepting legitimate developments of the heritage in question. In this way, his admonition of the bishops for abandoning their heritage is a failed attempt.

The second key point of Weigel’s critique is the bishops’ competency to make the types of statements they do in the letter in the first place. Clearly, I am not accusing Weigel of denying the bishops their rightful place as teachers of the Catholic faithful in their local churches. The accusation Weigel does make, however, that the bishops are simply not qualified to make policy suggestions as they do in *The Challenge of Peace* rings hollow because it sets up an apparent double standard in Weigel’s analysis. In one sense, *The Challenge of Peace* inherited the legacy that the American bishops had established with the “Bishops’ Program of Social Reconstruction” of 1919. As a body, the American Catholic bishops were known as the National Catholic War Council from 1917-1919, and then as the National Catholic Welfare Council. As Charles Curran explains, “The 1919 ‘Bishop’s Program’ indicated that the U.S. Catholic Church was now in a position to address in a more systematic and consistent way the issues of justice and peace facing the United States as a whole. Throughout the twentieth century, and into the twenty-first, bishops continued to speak out on such issues.” It would be nearly impossible to imagine *The Challenge of Peace* (among other pastoral letters) without the developments of 1919.

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188 For the most systematic treatment of this important evolution see Joseph M. McShane, S.J., “*Sufficiently Radical*”: Catholicism, Progressivism, and the Bishops’ Program of 1919 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1986).

Prominent among the influential, public, and political statements of the American episcopacy in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have been its outspoken advocacy against abortion and same-sex marriage. Similar to *The Challenge of Peace*, this advocacy has the effect of placing the bishops on a very particular side of divisive societal issues. The result has been a distinct movement into the political sphere. Simultaneously, the American episcopacy has focused less on issues of war and peace since it published the pastoral letter. Instead of committing themselves to what Joseph Cardinal Bernardin called the “consistent ethic of life,” the bishops zeroed in on one particular part of that overarching message.\(^{190}\) To my point: it is clear that Weigel would not counsel the American bishops to absent themselves from the ongoing debate over, for instance, whether women have the legal right to procure an abortion. If there is a question of competency, then it must be said that the bishops are no more experts in bioethics than they are in public policy. Either they remove themselves from all public policy debates or from none. One cannot have it both ways in this matter. It is my argument that the Roman Catholic bishops of any nation belong squarely in the midst of controversial debates such as warfare, capital punishment, and abortion.\(^{191}\)

In responding to the third of the above points Weigel makes, I readily admit I am responding to the most crucial argument for the purposes of this dissertation. Weigel’s opposition to the term “nuclear pacifism” and by association to all varieties of contingent

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\(^{190}\) Bernardin coined this term at Fordham University, during the Fall 1983 Gannon Lecture, entitled “A Consistent Ethic of Life: An American Catholic Dialogue.” The basic premise of the consistent ethic is that issues such as abortion, warfare, and capital punishment are not separate but closely linked through the basic human right to life.

\(^{191}\) Weigel and others might reply that since abortion is an “intrinsic evil” and therefore never morally licit, it lends itself to clearer teaching from the bishops. This should not cloud the fact that other “intrinsic evil” have not received the same episcopal response in this country (e.g. torture).
pacifism is misleading. I wish to focus my response on two aspects of the extended quotation above. First, Weigel argues that “nuclear pacifism,” as its practitioners understand it, is not really pacifism because it really has more to do with just war thinking than with the pacifist tradition. Weigel and I agree that there is a clear distinction between pacifism and the position in question. The overarching problem, of course, is that when the categories are simply “pacifism” and “just war theory” the result is a badly deficient understanding of the complexity of the scale on which individuals and groups find themselves with regard to the issue of war and peace. In truth, all varieties of contingent pacifism benefit from the just war criteria in explaining their rationale. Nuclear pacifists, for their part, point to proportionality and claim that it is impossible that this criterion ever be fulfilled with the use of nuclear weapons; therefore, when it comes to nuclear weapons, they are pacifists. Viewing pacifism and just war thinking as so diametrically opposed to one another is an injustice to both intellectual traditions.

The second claim is derived from the latter half of Weigel’s above accusation: “I continue to suspect that the nomenclature ‘nuclear pacifism’ was, and is, used on the assumption that identification with pacifism places one on the moral high ground, so to speak. Since this is, at best, a dubious position, I think we would all be better off if things were called by their proper names.” There are two rather glaring problems with this point.

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192 A further concern implicit in Weigel’s condemnation of nuclear pacifism is that it inherently takes on a political position, in that it denies any political attempt to develop more such weapons, or certainly to use these weapons in warfare. As we noted above, any pacifism that does not remain apolitical, is by its very nature inferior in Weigel’s eyes. John Howard Yoder noted Weigel’s acceptance of these apolitical forms of pacifism as a “Niebuhrian form of a backhanded compliment” in Nevertheless: The Varieties and Shortcomings of Religious Pacifism, rev. ed. (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1992), 175, n. 8. This is all part of Weigel’s larger argument that just war thinking and pacifism cannot be reconciled in the way that the bishops claim they can. Here, I must side with the bishops. While the bishops perhaps do not allow enough room for conflict between the two factions, it is still a worthwhile dialogue to have, and one which Weigel appears to eschew.
First, Weigel makes a claim about people, in general, believing that pacifism represents a “moral high ground.” This is a curious suggestion. I would hope that Weigel also believes that those (himself included) who adamantly believe that war can, in some tragic situations, be justified, also find themselves on “the moral high ground.” I wish to warn against using this term pejoratively, however. It is my argument that the grave situation of warfare necessarily requires each individual to make a crucial decision about her or his general conclusions regarding the permissibility of violent force. In the case of pacifists and just war theorists alike, it is my conclusion that all individuals will consider themselves to be on the “moral high ground” because they believe that is the most morally sufficient response. It is worth noting that a pejorative use of the term, conversely, assumes to know the inward beliefs of a particular individual or group. Such a judgment is not a worthwhile investment of time, and not the purpose of this study. One purpose of my work, however, is to make a coherent argument for the emergence of a new variety of religious pacifism in the twenty-first century.

This new variety of religious pacifism for our time can be known as “ecological pacifism.” While I will deal with this variety of contingent pacifism particularly in the final chapter of the dissertation, I will conclude this chapter with a brief overview of the necessary characteristics of a just war theory that will be useful in the world today, as well as a realistic variety of pacifism. The criteria of the just war theory, as laid out in *The Challenge of Peace*, are a suitable starting point for the doctrine as it should be implemented in the years ahead. Nevertheless, each criterion should be augmented by
more stringent standards\textsuperscript{193} that make it clear that the dangers of our world today are greater than those in the time of Augustine or of Thomas Aquinas. As I will argue, the effects of war on the natural environment and non-human animals must register as significant concerns when we consider creating a more just society. Moreover, regarding “ecological pacifism,” it must not be a type of contingent pacifism that places its advocates on the periphery of society. Ecological pacifists must not be viewed as passive idealists, as many groups have painted contingent and absolute pacifists in the past, and continue to do so. Rather, ecological pacifism must embrace much of what is good about the just war theory. In particular, ecological pacifists must rely upon the realism inherent in their position. Being realistic means that the continuation of war as it is currently being carried out will mean the continuing destruction of God’s creation, as well as our natural habitat. A realistic reading of the problem of warfare leads to a greater respect for all of creation. Such a realistic reading necessarily includes a discussion of justice after warfare, and the relationship between just war theorists and pacifists. These discussions are a key part of Chapter Two.

\textsuperscript{193} What John Howard Yoder would refer to as “just war with teeth.”
CHAPTER TWO

JUS POST BELLUM AND JUST PEACEMAKING: TWO DEVELOPMENTS IN THE WAR AND PEACE DEBATE

On 1 May 2003, in one of the most infamous presidential gaffes of recent memory, George W. Bush appeared aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln under a banner reading, “Mission Accomplished.” The bold statement, of course, referred to the war in Iraq that commenced fewer than two months earlier and would continue for more than seven additional years. Bush’s ill-timed proclamation of success, however, raised a crucial question for the United States and the entire world: what is the responsibility of a “victorious” nation in the wake of warfare? As I indicated briefly in the previous chapter, the Roman Catholic just war theory has identified two chronological stages in the process of a given war: ad bellum and in bello. In recent years, a number of thinkers – beginning with a 1994 article by Michael Schuck – have begun also to address the time after the fighting has ceased: jus post bellum.¹ This burgeoning aspect of war and peace studies

should take a central place of importance in the Roman Catholic just war theory precisely because of the inadequacies that it highlights in the current status quo. By focusing exclusively on the criteria before a war may be justly declared, as well as the criteria for fighting a just war, Christians neglect the fact that injustice also reigns supreme in post-war societies.

The second concept with which this chapter deals is another relatively new development in war and peace studies: just peacemaking theory. In the last 15 years, Glen Stassen (1936-2014) and his colleagues have argued that the interplay between just war theory and pacifism has not sufficiently responded to the problems in society that have historically led to violent conflict. As five just peacemaking theorists note in the introduction to the most recent edition of their work, there are now “three paradigms for the ethics of peace and war: pacifism, just war theory, and just peacemaking theory…An ethic of peace and war that still operates with only pacifism and just war theory is outdated.” 2 As some historians of war and peace will correctly note, properly speaking, there have been three paradigms before. To go along with pacifism and just war theory had been the third paradigm of the “holy war,” to which I allude in the preceding chapter.

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This point is important for the current discussion because it brings into question the proper place of just peacemaking in the current debate. In order to occupy a structurally dependable position in the war and peace discourse, just peacemaking theory must prove that it offers something to the debate.

One of the key facets of just peacemaking theory is that it is comprised of the work of both scholars who are pacifists and those who are adherents to just war theory. They explain the rationale for such a diversity of thought: “Just peacemaking won’t always prevent wars, so everyone needs either pacifism to say that participation in war is never justified, or just war theory to judge whether a particular war is justified.” This naturally leads to two important observations. First, if one must be a just war theorist or a pacifist in order to subscribe to just peacemaking theory, then how is just peacemaking a separate paradigm? Does its existence ultimately call for every individual and group within the other camps also to align with just peacemaking? More positively, however, the existence of just peacemaking theory does make it possible for adversaries in the just war/pacifism debate to come together to work for peace through civil discourse and united action.

After a brief excursus on just peace, this chapter will discuss some of the practices of just peacemaking theory and propose how ecological concerns could be integrated more seamlessly within that paradigm. In order for just peacemaking to have staying power in the church and the academy, it must be strengthened with practices that more

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3 Ibid., 9.
4 Each practice takes up one chapter in Stassen, *Just Peacemaking*. Because of space limitations, I will not have enough room to deal with each of the ten practices in the same depth. I will choose three that are particularly helpful in understanding just peacemaking theory in light of this project.
fully acknowledge the dangers of further ignoring the natural environment, particularly within the context of violent conflicts. Finally, this chapter will conclude with an analysis of where pacifism and just war theory are open to dialogue and look to the future with concrete suggestions leading to even greater common work for peace.

**Justice After Warfare and the Pacifist Tradition**

Perhaps the most interesting and debated question springing from the growing scholarship on *jus post bellum* is, “can good fruit come from a bad tree?” This question is challenging for both just war theorists and pacifists. Of course, pacifists would struggle with this question simply because they believe that, by definition, every single act of violence leading up to and within warfare is *always* unjust; violence is always and unequivocally a “bad tree.” For adherents to the just war theory – many of whom are contingent pacifists who believe that some particular issues will prohibit the use of violent force – the question likewise poses a moral quandary. When a war that fails to meet all the *ad bellum* and *in bello* criteria for a justified conflict ends, what can then happen to create some semblance of justice for those who have been wronged? Is there a way to make the fruits of this bad tree good?

Mark Allman and Tobias Winright have done a great service in beginning to answer this question. They assert, “A war that fails to meet the *jus ad bellum* requirements, but observes the *in bello* restraints and fulfills the *post bellum* responsibilities does not turn an unjust war into a just war, but it does make it less unjust

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5 This image is first introduced by Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount (Mt 7:18). For Jesus, the answer to the query is in the negative. Martin Luther famously cites the passage and comments upon it in his *Concerning Christian Liberty*. 

than it would have been if the in bello and post bellum obligations had been ignored. We envision the justice of war on a sliding scale of sorts.6 This “sliding scale” of justice in warfare is surely helpful from the perspective of just war theorists, especially since there is such a broad range of adherence to the plausibility that in some circumstances violence might be necessary. The scale, however, is more questionable for pacifists, who would claim that every single act of violence is de facto unjust. Pacifists – if they authentically hold their positions – must be on board with post bellum efforts at creating justice. After the fighting in a war has ended, being a pacifist means the same thing theoretically and practically as it did before and during the fighting: stringent opposition to any and all types of violence from all sectors. After a war has ended, however, there is a practical difference for pacifists regarding just post bellum: they are obliged to work actively for justice in the areas where the conflict had created situations of injustice.

For the purposes of this project, I wish to reference the four jus post bellum criteria that Allman and Winright suggest in After the Smoke Clears: the just cause principle, the reconciliation phase, the punishment phase, and the restoration phase.7 In briefly describing each of these criteria, I will also address a pacifist response to each criterion or stage. In so doing, I illustrate how pacifists not only can, but also must,

6 Allman and Winright, After the Smoke Clears, 98. In other words, on the scale, a war may be “perfectly just” (which the authors claim does not exist), “imperfectly just,” “unjust,” or “perfectly unjust” depending on how satisfactorily the given war meets the ad bellum, in bello, and post bellum criteria.

7 As Allman and Winright note (85), their own work draws on that of the philosopher Brian Orend, but their work is unique because of its particular place within the Christian just war (and I would argue, pacifist) tradition. Allman and Winright contend that these criteria (especially the last three) are best referred to as “stages.”
participate in movements to create justice after a given violent conflict if they are to remain true to their philosophical beliefs.

When speaking of pacifism, I am in some ways constrained by having to do so in a general sense only; thus I am unable to attend to the arguments proposed by every pacifist or even every group of pacifists. In the pages that follow, however, one area of pacifist thought in general will emerge: the firm belief that the moral goals, principles and virtues that guide human beings at the personal and interpersonal levels are the same moral goals, principles and virtues that guide us at the social and political levels of existence. Readers will, of course, note that this is a marked difference from traditional thought concerning just war doctrine, which is perhaps best explicated by twentieth century Protestant ethicist, Reinhold Niebuhr.

Niebuhr is well known for advancing a line of thought known as Christian realism. A realist outlook on the world argues, in part, that what may work in individual cases may not be imposed upon the state. As Niebuhr explains, there is a conflict between what he calls individual (religious) morality and social (political) morality. He does not admit that the pacifist will always be wrong in making a seamless jump from personal to social morality: “Forgiveness may not always prompt the wrongdoer to repentance; but yet it may. Loving the enemy may not soften the enemy’s heart; but there are possibilities that it will. Refusal to assert your own interests against another may not shame him into unselfishness; but on occasion it has done so.”

Ultimately,Niebuhr maintains that individual interests, while “related to those of the group,” should take a secondary

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8 Reinhold Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1932), 264.
position, while the needs of the group take the primary position.” The pacifist position that I present in this chapter holds – contra Niebuhr – that entire states can and should take as their policy the ideal of love.

The Just Cause Principle and Pacifism

The first post bellum category is the just cause principle. This principle is also a criterion in the jus ad bellum stage of just war theory, though it differs from the context of the post bellum phase. The U.S. Catholic bishops note that the just cause principle means “War is permissible only to confront ‘real and certain danger,’ i.e., to protect innocent life, to preserve conditions necessary for decent human existence, and to basic human rights.” The bishops continue by noting the danger of new weapons technologies. In line with papal thought from the preceding decades, the bishops reiterate the concerns of new weapons by noting, “if war of retribution was ever justifiable, the risks of modern war negate such a claim today.” As Allman and Winright make clear, “Just cause post bellum is related but not identical to just cause ad bellum.” Clearly, Allman and Winright are alluding to the fact that once a particular conflict has reached its conclusion, it is not possible to wonder whether there is a “just cause” for battle.

The post bellum application of the just cause principle, as Allman and Winright have catalogued, entails three steps: “accountability,” “means of restraint,” and

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9 Ibid., 273-4. For more on this point, see Reinhold Niebuhr, An Interpretation of Christian Ethics (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1935), 79.
10 See Allman and Winright, After the Smoke Clears, 85-101.
11 The Challenge of Peace, no. 86.
12 Ibid., no. 86.
13 Allman and Winright, After the Smoke Clears, 86.
These steps are important in contextualizing the *jus post bellum* criteria within just war thought as a whole. The doctrine calls for “accountability” from the first moment of discernment about the legitimacy of violence in a given situation; the just war theory is itself meant to “restrain” the justified party from overt aggression. Finally, “proportionality” is a criterion in both the *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* stages of just war thinking. In the time after a war has officially ended, the virtues of accountability, restraint, and proportionality are especially important because this stage is typically when the vanquished nation is at its most vulnerable. Such a state of vulnerability means that the “victors” could take their opportunity to bring the amount of devastation to an even greater level. The Roman Catholic understanding of justified conflict would disparage such a malicious and opportunistic mindset.

Admittedly, the line between *in bello* and *post bellum* becomes very blurred due to a lack of clarity about the official cessation of conflict. Therefore, extra care and attention to the human and ecological rights of the defeated nation are even more important in the closing stages of battle and in the earliest post-war stages. As I noted above, a pacifist would have trouble initially accepting the term “just cause” because of her or his prior allegiance to a mindset that believes there is no such thing as just cause for violence. However, since the *post bellum* criterion of “just cause” is essentially different from the *ad bellum* criterion, a pacifist must accept it as a just cause to create a new situation of peace in a recently vanquished land. For adherents to the just war theory, and those who believe the *jus post bellum* criteria fits nicely within this tradition, there

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14 See ibid., 87-89.
follows a particular tension with pacifists who should also fruitfully employ the *jus post bellum* criteria. Pacifists may well disregard the *ad bellum* and *in bello* criteria, but they may also see those criteria as more than mere checklists. In this way, pacifists would likely disagree with Allman and Winright, who critique a “segmented approach [to the categories of just war theory], as the three categories are intimately related.”  

A pacifist struggling to accept the legitimacy of a *post bellum* category within the just war theory might consider it as impossible that the three categories of just war theory could be “intimately related” because the actions of preparing for (*ad bellum*) and participating in (*in bello*) warfare differ significantly from the attempt to create a situation of justice after a conflict has come to an end (*post bellum*). The latter stage, however, is something that is incumbent upon not only those who prepared for the warfare and those who take part in the combat itself, but also for all human beings as part of the common good. This is not only a key tenet in Catholic social teaching but also a pillar of the just war theory—a pillar that thus calls the pacifist to action in the *post bellum* stage. In his encyclical *Mater et magistra*, Pope John XXIII defines the common good as “the sum total of those conditions of social living whereby men are enabled more fully and more readily to achieve their own perfection.” Particularly in the case of warfare, the notion of the common good places a serious challenge on those who would champion going to war. As Cahill puts it, “The proclivity to view foreigners not only as

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15 Ibid., 90. In the previous sentence, Allman and Winright also note that they find problems with the “checklist” approach to the just war criteria. My point is that one may well be a pacifist and understand that in order to engage profitably with just war theorists, the criteria are not meant to be utilized merely as a checklist.

outsiders, but as enemies to whom one does not apply the same requirements of
justice, much less compassion or love, is converted in recent encyclicals into a view of all
persons and groups as constituting one community of human persons.”\textsuperscript{17} Since the
common good is essential in Catholic social thought, it applies to pacifists and just war
theorists alike. \textit{Jus post bellum} could rightly be described as a post-war return to standard
ethical concerns that should always govern the international sphere.

Simply because one, as a pacifist, might reject the \textit{ad bellum} and \textit{in bello} criteria
for justified violence does not mean that this individual is also permitted to excuse
himself or herself from participating in efforts to create new situations of accord in a
vanquished land. As Charles Curran helpfully observes of \textit{jus post bellum}, “such a
condition reminds us of the inherent limitation in any use of force. Force can and at times
should be used to stop an injustice, but it can never bring about true justice and peace.”\textsuperscript{18}
Therefore, I agree with Allman and Winright in their assertion that the three categories of
just war theory cannot be taken as totally separate entities in the eyes of just war
theorists. However, I do make the important caveat that \textit{jus post bellum} is also especially
important for pacifists given their categorical objection to the other categories indicated
by the just war theory. These individuals, regardless of their disavowal of the \textit{ad bellum}
and \textit{in bello} criteria, must take very seriously the \textit{post bellum} criteria. Allman and
Winright posit, “If Christians wish to be just war theorists, then they must be equally
committed, if not more, to proactively eliminating the conditions that lead to war. They

\textsuperscript{17} Cahill, \textit{Love Your Enemies}, 206.
must be vigorous peacemakers.”¹⁹ To this I would add that pacifists are likewise obligated to carry out the gospel command to be peacemakers by seeing the conclusion of a war—a war they opposed from its very outset—as a “just cause” calling them to action in finally bringing about a time of peace, albeit an imperfect one given the conditions of warfare that precede and necessitate it.

The Reconciliation Phase and Pacifism

Next, I turn to what Allman and Winright term the “reconciliation phase” of postwar justice.²⁰ They lament that reconciliation is often dismissed by some who believe that victims should never be expected to forgive their attackers: “We believe that such worries possibly evince an impoverished understanding of reconciliation, seeing it primarily as a forgive-and-forget approach, whereas a richer understanding of reconciliation demands acknowledgment of guilt, contrition, reparations (penance), and – only then – absolution.”²¹ To be fair, one of the widespread problems in understanding the process of reconciliation is this precise misunderstanding of the terms involved. Allman and Winright explain a crucial difference between reconciliation and forgiveness: “Forgiveness seeks reconciliation, which is mutual. It is an action directed toward the other. It does not imply condoning or accepting the behavior of the other, only that one

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²⁰ See ibid., 102-117.
²¹ Ibid., 103.
wishes to set oneself and the other free, to move on. Reconciliation is relational, mutual. It is the result and goal of forgiveness.”

The relationship between reconciliation and retributive justice is as intimate as the relationship between the three categories of just war theory. It is impossible to have full justice and peace after a conflict has ended if reconciliation is not a part of the equation. Allman and Winright note, “Robust post war justice includes elements of restorative justice alongside retributive, social, procedural, and criminal justice…Restorative justice approaches conflict by engaging ‘those who are harmed, wrongdoers and their affected communities in search of solutions that promote repair, reconciliation and the rebuilding of relationships.’”

According to Allman and Winright, post-conflict reconciliation entails six key elements: “immediate post conflict period,” “acknowledgment of wrongdoing,” “apologies,” “punishment,” “forgiveness,” and “amnesty.” While I cannot attend in depth to each of these areas here, I do wish to focus particularly on apology and forgiveness as especially crucial in the process of reconciliation. First, before a guilty party can apologize for their actions, they must acknowledge their guilt. At this time, however, they enter into a distinct phase of the time after a wrong has been carried out. In the case of national and international conflict that have engendered massive amounts of

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22 Ibid., 104. As they explain earlier, relying on the work of Walter Wink, forgiveness is a “unilateral” action, and so only relies on the part of the victim.
23 Ibid., 105.
24 See ibid., 107-116.
25 I maintain, with Allman and Winright, that each of the six elements is vital for authentic reconciliation to take place. I will deal with the act of punishing the wrongdoers in the next part of this section, since the punishment phase is the third of the four post bellum phases in Allman and Winright’s work.
violence and countless casualties, it is interesting that both parties can learn from other instances where reconciliation has occurred. In point of fact, interpersonal relations may serve as the most meaningful example of cases of true reconciliation. Almost every individual has experienced in his or her life cases of committing wrongs as well as those of being wronged. In these instances, the effects of an authentic and heartfelt apology – springing from the realization that one has wronged another – are startling. Likewise, a person may apologize for institutional sins committed over a period of time. As Allman and Winright contend, “Apologies involve a great reversal as they require perpetrators to surrender the position of power, to become vulnerable (humble) before the ones they have wronged, leaving it to the victims to decide whether the apology will be accepted or rejected.”

Once an apology has been offered and accepted, it becomes more likely that forgiveness may be offered to the offending party. Allman and Winright contend here, “Only that which has been fully disclosed can be forgiven.” They go on, noting that acknowledgment and apology for the wrong done are prerequisites for true forgiveness:

Forgiveness not only empowers victims, it can also liberate them from the past. Having the horrid things done to them acknowledged and having the perpetrators ask their forgiveness allows victims to close that chapter of their lives and move on (without forgetting). This is why forgiveness cannot be rushed. It must proceed at the pace the victim sets.

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26 Allman and Winright, *After the Smoke Clears*, 111.
27 Ibid., 113.
28 Ibid., 114. They go on, agreeing with Walter Wink’s assessment, and claiming, “True forgiveness requires full knowledge of what was done and sincerity on the part of the confessor – in other words, genuine contrition” (114).
Here, I quibble with Allman and Winright over their understanding of forgiveness and reconciliation. I agree that in order to accomplish authentic reconciliation, both parties – the perpetrator and the victim – have a role to play. The perpetrators must acknowledge, apologize, and serve some type of penalty for their actions; the victim must forgive the penitent guilty party. Only then can true reconciliation take place. But what happens when the guilty party does not accept responsibility for their actions, or can otherwise not be forgiven?

One of the most noteworthy examples of such a situation as this occurred on 2 October 2006 in West Nickel Mines School, Lancaster County, PA. This one-room Amish school building was the scene of a heinous shooting that took the lives of some five young girls, aged 6-13, before the shooter took his own life as well. In the immediate aftermath of this act, the Amish community forgave the shooter, befriended and comforted his wife, and took the opportunity to practice Christian forgiveness. This action does not fit the model for forgiveness that Allman and Winright note in their study, yet it does show the victims pursuing forgiveness on their own terms and in their own time. In this case, their terms did not have conditions, and their timing was immediate. Yet, such a gesture of forgiveness should not be mistaken for condonation of the violent act, since through their words and actions they still showed grief and anguish over such a terrible event ever having taken place. It is just such an event that should stir the creative
imaginings of pacifists who consider the relationship between forgiveness and reconciliation.  

There is little question that the pacifist response to the reconciliation phase of *jus post bellum* would be quite positive. While some pacifists would emphasize reconciliation more than others, it is undoubtedly the case that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to be a pacifist (particularly a Christian pacifist) if reconciliation was not a fundamental part of one’s life. By no means does this indicate a universal agreement on what reconciliation entails, and certainly does not mean agreement on the various parts of reconciliation. For example, it is altogether probable that many individual pacifists would disagree with Allman and Winright’s assessment of the six key elements of reconciliation listed above. For the purposes of this discussion, I will highlight two potential responses offered by pacifists on the topic of exceptionless forgiveness.

The first possibility is represented in the work of Miroslav Volf (b. 1956). For this possibility, I wish to note Jesus’ well-known teaching on the nature and frequency of forgiveness: “Be on your guard! If another disciple sins, you must rebuke the offender, and if there is repentance, you must forgive. And if the same person sins against you seven times a day, and turns back to you seven times and says, ‘I repent,’ you must

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30 I do admit that Volf does have a somewhat confusing stance among pacifists; he believes that because violence belongs to God alone, it is not permitted for human beings to use violence. This belief, vis-à-vis human beings is accepted by all pacifists, but the argument vis-à-vis God, would be rejected by many pacifists, who would instead argue that God is completely nonviolent, and human beings are to emulate the God of peace.
forgive” (Lk 17:3-4). Here, it is clear why Volf (along with some other pacifists as well as Allman and Winright) claims that forgiveness should only follow an apology by the offending party. As Volf notes, “To offer forgiveness is at the same time to condemn the deed and accuse the doer; to receive forgiveness is at the same time to admit to the deed and accept the blame.” This argument from some pacifists would clearly hold that it is not a fundamental requirement of the pacifist to forgive as soon as one has been wronged. Before forgiving the offending party, acknowledgement and apologies must be made by the offenders. Only then does the forgiveness not become false in nature.

The other possible response that a pacifist might make when on the receiving end of an injustice is in line with the response proffered by the Amish community after the 2006 shooting: to forgive without seeking any sort of acknowledgment on the part of the offender. In the case of the Amish community, since the wrongdoer had also killed himself, it was truly impossible for him to apologize and actually “receive” forgiveness, as Volf would put it. However, the strand of Christian pacifists who would look to this Amish community as their guide can also point to the decisive figure of Christ as he was being crucified. His proclamation of forgiveness goes beyond forgiving based on the condition of the offending party repenting. From the cross, Luke records Jesus imploring,

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31 The parallel of this text in the Gospel of Matthew reads, “Then Peter came and said to him, ‘Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?’” Jesus said to him, ‘Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times’” (Mt 18:21-22). It is followed by the parable of the unforgiving servant (vv. 23-34).

“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing” (Lk 23:34). There is no record of Jesus’ executioners acknowledging their faults and seeking forgiveness before Jesus utters these words. The response from some pacifists, when referring to this passage, must certainly be confusion as to why the guilty party must apologize in the first place. Furthermore, if the act of forgiving is partially to free the burdens of the victimized, why should it require the prior acknowledgment and apology by the doer of the evil deed? It would be altogether reasonable for a person or group (like the Amish) to take matters into their hands and decide to forgive their offenders independently of whether or not the offenders requested it.

Regardless of which of those two particular groups a pacifist finds herself or himself in, it is clear that the reconciliation phase of *jus post bellum* is the particular criterion most readily accepted by pacifists at large. It is also fitting to note that with the shift in magisterial church teaching since *Pacem in terris*, these pacifists may look especially at the example of Pope John Paul II in offering their forgiveness. According to Daniel Philpott, “no pope strongly and systematically advocated forgiveness as a political practice until John Paul II did in *Dives in Misericordia* in 1984 [sic] and in several subsequent statements.” For John Paul II, however, forgiveness was not merely a political or institutional arrangement. John Paul II is also a model for the group of pacifists who might believe that forgiveness can be extended even before the guilty party apologizes. On 13 May 1981, John Paul was shot in the abdomen while greeting pilgrims.

in Saint Peter’s Square. Only four days later, the faithful gathered in that same place for the regular Sunday Angelus prayer and weekly papal address heard a tape-recorded message from John Paul, in which the pope expressed his own prayer for that day: “I pray for that brother of ours who shot me, and whom I have sincerely pardoned. United with Christ, Priest and Victim, I offer my sufferings for the Church and for the world.”

Surely, this model of forgiveness can appeal to those pacifists on either side of the issue of forgiving without first receiving some recognition of wrongdoing by the offender. Particularly in the case of _jus post bellum_, however, it is important to carry out certain penalties in the course of restoring justice.

One of the most common critiques of the reconciliation process is that the act of forgiving an individual or a group for a wrong that has been committed is actually tantamount to forgetting that the action had ever occurred at all. As I have tried to illustrate, in cases of authentic reconciliation, this is far from the reality because instead of forgetting the action has occurred, the victim(s) forgive not out of a sense of amnesia, but rather out of a sense of being changed by the event. Not only is it impossible to forget the injustice, but to do so would be decidedly unhelpful. Remembering the evil action that has been done makes it possible to grow and to rebuild. Part of this remembering includes holding the guilty party accountable for the injustice in question. Accountability may begin with the guilty party acknowledging their role in a particular action, but it surely must not end there. Not only should apologies be proffered, but those who are

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guilty of heinous acts of war crimes should also have to pay some price for what they have done.

The Punishment Phase and Pacifism

Allman and Winright settle on two interrelated and key components of punishment: compensation and war crimes trials.\(^{35}\) The first component – compensation – is necessarily preceded by acknowledgment of guilt: “At the most basic level, post war restitution refers to returning property unjustly or justly seized during conflict (returning annexed land, seized financial assets, war booty, and so on) or paying for what has been unjustly destroyed.”\(^{36}\) As the authors point out, quite reasonably this would return the state of affairs to a situation very similar to what was present before the war took place: *status quo ante bellum*, or “the condition that led to war in the first place.”\(^{37}\) Allman and Winright go beyond the types of things for which there ought to be compensation after a war has taken place. They make it clear that, as a point of justice, in the process of this compensation “the perpetrators, not the victims, should be the ones who bear the burdens and costs of the bad behavior.”\(^{38}\) Who are these people?

In considering who actually ought to pay for the reparations after a war has ended, Allman and Winright suggest that “due care needs to be exercised to ensure that the civilian population of an unjust aggressor nation does not bear the burden of decisions

\(^{35}\) See Allman and Winright, *After the Smoke Clears*, 118-142.

\(^{36}\) Ibid., 120.

\(^{37}\) Ibid.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., 121.
made by political and military leaders over which civilians had no control.”

Granted, this brings up a number of significant and controversial issues, but it is certainly a fair way to initiate the conversation for such post war penalties. There is no doubt that the political leadership of an aggressor nation must be the first party held responsible in the wake of combat. If this is not the case, it becomes impossible to judge war properly from the perspective of serving justice after the war has ended.

Finally, with regard to compensation, Allman and Winright consider the question of how much is owed to the victimized nation. They claim, “Compensation agreements need to be proportional: enough to make restitution more than a token gesture and enough to serve as a penalty that satisfies, at least in part, the victims of the crime, but not so severe that the vanquished never recover.”

Perhaps the greatest element to glean from the writing on compensation after a conflict has ended is the rehabilitative nature of punishments such as these. Here an ecclesiological analogy might be in order. These types of financial compensations (along with prior acknowledgment of guilt and apologies) are similar in some ways to a variety of canonical penalties. As has been the

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39 Ibid., 125. They go on to suggest, with Michael Walzer and Brian Orend, that particularly the “political and military elite” should be responsible, as well as note Gary Bass’s point that “war profiteers” should also be held accountable (125). What is not dealt with directly here, and is also a point about which pacifists and contingent pacifists might wonder, is what happens when the vast majority of a civilian population is strongly in support of a given unjust war. The prime example for this might be the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, which was supported by the vast majority of the United States civilian population and their congressional representatives. Pacifists and (some) contingent pacifists might ask why the many civilians who placed their support behind such a war should not be made to compensate in some way. Also, the authors do cite Walzer’s belief that “post war taxes on the populace of the aggressor the price for maintaining national sovereignty” (125).

40 Ibid., 129.
tradition of the church, these punishments are never meant to be a permanent penalty. As one canonist explains, “Since the purpose of medicinal penalties is conversion, a censure must be lifted when the offender repents and is willing to repair the harm done or the scandal caused.” Just as those found guilty of committing grave canonical offenses are permitted to return to the community following a period of moral rehabilitation, so too should guilty parties in warfare be returned to the international community following their own offenses.

The second aspect of the punishment phase, according to Allman and Winright, is war crimes trials. These trials are carried out in order to determine guilt in both the *ad bellum* and *in bello* stages of the warfare. This seems a natural component of any post-war justice, for similar reasons that civil trials are used to create situations of justice after a civilian crime has occurred: “War crimes trials are a key component of *jus post bellum* in that they endeavor to end war well by holding accountable those who violate the norms and standards of just war theory.” Depending on when the particular war crime took place (*ad bellum* or *in bello*), there will be different defendants in the trial. If the crime of aggression took place in the stages leading up to the combat, then it is likely that the governmental leadership that orchestrated the aggression will be held responsible. If the injustice took place during the fighting itself, the onus for the injustice will shift to the

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41 See *Code of Canon Law* (1985 ed.), no. 1358 §1: “Remission of a censure cannot be granted unless the offender has withdrawn from contumacy according to the norm of ⇒ can. 1347, §2; it cannot be denied, however, to a person who withdraws from contumacy.”


44 Ibid.
military responsible for carrying it out. As I noted earlier in the chapter, the level of justice in the war is important here. If the war met neither the *ad bellum* or *in bello* criteria necessary for it to be considered justified, then both government and military officials will be tried in these affairs.

Undoubtedly, there would be a variety of opinions with regard to the punishment phase of *jus post bellum* among pacifists. Merely because one is a pacifist does not mean that she or he is willing to let guilty aggressors (whether in personal or war crimes) go unpunished. There is a clear difference between making the conscious decision not to use violence against another human being and believing that a person who has committed an act of injustice should not have to pay some price for their transgression. While the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission of the late 1990s was not a war crimes trial *per se*, it does helpfully illuminate the question at hand. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who served in an integral role throughout these proceedings, was guided by *ubuntu*. As Peter-John Pearson explains, “*ubuntu* orients one to look at one’s torturers, to realize that they need help, and to stand ready to enable them to regain their humanity…But *ubuntu* does not allow perpetrators to escape the necessity of confessing and making restitution to survivors, because it places the needs of society – the restoration of relationships – at the heart of reconciliation.”45 I would contend that some forms of pacifism ideologically cling to the same foundations as *ubuntu* and derive their own beliefs from that worldview.

One critique that some pacifists might well make towards war crimes trials is that they stray from the ideal toward which pacifists strive to create in the world. Here, the best course of action would be to hearken back to the writings of Augustine and other important figures in just war theory, all of whom remind us that there is a vast separation between the ideal and the real. This conclusion does not mean that war crimes trials are meaningless. In point of fact, they can be very fruitful in bringing about a close approximation of justice, a goal for which all pacifists must at least strive. As David Carroll Cochran explains in his study on abolishing warfare, pacifists must look to the progress that has already been made in eliminating other sources of injustice in society such as dueling, slavery, and lynching. He argues that opposing these forms of violence – an opposition now commonly accepted as being on the right side of history – was a lost cause in the time during which these practices were common: “Opponents of these various forms of institutionalized violence consistently faced charges of being unrealistic and foolishly utopian, but what their critics always missed was the fact that we can make moral progress without achieving moral perfection.”\textsuperscript{46} Ironically, even though Cochran is pointing to the shortsightedness of those in favor of these types of violence, this same advice is very helpful to pacifists now. Even though war crimes trials may seem to some pacifists to be a way of rehashing old conflicts and keeping a war alive, they can actually be a way to move forward, and create situations of reconciliation, so that peace may be achieved in formerly combative areas.

The Restoration Phase and Pacifism

The final phase that Allman and Winright pursue in their study is the restoration phase of *jus post bellum*. As they put it, “A just war ends with the creation of conditions that permit citizens to pursue a life that is meaningful and dignified.” These conditions are met through five particular concerns.

The first of these concerns is security and policing. Looking to the future with any optimism about real reform in a war-ravaged society without security is almost impossible. As the authors suggest, “A secure peace that protects civil liberties and human rights should magnify the probability of success of other tasks necessary for restoring public life.” They go on to argue for measures taken to ensure a “positive peace” in countries after a war has ended rather than simply the absence of conflict, which only has the result of leading to more situations of violence. One need look no further than Iraq and Afghanistan to see the validity of this point.

The second concern is for lasting and effective political reform. Allman and Winright make a vital point that has two important consequences: “Simply reinstating the same political powers that waged the war in the first place (*status quo ante bellum*) is undesirable and unjust, but triumph in battle does not confer upon the victor the right to restructure the vanquished in any way it sees fit.” The first of the important

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47 Allman and Winright, *After the Smoke Clears*, 143.
48 Ibid., 145. Interestingly, the term “probability of success” is also one of the *jus ad bellum* criteria put forth by the U.S. Catholic bishops in *The Challenge of Peace*. The terminology is well-suited here because it blends together the *ad bellum* criterion with this restoration phase of the *post bellum* stage. It is crucial to consider the probability of success for the future of a vanquished nation.
49 See ibid., 147-52.
50 Ibid., 153.
consequences from this overview of *post bellum* restoration is the caution regarding the reinstatement to positions of authority of those individuals who directed the nation before and during the war. Quite obviously, having already proven their incompetence in bringing about peace and justice in the nation, these individuals should be prevented from returning to office. The second consequence, though, balances the first by placing a limit upon the victorious nation regarding who may fill these leadership posts. Crucially, Allman and Winright note the difference between initiating a war with the stated goal of regime change and changing the regime during the *post bellum* stage. While the victors must take initial responsibility for filling the political voids, according to Allman and Winright there is a limit on this interim regime: “The goal is a just and lasting peace inclusive of robust defense of human rights, a functioning and stable government pursuing the common good, and socio-economic conditions that allow the citizenry to flourish.”

The third concern in the restoration phase is economic recovery. Here, it is clear that many nations that have been plagued by war for some time will have a very difficult experience in this part of the restoration phase, since the effects of war are not only damage on the battlefield: “If a conflict has waged for decades, then countries face the possibility of a workforce that knows no vocations other than soldiering. In such situations, vocational training is paramount for peace.” I would add that such broad

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51 Ibid., 160. This is the optimal result. In the preceding lines, they write, “Minimally, the political, policing, and military structures of the vanquished aggressor need to be reformed to the extent that the conditions that led to the aggression are eliminated and new threats are removed, but not to the extent that they become vulnerable or are reduced to a puppet government” (160).

52 Ibid., 161.
vocational training is squarely in line with the Catholic social thought tradition, which has been carried out by recent papal encyclicals. As Allman and Winright rightly note, “If the aim of a just war is the tranquility that comes from order, then the jobs, infrastructure, and banking and financial institutions needed to bring economic stability must be seen as concomitant duties implicit in the reasons cited for going to war in the first place.”

The social rehabilitation of nations is the penultimate concern of the restoration phase. Here Allman and Winright build on the argument of retired Admiral Louis Iasiello, who “identifies the need to safeguard the innocent and vulnerable and to pay attention to the transition of the military as two vital components to post bellum social rehabilitation.” Of the five concerns, this is the one that most clearly focuses on representatives from both sides of a conflict. Allman and Winright correctly note the biblical foundation of caring for the innocent and vulnerable, and this should have clear ramifications in any Christian understanding of post war justice. The care of soldiers should extend to soldiers on both sides of a completed conflict. As the authors suggest, “When a nation sends it citizens to war, it turns ordinary men and women into potential killers. In so doing, nations should assume the responsibility to assist warriors in their transition back to civilian life once the fighting has ended. This includes rehabilitation for

54 Allman and Winright, *After the Smoke Clears*, 163. Of course, the cited quotation asks the question indirectly, if the “tranquility that comes from order” was actually the aim of a war in the first place.
55 Ibid., 163.
physical injuries sustained in combat, as well as the care of emotional and psychological disabilities.”

The fifth, and final, element of the restoration phase of *jus post bellum* is environmental cleanup. I will deal with this particular issue in more detail in the final chapter of this dissertation. For the purposes of this chapter, suffice it to say that the authors broach this subject because of the clear impact of depleted uranium and cluster bombs and land mines. This work is foundational for the terrible impact that warfare has had on the environment. It is impossible to consider true justice after a war has ended without thinking of the sacrifice necessary to create justice for the natural environment, upon which all living beings depend for their vitality.

The pacifist responses to these five restoration concerns in creating post-war justice are varied. In a general sense, one must admit the vast majority of pacifists would support the complete restoration of the ravaged nations based purely on the principle that they would have believed that the war was unjust in the first place. In this sense, the pacifist response to this stage is similar to that of the reconciliation phase: there is little with which to argue. For pacifists, perhaps the most interesting of the aforementioned five key concerns in the restoration phase is security and policing. I note this as the most interesting concern because it seems most likely to involve violence and will thus be of

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56 Ibid., 164. In the preceding paragraphs, Allman and Winright note the grave struggles that many former soldiers experience with posttraumatic stress disorder and other psychological maladies.

particular importance to those who eschew violence in all its forms. I will briefly consider one approach to this issue.

The most recent response by a pacifist to the problem of security and policing is the concept of “just policing” advanced by Gerald W. Schlabach. Schlabach takes as his starting point the crucial question posed by John Howard Yoder, with which many pacifists would likely sympathize:

The question, May a Christian be a policeman? is posed in legalistic terms. The answer is to pose the question on the Christian level: Is the Christian called to be a policeman? We know he is called to be an agent of reconciliation. Does that general call, valid for every Christian, take for certain individuals a form of a specific call to be also an agent of the wrath of God?

Even if Yoder attests to having never met a Christian who genuinely discerned her or his calling to be a police officer, the question must be taken seriously if it is even a possibility. What does this mean for the ethics of policing among pacifists? There is no unanimous agreement, but it is at least a worthwhile starting point among pacifists for there to be agreement that security and policing must have the best interests of the rebuilding nation in mind. This means that pacifists must agree with Allman and Winright that there must be a positive peace in a restored society.


In this section, I have attempted to advance Allman and Winright’s *jus post bellum* as a serious addition to what the Roman Catholic church considers the official just war tradition. In so doing, I have taken each particular *post bellum* phase in turn and examined some of their salient points in order to propose a clear connection between *jus post bellum* and pacifism. I propose this connection primarily because just war theorists (the primary audience for Allman and Winright’s study) and pacifists can and must work together to build up society after a war has torn it apart. After a brief interlude to introduce the concept of “just peace,” I will examine some key elements of just peacemaking theory in order to show a way of bridging the divide between pacifists and just war theorists. In so doing, I will introduce further attention to the element of the environment in creating this positive, just, and lasting peace.

**Excursus: Is Jus Post Bellum Good Enough?**

In her work, Maryanne Cusimano Love issues a challenge to those who have written on the topic of justice after warfare: “We must go beyond statist, legalist, top-down, ethics-of-occupiers conceptions of just peace. Catholic approaches to just peace begin at the other end of the spectrum, with the fundamental dignity of the human person.”

I would contend that we must extend this statement to appreciate “the fundamental dignity of all creation.” For her part, Love establishes seven just peace criteria: just cause, right intention, participatory process, right relationship, reconciliation,

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61 Maryanne Cusimano Love, “What Kind of Peace Do We Seek? Emerging Norms of Peacebuilding in Key Political Institutions,” in Schreiter, Appleby and Powers, *Peacebuilding*, 77. I should note that this essay and Allman and Winright’s work were published in the same year, and their work is not cited among Love’s notes. I believe that Allman and Winright develop *jus post bellum* to a greater level than many of the others listed above in note 1 in this chapter. The point remains, however, as Love puts it, none of these examples are “intended to be the last word on the topic” (77).
restoration (repair), and sustainability. What distinguishes these just-peace criteria from the phases of *jus post bellum* is Love’s contention that “Peacebuilding is a continuum that works to prevent conflict, to end conflict, and to restore societies after conflict; just-peace criteria are not limited to a *post bellum* time line.” While I will not delve into each just peace criterion in this excursus, it should suffice to say that these criteria are meant to provide a more robust response to the problems of violence in our society than the current just war criteria have thus far accomplished.

Before turning to the Just Peacemaking Theory advanced by Glen Stassen and his colleagues, I do wish to discuss briefly three of Love’s seven criteria. First, Love calls for a participatory process:

> While the primary responsibility for peacebuilding falls to people in areas of conflict themselves, communities ravaged by war often lack the capacity and resources to build peace alone. People outside war zones have the obligation to love our neighbors as ourselves (the golden rule), because conflict has negative spillover effects for people outside the war zone, and because we have a moral obligation to help those in need (the preferential option for the poor).  

This process, if it is truly to attend to the common good, must take into consideration all of the created order. The participatory process must not be limited only to human beings outside the war zone, but also include nonhuman animals within and outside the war zone.

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62 See ibid., 78-82. Of these, two (just cause and right intention) overlap with the *ad bellum* criteria, and three (just cause, reconciliation, and restoration) overlap with the *post bellum* criteria noted in the previous section.

63 Ibid., 78.

64 Ibid., 79.
Second, it seems that Love’s treatment of “right relationship” is crucial if we are to envision a truly just peace that transcends the criteria for a justified war. The right relationship to which Love refers in her work necessarily means a consistent way of being in communion with others, “not just a goal, but a process.” It is instructive to understand the right relationship among human beings as something that is only a starting point for a greater experience of right relationship among all of creation. Through a careful understanding of the mutually supportive and sustaining relationship that all of creation shares among the many species, it will become possible for the entire created order to practice actions that uphold the dignity of every created thing. As Pope Paul VI noted, “Peace cannot be limited to a mere absence of war, the result of an ever precarious balance of forces. No, peace is something that is built up day after day, in the pursuit of an order intended by God, which implies a more perfect form of justice among men.”

Once again, I would argue that the “more perfect justice” to which Paul alludes is not something that we can rightly limit to human beings in our world today. Rather, the most perfect form of justice now must consider the rights and necessities of all divinely created things. Such a renewed mindset calls for a world with an eye focused on sustainability, the last of the three of Love’s criteria I wish to highlight.

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65 Ibid., 80.
66 Pope Paul VI, *Populorum progressio* (1967), no. 76. It is worth noting that this paragraph is a part of the section of the encyclical entitled “Development is the New Name for Peace.” This is a good gauge for Paul’s understanding of the role of peace in the world. What Love and others call “just peace” is brought about not through one or another isolated action, but rather an entire lifetime working towards justice. More than simply an individual development, it is one towards which Paul calls the entire church to strive.
As Love explains, “Sustainability means developing new societal and international structures that can help peace endure over time.”\textsuperscript{67} I submit that the virtue of solidarity is precisely the element that brings these criteria together and makes it possible for a just peace to come about in society. As Pope John Paul II notes, solidarity “is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all. This determination is based on the solid conviction that what is hindering full development is that desire for profit and that thirst for power.”\textsuperscript{68} The pope continues by noting solidarity’s special connection to peace: “World peace is inconceivable unless the world’s leaders come to recognize that interdependence in itself demands the abandonment of the politics of blocs, the sacrifice of all forms of economic, military, or political imperialism, and the transformation of mutual distrust into collaboration.”\textsuperscript{69} Such a transformation – not the product of an overnight shift in international relations – can only be achieved through a new mindset that is committed to a long-term engagement between peoples. Solidarity is precisely the virtue by which we can establish peace, not only among humans but also between humans and the rest of God’s creation. In order to arrive at a fuller understanding of what a just peacemaking theory might entail, I now turn to Stassen and his colleagues’ formulation.

\textsuperscript{67} Love, “What Kind of Peace Do We Seek?,” 82.

\textsuperscript{68} Pope John Paul II, Sollicitudo rei socialis (1987), no. 38. Emphasis in original. Clearly, throughout this document, the pope means that solidarity is primarily (if not exclusively) meant for human beings, and not other created things. In the following chapters, I will address this phenomenon and the gradual shift in magisterial teaching over the intervening three decades.

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., no. 39. Emphasis in original.
Just Peacemaking Theory: What Is Its Role in the Debate?

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, there are some fundamental questions as to the particular role that just peacemaking theory plays in the relationship between war and peace. The most important question is whether or not it actually should be considered a “new paradigm for the ethics of peace and war” at all. I would suggest that the argument for placing it as a third alternative in this conversation is actually fairly weak. This is not to denigrate any of the positions taken by these thinkers; rather, I hold the simple belief that it is counterintuitive to necessitate that each just peacemaking theorist must also, by necessity, be either an adherent to just war thinking or pacifism. However, I agree wholeheartedly with the editors that such a dual identity must be necessary for this paradigm to be tenable. The reason noted above is wholly accurate: since the practices of just peacemaking do not always prevent war, each thinker must hold a fundamental understanding of the morality of violence, so that she or he can then argue that a given war is either justified or unjustified, or to hold that war is never justified.

The questions remains, then: “If just peacemaking theory is actually not a third paradigm in the war and peace debate, does it warrant a place in the conversation at all?” I submit that just peacemaking theory provides a number of very important practices that serve to bring together just war thinkers and pacifists. The ongoing conversation of just peacemaking theorists (comprised of both just war thinkers and pacifists) over the past 15 years is proof that this approach to the ethics of peacemaking is one way in which both intellectual groups can come together to discuss their similarities and differences on the issue of warfare. In this section of the chapter, then, I will select three of these ten
practices and examine how they can be used to bolster Catholic social teaching’s approach to peace, therein presenting just peacemaking as a *bona fide* part of the Catholic tradition. I will then examine the just peacemaking theory alongside Allman and Winright’s treatment of *jus post bellum* and examine how these two newer topics can enhance Catholic teaching on war and peace.

There are three parts to *Just Peacemaking*, each under a general heading that describes the chapters (practices) in that part. In order to give a broad overview in limited space, I will choose three practices of the theory, one from each part of the text. I have selected these practices on the basis of only one criterion: the practice that makes it most possible for just war advocates and pacifists to come together in active dialogue.

### Pacifism, Just War, and Nonviolence

The first of the practices of the just peacemaking theory I wish to present here falls under the section entitled “Peacemaking Initiatives” and urges all people to “support nonviolent direct action.”

This support for nonviolent direct action is crucial to the just peacemaking theory because it is “designed to deal with injustice that is already happening.” Since it is meant to respond to such injustice, it is something that admits that there is a way to solve problems that have already erupted into violence and led to deaths, injuries, and broken relationships among many peoples.

By advancing this practice, John Cartwright and Susan Thistlethwaite are easily able to point to a number of historical instances where this nonviolent response has been

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71 Ibid., 43.
quite effective. By explicitly pointing to figures such as Martin Luther King and Gandhi, the authors are able to conjure up images of pacifists in readers’ minds. Such imagery is important as it also points to lesser-known nonviolent actions, such as those organized by César Chávez and Archbishop Jorge Manrique. By pointing to actions both celebrated and relatively unknown, the authors make it possible to envision a new understanding of nonviolence: it is a tactic that can work for pacifists and just-war thinkers alike. Simply because one believes that violence may sometimes be licit does not mean that it always is the preferred method. All types of ideological positions can support nonviolent direct action at most times.

It would seem relatively clear that the immediate response to this practice from both sides of the debate would be that supporting nonviolence should come naturally to pacifists; but, is it really fair to expect that adherents to just war theory could support nonviolent direct action in their daily lives and in response to injustice that already existed? Such a just war thinker might well say, “this isn’t just peacemaking; it is unbridled pacifism. Why should I have to support a pacifist worldview while pacifists need to make no concessions to my own way of thinking?” I would contend, however, that a careful reading of the practice’s tenets should force such a just war thinker to reexamine her or his notion of what it means to adhere faithfully to the presumption against warfare. This presumption is that nonviolence is one of the means that must be tested before the “last resort” criterion can genuinely be met.

Cartwright and Thistlethwaite propose a number of concrete steps through which individuals and groups can support nonviolent direct action. These steps include boycotts, strikes, marches, civil disobedience, public disclosure, accompaniment, and the
implementation of safe spaces. In order to highlight the common ground between just war thinking and pacifism in carrying out this practice of nonviolent direct action, it would be best to begin with the practices of strikes and marches. These are two areas that speak broadly across ideological lines that might divide the two parties. In the realm of Catholic social thought, the notion of a strike is nothing new. In his encyclical *Rerum novarum*, Pope Leo XIII proclaimed that sometimes conditions for laborers are so unjust that strikes are necessary, but he warned that strikes could have negative consequences: “Such paralysis of labor not only affects the masters and their work-people, but is extremely injurious to trade, and to the general interests of the public; moreover, on such occasions, violence and disorder are generally not far off, and thus it frequently happens that the public peace is threatened.” Of course, in the case of just peacemaking, such a result would directly contradict the point of the strike itself, which would be to bring about peace.

If the point of nonviolent direct action is, in fact, to bring about peace, then it is a relatively short leap to show support for nonviolent marches in favor of bringing about social change. As Cartwright and Thistlethwaite explain it, marches attempt to do this through

a mass public demonstration by a group or groups seeking to dramatize an issue, a concern, a point of view, or an injustice.Externally, its purposes may include one or more of the following: education, fund raising, a show of force (in terms of numbers, recruitment of new or marginal adherents,

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72 Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum novarum* (1891), no. 31. A helpful note on Leo’s view of strikes is proffered by Michael J. Schuck in *That They Be One: The Social Teaching of the Papal Encyclicals, 1740-1989* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1991), 96, n. 19: While Leo believed that strikes occurred because of “employer callousness,” Pope Benedict XV held that their main cause was “class hatred.”
or engendering of so-called creative tension and crisis. Internally, the
march serves to build group morale, to identify the sympathetic, and to
foster cohesion among the participants with regard to the group’s aims and
goals. A march usually involves both a parade and a rally, the latter
characterized by speeches and celebration.\footnote{Cartwright and
Thistlethwaite, “Support Nonviolent Direct Action,” 49.}

There is no doubt that a march can garner a significant amount of media attention and
thereby inform the conscience of society. It is especially helpful if there is a key voice
behind the march, such as was often the case with Martin Luther King.

To use King as an example of the quintessential organizer of a march necessarily
invokes the example of his marches that were carried out to bring attention to the civil
rights movement in the United States. Cinematic representations\footnote{See especially
Selma, directed by Ava DuVernay (Hollywood, CA: Paramount Pictures, 2014).} of these marches have
also accurately highlighted some key aspects, three of which are worth mentioning here.
First, these marches are focused on an issue of human rights, such as the civil rights
movement. Second, the marches are grounded in religious belief and were historically
ecuminal and interreligious in nature. Third, since the focal issue of these marches was
a fundamental human right, it makes it possible for people on different sides of the
political and ideological divide to join hands in addressing an injustice. Therefore, this
third point becomes crucial for the relationship between pacifists and just war thinkers.
By supporting nonviolent direct action before a conflict has reached the stage of violent
warfare, it becomes possible to create a situation of peace. In so doing, both sides would
have successfully enacted the presumption against war.
A Common Ground Initiative for Justice and Sustainability

The second part of *Just Peacemaking* focuses explicitly on the issue of “justice.” In their single chapter entitled “Foster Just and Sustainable Economic Development,” David Bronkema, David Lumsdaine, and Rodger A. Payne dedicate more attention to the natural environment than in the remainder of the chapters combined. It is this attention that sets apart this practice—fostering just and sustainable economic development—from the others. As I will argue in the remaining chapters of this dissertation, the natural environment is a critical consideration of any movement towards peace and justice in the world today, and one upon which *Just Peacemaking* should have focused more carefully. Because of the importance of the environment in creating peace, I argue that it is vital for consensus to exist between pacifists and just war thinkers on this issue. If this is not something that unites them in the years ahead, it becomes almost impossible for us to foresee a planet that survives human abuse and mistreatment.

It has become painfully obvious that there is no risk of exaggerating the damage that is being done to the natural environment and all living creatures: this damage is unthinkably widespread, deeply impactful, and unceasing. The authors of this chapter go to great lengths to call our attention to the importance of caring for creation in the process of carrying out authentic human development. They note, “Wholesome ‘development,’ then, might best be defined as ‘processes of change in peoples’ relationships to their

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75 It would be worthwhile to note that the authors of the Introduction note that they do not deal adequately with the natural environment: “We should say much more about the global ecological crisis—issues such as global warming, and competition and conflict over scarce resources like water and nonrenewable energy. This can be a source of severe wars…Conservation should be added as a just peacemaking practice in itself (38).
One of the areas that emerges forcefully from their essay is the relationship of the poor to environmental degradation. The authors rightly state, “Ecological destruction often threatens poor people’s basic needs; poor communities often have an interest in long-term, ecologically sustainable development; and in any case, both involve a humane commitment to permanence and human flourishing.”

Within the corpus of Catholic social teaching, the terms “development” and “integral development” have a noteworthy history. The most important magisterial documents dealing with that topic are the encyclical letters *Mater et magistra*, promulgated by Pope John XXIII in 1961, *Populorum progressio*, promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1967, and *Justitia in mundo*, the 1971 Synod of Bishops’ document. John believed that there were fundamental norms to this human development. Chief among these norms was the assurance that “wealth produced be distributed equitably among all citizens of the commonwealth.” Second, assisting poorer nations should not be the occasion for the aiding nations to take advantage of the weaker ones; rather, “they should aid the less developed nations without thought of domination.” Perhaps predictably, this document was not readily accepted by certain political sectors of society. As Martin L. Mich explains,

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77 Ibid., 134.


79 Ibid., no. 173.
Some of these disgruntled Catholics were avid readers of William Buckley’s journal *National Review*, which had criticized the encyclical in its July 29, 1961 editorial, calling it a “venture in triviality” and observing that “like Pius IX’s *Syllabus of Errors* it may become the source of embarrassed explanations.” A few weeks later Buckley quipped that the phrase “Mater Si, Magistra no” – “Mother Yes, Teacher no” was “going the rounds in Catholic conservative circles.”

The church’s teaching on development, however, reached a new high point with Pope Paul VI’s 1967 promulgation of *Populorum progressio*. This document advances the idea of “integral development” for the first time. As David Hollenbach points out, the document “does not regard economic well-being simply as a minimum standard which is extrinsic to the development and dignity of the person. This kind of dualism is both foreign to the concept of integral development and unresponsive to the historically concrete situations of the vast number of poor persons who are the concern of the encyclical.” So, when we consider the just peacemaking understanding of development, we must recall that truly sustainable and just development must be integral in the sense that Paul lays out in *Populorum progressio*. That is to say, integral development must go beyond the simple owning of goods. As Hollenbach continues, though, “Possession of economic well-being, when properly coordinated with the other aspects of development, is thus perceived by the encyclical as a positive value directly related to human

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80 Marvin L. Mich, “Commentary on *Mater et magistra (Christianity and Social Progress)*” in Himes, *Modern Catholic Social Teaching*, 211. It is worthwhile to note that more than a half-century later, some of the same “Catholic conservatives” are critiquing the writings of Pope Francis in a similar manner.

81 For a summary of Pope Paul VI’s understanding of “integral” development, see *Populorum progressio* (1967), no. 21.

dignity.” Respect for human dignity is impossible without economic development, but economic development by itself is insufficient for integral development.

The other fundamental point that Paul makes in this encyclical is the relationship between development and peace. This relationship is one of equivalence. Paul spends two paragraphs of the encyclical under the heading, “Development, the New Name for Peace.” By noting the long-held Christian tenet that “peace is not simply the absence of warfare,” Paul is able to drive home the point that a positive understanding of peace advances the image of a world where the entire human family may live together in well-ordered harmony. As one commentator explains, “The pursuit of peace requires a war on poverty, human misery, and inequality.” While it may sound counterintuitive to say that peace requires a type of war, in this case it makes perfect sense; moreover, it is terminology to which pacifists would assent. This type of warfare is one that can garner a newfound relationship between pacifists and adherents to the just war theory in order to reach a common goal.

Catholic social thought regarding the natural environment – a focus of Chapter Three of this study – is still burgeoning, as is the thought surrounding the topic from the just peacemaking perspective. What role does the environment play in sustainable development? The authors claim that there are lenses through which to view the importance of the ecological question in this matter: “Sustainability understood in ‘green’

83 Ibid., 80.
84 See Populorum progressio, nos. 76-77.
85 Ibid., no. 76.
86 Allen Figueroa Deck, S.J., “Commentary on Populorum progressio (On the Development of Peoples)” in Himes, Modern Catholic Social Teaching, 305.
terms can also be important because resource scarcity, ecological deterioration, and relative deprivation might contribute to violent conflict. Positively, peace embraces as well as depends on a wholesome and ecologically aware economic order that allows human flourishing and good working relationships.”

Both of these aspects are crucial for a holistic understanding of development that focuses not only on integral human development (which has traditionally been at the forefront of the Catholic social teaching on the topic), but also on integral environmental development. Noting that peace is imperiled particularly through poverty and ecological destruction, it becomes even clearer that integral development must consider all of creation.

The proponents of this practice also rightly point to the “negative” possibility that environmental degradation can lead to violent conflict. Specifically, the issue of water resources in certain countries is an issue that could certainly lead to violence. As the authors note, “People impoverished by environmental calamities may become increasingly exasperated by their plight, leading to ‘deprivation conflicts,’ which result from the gap between actual and expected living conditions.”

The authors also explain, however, the positive aspects of sustainable development provide a wonderful opportunity to link economic development with environmental development. As we move ahead in the twenty-first century, Catholic social thought may no longer refer to “integral development” without witnessing in its

magisterial documents to this important connection. From the human perspective, the people who will be affected most positively by such an evolution in the official teaching are the materially poor. In order for such destitute poverty to be eradicated in the world, there must be a concerted movement to protect all of creation and the environment. With such care for creation comes direct concern for the poor, who are already the human beings most adversely affected when the natural environment is ignored. As the authors note, there are concrete solutions that would lead to situations of sustainable, just, and integral development. Just peacemaking in this area is defined by five such explicit methods: direct work with the poor; creating community ties with the poor; protecting the legal rights of the poor; increased transfer of material and natural resources; ecologically sensitive practices by individuals, organizations, businesses, governments, and international aid institutions.  

Implementing these five practices is a clear extension of Catholic social thought in the area of integral development. The development of this social teaching is crucial if the church will continue to be an entity that works with a “preferential option for the poor.” This fundamental concern for those living in conditions of poverty is at the heart of the gospel message and is also central to just peacemaking initiatives. As such, it is a point of agreement between just war theorists and pacifists and therefore is an area that can provide common ground for further dialogue. A third area that can provide such common ground is a hopeful look to the future.  

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89 See ibid., 148-50.
90 Pope Francis treats these issues in *Laudato si’*, which I treat in some detail in Chapter Three below.
Grassroots Peacemaking Groups for Dialogue

In the final chapter of *Just Peacemaking*, Duane K. Friesen makes a sustained argument for a practice that, at first blush, would seem to speak only to pacifists. Friesen explains, perhaps more clearly and succinctly than at any other place in the volume, how it is possible to overcome the impasses that have formerly challenged pacifists and just war adherents: “Pacifists are stressing what the label ‘pacifism’ means: *pax*, or peacemaking, not passivity or withdrawal from conflict. Just war theorists recognize that peace should be the aim or intention of action and that war must be a last resort. Both traditions, consequently, converge…in order to identify and practice the norms of just peacemaking.”91 Friesen suggests that this convergence between pacifists and just war theorists can come about most effectively through “grassroots peacemaking groups and voluntary associations.”

Perhaps the part of the *Just Peacemaking* volume that the contributors most keenly present to the reader is that “peacemaking” practices are not only meant for pacifists. Since the just war theory is meant to bring about peace where disorder and conflict had been the order of the day, just war theorists should, in theory, be as inclined as pacifists towards creating situations of peace. Friesen, for his part, points to an endemic problem that may unfortunately be another common thread between just war theorists and pacifists: “Communities that nurture a commitment to a social vision are increasingly being eroded by an ethic of ‘self-interest’ that acts on the premise that

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91 Duane K. Friesen, “Encourage Grassroots Peacemaking Groups and Voluntary Associations,” in Stassen, *Just Peacemaking*, 208. Friesen makes it clear that he is a pacifist, “but I am less and less interested in defining the pacifist position over against other positions” (208).
individual well-being is the ultimate value.”\textsuperscript{92} Of course, just peacemaking theory, as well as Catholic social thought, maintains that the ultimate value is the common good, which considers the value of all areas of social life and the entire community. Today, the scope of the common good also includes non-human creation.

Himself a scripture scholar, Friesen makes very interesting use of the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 18:18-30). He notes, “Jesus’ parable jars us to consider that it is the social outcast, the excluded one, who shows compassion. The story forces us to consider ways in which divisions between rich and poor, black and white, male and female, citizen and alien can be overcome.”\textsuperscript{93} It would seem to be even more possible for pacifists and just war theorists to overcome the ideological divisions that separate them. Friesen suggests ten results stemming from instances when these divisions are overcome and people (who may have different worldviews) dialogue and work together to create peace. A few of these results are worth pondering here.

Friesen reminds us that these groups comprised of peacemakers “often serve as advocates for the voiceless, especially those who are poor and powerless.”\textsuperscript{94} As I have already noted, extreme poverty in the world today is intimately linked with violent conflict and ecological destruction. A holistic view that would support justice for all creatures is in the best interest of all people, regardless of whether they believe warfare may sometimes be justified. Likewise, in another payout of this dialogue across party lines on the question of justified warfare, Friesen believes that the members have “less

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., 202.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 204.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 210.
investment in defending what has been.95 This may seem to be something of a side note in this discussion, but I maintain that it is central to the process in question. Part of what should bring together people of opposing views on the question of war and peace should be a movement toward a better life for the planet. Since peace is the goal for both theological positions, it is clear that there is work to be done to move from discord to the idyllic destination. Believing that we have a common purpose towards which all people should strive means that what is currently in place is imperfect. Since the present reality is incomplete, all people should be committed to looking to the future with an open mind.

One of the most important suggestions that Friesen makes is about the long-term nature of the citizens’ groups that he recommends. The tenure of these associations is so important because, as we have seen, many public events, conflicts, and newsworthy items lack staying power. As Friesen puts it, such a group “sustains concern and interest when the media and world opinion are unaware, forget, or flit about from one thing to the next.”96 I wish to focus on this issue in particular because the environmental concern that should be sweeping the planet does not resemble other issues that have been fleeting in recent years. As many scholars who have advanced jus post bellum criteria have rightly noted, once a war concludes, it often fades from the public spotlight. In fact, even during the midst of most wars, the general public remains unaware of the grave nature of its casualties.97

95 Ibid.
96 Ibid., 211.
97 One tragic example: for a matter of two weeks in September 2014, the United States of America was grief-stricken over the loss of life taking place during that time in Syria and the use of chemical weaponry. Once President Barack Obama announced on September 10, 2014 that he would not be seeking to declare
Reflecting on the capabilities of citizens’ networks in the effort to bring about peace in the world, Friesen finally turns to one last (and first!) strategy in any effort at a lasting dialogue between pacifists and just war theorists within the community of Christian ethics: prayer. Friesen points to a fundamental Christian tenet that all people in this discussion on war and peace should be sharing from the very start of their work together to create a more orderly and peaceful world: “Prayer and meditation are spiritual disciplines that open people to a transcendent reality beyond themselves…Prayer helps us to be more aware of our limits to predict and control the future.”

All too often, Christian adherents to either pacifism or just war thinking fail to draw from the rich spiritual resources of their faith tradition. I contend, with Friesen, that these resources should form the bedrock for any future alliance between these groups. It is the starting point and will lead to an ultimate destination.

**Pacifism and Just War Theory: A Way Forward**

One of the finest studies on the convergence and divergence of pacifism and just war thinking is found in the work of Richard B. Miller. His work points out a very interesting reality: “divergences may reveal yet more profound points of convergence.”

Miller identifies three particular areas of convergence between the two worldviews. First,

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100 Ibid., 107. Emphasis in original.
he claims that “Peace for Christian pacifists is a theory-dependent concept.”\textsuperscript{101} Next, he suggests that all people recall that justified warfare is not the norm in the world today. This fact means that, “in the normal (rather than the exceptional) course of human commerce we should work more assiduously to make the requirements of peace central to the moral discourse and practice.”\textsuperscript{102} Third, and finally, Miller indirectly refers to what John Howard Yoder termed a “just war without teeth.” Miller reminds us that if just war thinkers are honest in applying the tenets, they will converge with pacifists in that neither group “may endorse uncritically the impulses of nationalistic fervor or patriotic zeal.”\textsuperscript{103} These three points of convergence between pacifism and just war thinking help us attend to the resources that I have brought forth in this chapter: \textit{jus post bellum} and just peacemaking theory. In the final pages of this chapter, I will suggest one way both of these developments in the war and peace debate enhance these three points of convergence to which Miller points us.

As I noted in the first chapter of this dissertation, Cahill explains Christian pacifism primarily as a commitment rather than a theory, per se.\textsuperscript{104} Therefore, Miller’s first point is not one that goes without some contention among pacifists. This contention notwithstanding, I argue that the concept of having a “theory” for peace need not be a stumbling block in the dialogue for pacifists. It is in such a light that I propose that \textit{jus post bellum} and just peacemaking theory provide resources for convergence in the war and peace debate.

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 120.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 122.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 123.
\textsuperscript{104} Of course, as I mentioned in the opening chapter also, the term “just war theory” also has its own limitations, and so there are alternative such as “just war doctrine” or “just war tradition,” etc. See Allman and Winright, \textit{After the Smoke Clears}, 8 and Daniel M. Bell, Jr., \textit{Just War as Christian Discipleship: Recentering the Tradition on the Church Rather Than the State} (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009).
"post bellum" presents itself through its post-war stages to be an aid in bringing about the peace that all pacifists work toward achieving through their unwavering commitment to nonviolence. Once a war has ended, the movement towards a peaceful existence is almost never completed immediately. Therefore, pacifists must work together with just war theorists in order to bring about this peace. That is why the four "post bellum" stages are so important. Once the fighting has concluded, it is theoretically plausible that both parties can agree on what is necessary to bring about peace. Certainly, this dialogue is part of any theory for peace. Once war has ended, we move back to ordinary ethical commitments to justice, peace, and sustainability.

From this same standpoint, the ten practices of just peacemaking also advance a clear theory for peace: in order to bring about peace in the world, actual concrete actions on the ground are required. In the three particular practices I mentioned in the preceding section of this chapter, the initiative is clear: peace is the work of all people in their everyday lives. It is accomplished mainly through solidarity and collaboration with others. Since just peacemaking purports to be a theory, it is crucial to state that a theory must not be limited to intellectual thought, and thereby separated from concrete actions on the ground in pursuit of peace and justice. If there is a theory for peace it must begin with the belief that peace is the result of tireless work on the ground.

Miller’s second point of convergence is particularly interesting because in reminding us all that there should always be a presumption against warfare, he points us to deeper reflection. This reflection must remain with each individual before, during, and after a particular war. Allman and Winright have provided, in their "jus post bellum" criteria, a clear framework for how we may continue reflecting on the best ways to bring
about peace in the tertiary stage of conflict. If the requirements of peace are truly
central to our moral discourse, then justice after warfare will also have a role in pointing
us away from the next war. If we are faithful to the criteria that Allman and Winright set
forth, then it is likely that we will all move towards peace together as a unified world in
solidarity with all of God’s creation. This is the solidarity that constantly focuses our
minds on thoughts of peace. Truly, just war theorists who take the criteria seriously will
join pacifists in this common goal.

As just peacemaking theory considers how best to keep peace at the forefront of
its concerns, I suspect that some deep reconsideration of the name they have chosen for
their movement is in order. Just as I previously suggested that they strongly consider that
for their movement, the word “theory” must signify that concrete work on the ground
must be carried out, I also wish to call attention to the first two words of the phrase. To
focus on the word “peacemaking” is a relatively straightforward suggestion when
advising to keep peace as the normative expression of relations between nations in
today’s world. However, let me briefly consider the other word that this movement shares
with the just war theorists: “just.” In many applications of the *jus ad bellum* and *jus in
bello* criteria of the just war theory, it is all too easy to forget that the criteria are overly
stringent so as to avoid the most possible human casualties in warfare. It is very difficult
to meet these criteria, and so “just” wars are few and far in between. At all times,
however, authentic peace is “just” and so just peacemaking theory must reframe the just
war theory such that peacemaking becomes all the more inclusive, and warmaking
becomes even more rare.
In finally suggesting that just war theorists and pacifists converge in their common opposition to acting “uncritically” with regard to nationalism or patriotism, Miller makes a particularly challenging point for some in the former camp. Since many wars have begun under the auspices of justice, and with the backing of a great many individuals, it is altogether reasonable to suggest that some number of these supporters would be adherents to the Christian just war tenets. This poses a serious problem to the church, which cautions a careful application of the traditional criteria. Therefore, the role of *jus post bellum* becomes even more important in light of the support that many wars receive from Christians. In the interest of forthrightness, I cannot admit to knowing many pacifists who struggle with an overt sense of patriotism or uncritical nationalism. Therefore, it would be easier for pacifists to meet just war thinkers on this point of convergence. I would maintain, however, that the postwar phase would be an ideal place for just war thinkers to approach pacifists in this area of agreement. Ideally, all adherents to the just war theory would stray from uncritical nationalism in the *ad bellum* and *in bello* stages, and recognize the tragic effects of the given conflict. However, once a war has been completed, the criteria that Allman and Winright suggest compel this group to view nationalism in a healthy and balanced way. Such an outlook maintains that the “victorious” nation’s good is intimately tied up with the good of the vanquished people. The actual payout when both sides meet at this point of convergence in a conflict’s aftermath is that national difference will finally be put aside in favor of creating the peace that was the alleged purpose for the fighting in the first place.

The just peacemaking practices also lend themselves to this third point of convergence between pacifists and just war theorists. To take the practices that I
highlighted in this chapter as only three examples would be to turn our attention toward what could aptly be described as countercultural practices. Like the other seven just peacemaking practices, the three practices analyzed above force citizens to reconsider their relationship to governmental officials. Embodying the virtues necessary to carry out these three practices will almost surely put any individual or group at odds with the politicians who often support a given war for political reasons that are wrapped in rhetoric about love of one’s country. Christian theology, however, challenges all human beings to recognize a primary love that is not bound by national borders. This love is at the heart of the practices put forth in Just Peacemaking.105

The love to which I refer, of course, is a love for God, which is also joined by a love for neighbor and self. I propose in this chapter that jus post bellum and the just peacemaking theory are helpful ways to engender these loves in the world today. What I propose in the next chapter, however, is a rereading of the Christian tradition to widen even further our understanding of “neighbor.” In his teaching, Jesus paints shocking imagery of our neighbor as our human enemy. From what we have learned over the past few millennia, the time is now ripe to broaden this divine teaching even more and to admit that our neighbor is not only the person who hates us, but also the creature that

105 Martha C. Nussbaum argues for this exact point in her essay, “Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism.” See Martha C. Nussbaum, For Love of Country?, ed. Joshua Cohen (Boston, Beacon Press, 2002), 2-17. Nussbaum argues, “One may note that the values on which Americans may most justly pride themselves are, in a deep sense, Stoic values: respect for human dignity and the opportunity for each person to pursue happiness. If we really do believe that all human beings are created equal and endowed with certain inalienable rights, we are morally required to think about what that conception requires us to do with and for the rest of the world” (13). For his part, William C. French has coined the term “nationalist discounting” to suggest that in a given nation, there may be a propensity to overlook the rights of individuals beyond the national borders. See his essay, “Teaching the Just War Tradition,” in Teaching Religion and Violence, ed. Brian K. Pennington (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 315.
cannot speak our language; our neighbor is not only the family pet, but also the vegetation that nurtures the earth; our neighbor is not only our favorite tree or plant, but even the air that we breathe.

Over the past century, while a great deal of debate has been taking place between just war theorists and pacifists, the world’s population has more than tripled. Now with over seven billion human beings living on this planet, we must begin to take heed of the many warnings ecologists have been delivering while their colleagues have been debating the justification for conflict. In my coming discussion, I will introduce a few of these ecologists and examine their role, if any, vis-à-vis Christianity. Often, I will note that the Christian treatment of ecology has been lagging behind the more secular approaches. Even later to the discussion have been official, magisterial documents dealing with these pressing issues. In the coming chapter, I will engage the first ever papal encyclical to focus primarily on care for all of God’s creation, *Laudato si’*. Many times over the course of that text, Pope Francis declares, “everything is connected.” Therefore, I argue that any treatment of war and peace in the twenty-first century that does not also consider the natural environment as our neighbor is impoverished. It is to this neighbor that I now turn.
CHAPTER THREE
CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING ON THE ENVIRONMENT: SHADES OF GREEN

The history of modern Catholic social teaching, dating back to 1891 and Pope Leo XIII’s promulgation of *Rerum novarum*, is marked by a number of key concepts that date even further back in the magisterial documents issued by Leo’s predecessors in the chair of Saint Peter.¹ As I have already noted in this study, one of these key concepts that has been of great concern to the popes has been the challenge of warfare. Since the pontificate of John Paul II, the natural environment (and all of God’s creation) has been a new concern in the corpus of Catholic social teaching. As any careful observer will be aware, however, the fact that it has been a “new” concern in the last twenty-five years is a point of contention for Roman Catholics.

There are three camps within the church with opposing viewpoints on the renewed emphasis on creation in Catholic social teaching. The first of these camps could rightly be considered as beholden to the status quo. This group believes that the last three papacies have actually overstepped the limits of their teaching office and have misunderstood the relationship of individual believers to the entirety of creation. They might argue that God’s creation may rightly and justly be used by all human beings for their own needs. They also tend to downplay the reports regarding the severity of

ecological degradation or rising climate change concerns. The second group of Catholics tends to hold that the teachings of Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis have been on a trajectory leading towards the right approach regarding the environment and non-human animals; that is to say, they would agree that there is what Pope Francis terms an “integral ecology.”\(^2\) Finally, the third group of Catholics would say that the church has much more to learn from ecological scientists who have been warning for many decades that the global environmental crisis is reaching dire levels. This chapter will deal primarily with the beliefs of the latter two groups.\(^3\)

First, we must consider why the natural environment should properly be considered a part of Catholic social teaching. That is, why would Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis consider it to be part of their papal responsibility to deal with the good of all creation?\(^4\) To answer this question, I will detail a number of ecological scientists who called the world’s attention to this issue. I will then turn my attention to the third group of Catholics mentioned above. This turn will begin with an analysis of the contributions of ecological scientists of the latter half of the twentieth century that predated any magisterial concern on this issue. This group offered the first prophetic warning that the natural environment is a moral subject; in so doing, it opened the eyes of many Christian theologians and ethicists who utilized a fair amount of environmental

\(^2\) I do not mean to say that these three popes have dealt the same way with ecological concerns. It is quite clear that Pope Francis has made the issue a priority in his first three years in the papacy to a degree that neither of his immediate predecessors did.

\(^3\) Here, I table the concerns of the first of these groups because scientific evidence has proven their concerns to be untenable and in some cases, dangerous for our society.

\(^4\) It is important to note that John Paul II did not address the issue in any substantive way until later in his papacy. While Benedict XVI addressed it in greater detail in his 2009 encyclical \textit{Caritas in veritate}, it was not until Pope Francis assumed the papacy that the issue garnered real momentum from the pope himself.
ethics in their own thought on the issue and applied it to the Christian theological tradition. It became clear that increasing damage of the natural environment by humans is an important moral and religious concern. I will examine a sampling of these arguments.

Following an exposition of the foundations for the place of creation in Catholic social teaching, I will examine the early chapters of sacred scripture. Both stories of creation in the book of Genesis explain the importance of all of creation, and even more, God’s pleasure in that creation. In exploring the Hebrew Scriptures and the theological view of creation, we will see how biblical scholars are indebted to ecological science for their own scholarship on the issue. Moreover, I will show some of the christological implications of this scientific research.

Next, I will turn my attention to the actual magisterial documents of the three popes mentioned above, including a careful reading of Pope Francis’s 2015 encyclical _Laudato si’_, which is the first papal social encyclical to be dedicated to the topics of God’s creation, and humanity’s need to exert much greater care of it. This analysis will be essential to advancing one particular argument of this dissertation: the church’s teaching vis-à-vis the entirety of creation is in flux and must continue to develop to address the deleterious effects of violent conflict, a topic which has already been a point of consideration in my first two chapters.

It may well be a fair question for the reader of this chapter to wonder what importance ecological scientists (many of whom are secular figures) should have for this study. By including them here, I am explicitly responding to the directive of the Vatican II fathers who remind us, “the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the gospel…We must therefore
recognize and understand the world in which we live, its expectations, its longings, and its often dramatic characteristics.”5 The signs of the times in today’s world necessitate examining the climate crisis that is degrading the planet. Pope Francis has taken up this call in his own magisterial teaching. This chapter is an attempt to bring together the ever-present ecclesial call to examine the signs of the times and determine how to preach the gospel based on our knowledge of the world. I begin that attempt by surveying a selection of ecological scientists who have impacted the church’s theological development in the area of care for creation.

Environmental Ethics: A Matter of Global Conflict

One concerted group would argue that, using almost any logical standards, Roman Catholic magisterial documents have been disappointing when it comes to their ability to deal with the natural environment. I note this point at the outset of this section as a means of contextualizing the discussion that is to follow. That is to say, the corpus of Catholic social thought has made serious strides in the last 25 years with regard to its teaching on environmental ecology, but at least until May 2015, it still had some way to go in order to be taken seriously. In particular, any number of ecological scientists and ethicists would be justified in noting the tardiness of the papacy in responding to the crisis that plagues the planet at the present moment. Indeed, many Catholic and Protestant theologians and ethicists share a frustration with their churches’ slowness to see the seriousness of our rising ecological problems as serious issues for theology and ethics.

5 Vatican II, Gaudium et Spes, no. 4. I cited this same passage early in chapter one of this study. I cite it again here because of the clear connection between warfare and ecological concerns.
Until the 1990 World Day of Peace Message promulgated by Pope John Paul II, there was little or no serious engagement with God’s creation outside of human beings. But, while the Vatican was slow, many other theologians were drawing attention to the importance of these issues. As I show in the previous section, such a glaring omission in the social teaching of the church causes serious problems for the way the faith is practiced by the Body of Christ. On the other hand, however, it is never too late to admit past shortcomings and carry out a development of the doctrine regarding the natural environment. In the pontificate of Pope Francis, the church is in the process of making such a step forward. The Catholic church has a great deal to learn from the aforementioned ecological scientists. In this section, then, I will turn my attention to only five of these figures: Barry Commoner, Lester R. Brown, Rachel Carson, Edward O. Wilson, and Bill McKibben.

**Barry Commoner**

Barry Commoner (1917-2012), who first published his landmark *The Closing Circle: Nature, Man, and Technology* in 1971 and *Making Peace With the Planet* in 1975, was one of the best-known scholars who advocated for a widespread response to environmental degradation. His own activism and scholarship led to a failed run for the United States presidency in 1980. The importance of Commoner’s argument touches a nerve with most Americans and is evident on the first page of the 1990 revised edition of *Making Peace With the Planet*. In describing the “two worlds” in which people live, Commoner shows there is a clear break between the natural world and the world of our own creation. He points out the obvious fact that (still) plagues most people: “We accept responsibility for events in our own world, but not for what occurs in the natural one. Its
storms, droughts, and floods are ‘acts of God,’ free of human control and exempt from our responsibility.”6 In other words, each human being lives in a bubble that separates them not only from their fellow humans, but especially from nonhuman animals and plants as well as the meteorological conditions surrounding these and humans alike.

Commoner continues his argument by asserting that there is a necessary shift in the way humans must interact with nature: “Now, on a planetary scale, this division has been breached. With the appearance of a continent-sized hole in the Earth’s protective ozone layer and the threat of global warming, even droughts, floods, and heat waves may become unwitting acts of man.”7 Now, years later, we can proclaim with even greater levels of certainty the many dangers about which Commoner cautioned some five decades ago. What is particularly noteworthy about Commoner’s approach, though, is the imagery that he utilizes. The principal images that Commoner brings forth are those examined in the first two chapters of the present study: war and peace. The title of the volume itself, as well as the titles of some of the chapters therein, make it clear that Commoner sees an obvious linkage between the practice of warfare (as classically understood between at least two violent groups of people) and the current deleterious activities that human beings are carrying out against the earth.

To highlight his purpose in his study, Commoner puts forth this rather chilling statement: “In the short span of its history, human society has exerted an effect on its planetary habitat that matches the size and impact of the natural processes that until now

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7 Ibid.
solely governed the global condition.” Here, Commoner makes it clear that despite the scientifically verified fact that human beings arrived on earth much later than other species, humans have acted in such a way as to deprive other creatures of what they need to survive or thrive. This is in line with the hierarchical Great Chain of Being which many theologians have criticized for its anthropocentric worldview, and of which more will be said below. Such a worldview places humans (and angels) so far above other created things that it makes it not only explicable but even natural to relegate these nonhuman beings to secondary and tertiary statuses on the earth. In a world where certain factions of creation are ignored or killed, secular ethicists might well call the practice unethical. Christian ethicists believe that these types of actions are not only unethical but also sinful actions that disrespect the God of all creation.

Not only are the anthropocentric practices enumerated above unethical, but they are also deadly. As I have noted, Commoner often uses the imagery of warfare. He chooses this imagery carefully and advisedly. The facts certainly bear out his belief. He notes the obvious connection in no uncertain terms:

Clearly, we need to understand the interaction between our two worlds: the natural ecosphere, the thin global skin of air, water, and soil and the plants and animals that live in it, and the man-made technosphere – powerful enough to deserve so grandiose a term. The technosphere has become sufficiently large and intense to alter the natural processes that govern the ecosphere. And in turn, the altered ecosphere threatens to flood our great cities, dry up our bountiful farms, contaminate our food and water, and poison our bodies – catastrophically diminishing our ability to provide for basic human needs. The human attack on the ecosphere has instigated an ecological counterattack. The two worlds are at war.\(^9\)

\(^8\) Ibid., 6.
\(^9\) Ibid., 7.
Using warfare as the image to describe the delicate relationship between humanity and the natural environment may strike many people as odd. Commoner’s reasoning, though, is important. There is a certain subjectivity that belongs to the natural world that human beings have often failed to acknowledge through many millennia. This human failure – resulting in widely held anthropocentric beliefs and practices – results in a “human attack.” Since many people have long considered the natural environment as unable to carry out actions on its own, the idea of a “human attack” on an object is an odd idea indeed. For instance, if a human being sets fire to a stack of newspapers, the human is not thought to be carrying out an attack on those sheets of paper. If a military unit sets fire to oil, however, such as occurred in Kuwait in 1991, it should also be considered a direct human attack on the environment, and not only an act of war against the military of the opposing nation.

Commoner is not the first thinker to bring together the images of warfare and the natural environment. Over a century ago, in his famous essay entitled “The Moral Equivalent of War,”10 William James argued that the United States should begin a conscription of force against nature in order for the horrors of modern warfare to be avoided. According to James, there existed any number of virtuous characteristics that came from the practice of fighting in warfare. James believed that we, as a society, should save these honorable traits and put them to use against nature. As William French explains, “James imagined this ‘war’ as a bloodless enterprise, for he viewed nature as a

passive sphere subject to human transformative agency.”

It is now clear that James was wrong in his understanding of nature as passive. Instead, nature has the capacity to inflict great suffering on humans who declare war on it. The natural environment is meant to sustain humanity, and vice versa. Throughout the same twentieth century that has produced even further developments in the destructive technology of weapons for warfare, we have also learned a great deal about our natural environment through the ecological sciences that give us a new understanding of our utter dependence on the integrity of the entire created order.

It is this integrity of the created order that is foundational to Commoner’s argument. Commoner, of course, would disavow James’s understanding of nature as passive and writes with conviction of the moral imperative to work for a world where we avoid creating war with nature. Although he is not a theologian, Commoner makes use of Pope John Paul II’s 1981 encyclical *Laborem exercens* and the 1986 pastoral letter of the United States Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*. Here, Commoner makes it clear that the goal he shares with the church leaders in question are to revise the economic outlook of the United States and to remove control of natural resources of the nation from the hands of private interest groups. One of the most concrete ways of revising the economic system in the United States, according to Commoner, is by the government making a drastic shift in its military budget.

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12 See Commoner, *Making Peace With the Planet*, 217-8. Commoner bemoans the fact that after some initially negative responses from some quarters, the reaction was “nearly total silence” (217).
Lester R. Brown

The military budget of the United States is a key point of contention for Lester R. Brown (b. 1934), who asserts that the increased military budget over the last two decades in this country has been a mistake of epic proportions. Brown makes it clear that the United States must join the entire world in preparing to combat the innumerable problems that have already come with climate change, as well as the impending damages sure to befall our society. Brown explains that the United States carrying out its war in Iraq caused great problems: “The Iraq war may prove to be one of history’s most costly mistakes not so much because of fiscal outlay but because it has diverted the world’s attention from climate change and the other threats to civilization itself.” Brown argues that a shift of some 13 percent of the world’s military budget to his proposed “Plan B” budget would be more than ample to bring out a path of sustainability that would curb the damage already done to the environment. As he correctly suggests, “The challenge is not to provide a high-tech military response to terrorism but to build a global society that is environmentally sustainable and equitable – one that restores hope for everyone. Such an effort would do more to combat terrorism than any increase in military expenditures or any new weapons systems, however advanced.” The image of warfare thus proves to be apt for Brown’s theory as well as for Commoner’s.

13 Lester R. Brown, Plan B 4.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2009), 264. In the preceding sentence, Brown notes the cost itself: “If all the costs are included, such as the lifetime of care required for returning troops who are brain-injured or psychologically shattered, the cost of war will in the end approach $3 trillion” (264).

14 Ibid., 265. Brown also continues the theme of national security and warfare to make his points here. Earlier in his study, he suggests that we, as a society, need to move at very fast speed. He deems that this speed needs to be “a wartime mobilization,” by which he associates the need to respond to global climate change to be as important (or more important) as a major military attack (see ibid., 259-260).
Also like Commoner, Brown does not directly appeal to religious sensibilities in his work. This does not, however, mean that the major religious traditions should not take these two secular thinkers very seriously. Since both of the arguments proposed here affect all of creation, they are *de facto* religious arguments. The time has obviously passed to disregard a given argument because it does not begin with one’s own religious sentiments. In fact, it is high time for people of all (and even no) religious traditions to work together to admit that human beings are largely at fault for global climate change, to confront the issue head-on, and to work together in the face of certain climate change “deniers” who maintain that any change that takes place in nature is purely coincidental.

Rachel Carson

One of the most important works in the burgeoning environmental, conservationist movement to be published was *Silent Spring*. The author, Rachel Carson (1907-1964) was a pioneer in the scientific movement to stand up in protection of the natural environment. At the very outset of *Silent Spring*, Carson enters into a chilling narrative which she entitles, “A Fable for Tomorrow.”\(^{15}\) In these few pages, Carson describes an American town that devolves from beauty into wasteland:

Some evil spell had settled on the community: mysterious maladies swept the flock of chickens; the cattle and sheep sickened and died. Everywhere was a shadow of death. The farmers spoke of much illness among their families. In the town the doctors had become more and more puzzled by new kinds of sickness appearing among their patients. There had been several sudden and unexplained deaths, not only among adults but even among children, who would be stricken suddenly while at play and die within a few hours. There was a strange stillness. The birds, for example – where had they gone?\(^{16}\)

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\(^{16}\) Ibid., 2.
The most unsettling part of Carson’s tale was the swiftness with which this transformation had happened. It took place right in front of the people’s eyes, and seemingly overnight, even though in reality it had all been building over time to its eerily silent crescendo.

It was not only the living beings who were affected in this town, however; where it had once been so beautiful and aesthetically pleasing, the town was now an eyesore: “The roadsides, once so attractive, were now lined with browned and withered vegetation as though swept by fire. These, too, were now silent, deserted by all living things. Even the streams were now lifeless. Anglers no longer visited them, for all the fish had died.”

It is no coincidence that there is for Carson a very intimate relationship between the living beings (anglers and fish) and their habitats (roadsides and streams). The change in that town was affecting everything, not only small factions of the place. Carson then completes her tale with the most daunting words of all: “No witchcraft, no enemy action had silenced the rebirth of new life in this stricken world. The people had done it themselves.”

As we know now, and even Carson knew over fifty years ago, these terrible things were not just potentially devastating developments but realities. Part of the groundbreaking nature of the work was Carson’s careful and extensive discussion of the use of dichloro-diphenyl-trichloro-ethane (DDT), especially in pesticides. Carson was explicit about the close relationship of all living things in the way that DDT was “passed

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17 Ibid., 3.
18 Ibid., 3.
on from one organism to another through all the links of the food chains.”\(^{19}\) The problem, as Carson observes, may not be that a “safe dose” of DDT by itself is deadly for a living being (human or otherwise) but that when combined with “safe doses” of other harmful substances, it can become exceedingly dangerous: “The individual exposed to DDT, for example, is almost certain to be exposed to other liver-damaging hydrocarbons, which are so widely used as solvents, paint removers, degreasing agents, dry-cleaning fluids, and anesthetics.”\(^{20}\) The point here is not to dwell specifically on the deleterious effects of DDT on living organisms, but rather to highlight the interconnected nature of all living beings. This interrelationship between all living things is something upon which Pope Francis would expand more than a half-century after Carson wrote her own warning.

All hope is not lost, according to Carson. In much the same way that human beings are responsible for the ecological destruction that the planet now suffers through (and indeed, was already experiencing in 1962), human beings have the opportunity to turn the tide on this destruction. In the final chapter of her text, Carson suggests three “biotic controls” that could slow or potentially end the environmental destruction of the earth.\(^{21}\) This is noteworthy not for the measures she suggests (although those are also interesting), but rather for articulating the simple notion that human beings have it within their power to curb their already-disastrous actions against the common good of the entire planet. In bringing forth her argument in *Silent Spring*, Carson has set the stage for a

\(^{19}\) Ibid., 22.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., 238. Carson then concludes with the obvious question: “What then can be a ‘safe dose’ of DDT?” (238).

\(^{21}\) See ibid., 277-297.
theological reading in two ways: first, by being one of the very first pioneers from the platform of ecological science to call the world’s attention to the consequences of its actions; and second, by alerting us that it was not too late to save the beauty of the earth.

Edward O. Wilson

Like the other ecological scientists I mention in this section, the work of Edward O. Wilson (b. 1929) has been very influential in the movement towards greater awareness of the ecological emergency we are currently experiencing – greater awareness not simply for the scientific community, but also (and equally important for this study) the theological community. Wilson presents a particularly interesting case because he is a scientist who has also attempted to dialogue (in monograph form) with a fictional Southern Baptist pastor. As a scientist, Wilson has published a number of seminal works. Here, I will limit my comments to only four of these: *The Diversity of Life* (1992), *The Future of Life* (2002), *The Creation: An Appeal to Save Life on Earth* (2006), and *The Meaning of Human Existence* (2014). In each case, Wilson makes it clear that human beings are at the heart of any recovery process from their own misdeeds. Like Carson, Wilson has a plan for future life on the planet.

Wilson presents a five-step agenda aimed at the goal “to save and use in perpetuity as much of the earth’s diversity as possible.” Wilson lays out the four steps as follows: survey the world’s fauna and flora; create biological wealth; promote

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23 See ibid., 312-319.

24 See ibid., 319-322.
sustainable development;25 save what remains;26 restore the wildlands.27 His third item is most important for my study: promoting sustainable development. In his description of this step, Wilson is making it clear that the poor, especially of the developing world, are those who are suffering at an exponentially greater level than the wealthy. As Wilson puts it, “The rural poor of the Third World are locked into a downward spiral of poverty and the destruction of diversity. To break free, they need work that provides the basic food, housing, and health care taken for granted by a great majority of people in the industrialized countries.”28 Wilson links poverty with another problem that he believes is evident in the world today: overpopulation. What follows, then, in Wilson’s argument is laying the groundwork for the preferential option for the poor and a genuine respect for life.

These terms are pillars of Catholic social teaching and so Wilson becomes a secular bedfellow with the church’s mission of reading the signs of the times. Wilson makes a fascinating point about the ways that all living creatures overlap with one another. This overlapping leads to one of the theological virtues: love. As Wilson explains, “It is not so difficult to love nonhuman life, if gifted with knowledge about it. The capacity, even the proneness to do so, may well be one of the human instincts. The phenomenon has been called biophilia, defined as the innate tendency to focus upon life and lifelike forms, and in some instances to affiliate with them emotionally.”29 The term

25 See ibid., 322-329.
26 See ibid., 329-339.
27 See ibid., 339-342.
28 Ibid., 322-3.
“preferential option for the poor,” which was first introduced by Latin American bishops and then introduced into the papal magisterium by John Paul II in *Sollicitudo rei socialis*,\(^\text{30}\) bears special consideration in discussion of biophilia.

A biophilic outlook on the world entails a worldview that encompasses all of creation. As Wilson has noted, the degradation of the natural environment adversely affects poor people at an alarming rate. Moreover, the natural environment itself is a source of poverty in the twenty-first century. In other words, the option for the poor in today’s world must extend to all of creation, especially species that are going extinct. Insomuch as we shift our special care to all living things, but with preferential concern for those most acutely affected by injustice, we are living up to the calling of the preferential option for the poor. Moreover, in doing so, we are engaging in a fundamental respect for all forms of life. The rhetoric “respect for life” in ecclesial terminology usually refers to the anti-abortion stance of the Roman Catholic church. I am proposing that Wilson’s own thought on this issue, while not necessarily dealing explicitly with abortion, falls under the auspices of respect for life – human and otherwise.

While not a theologian himself, Wilson engages in a hearty, book-length open letter to a Southern Baptist pastor.\(^\text{31}\) He chooses a religious leader in that particular denomination, ostensibly, because that was the religion in which he was raised. More to the point, however, he is able to write this letter to someone with whom he seems to share

\(^{30}\) See Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (1987), no. 42: “This is an option, or a special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness. It affects the life of each Christian inasmuch as he or she seeks to imitate the life of Christ, but it applies equally to our social responsibilities and hence to our manner of living, and to the logical decisions to be made concerning the ownership and use of goods” (emphasis in original).

very little in common, at least from the point of view of scientific understanding of
the planet earth. Very much in line with the Catholic church’s teaching of preferential
option for the poor, Wilson refers to a “pauperization of the Earth.” He explains to his
clerical interlocutor – who, Wilson notes, may not believe these scientific facts due to his
literalist reading of the Bible – that there have already been five great extinctions of life
on the planet, and then paints the picture for the pastor: “Kermit the Frog, to summarize
the situation in a phrase, is sick. And to varying degrees so is much of the rest of the
living world. Might *Homo sapiens* follow? Maybe, maybe not. But with certainty we are
the giant meteorite of our time, having begun the sixth mass extinction of Phanerozoic
history.” Despite the ideological differences between Wilson and the pastor, Wilson
believes that the two parties also have a reason to come together: stewardship of life.

This stewardship of life is based not on overcoming their significant differences
of opinion. Rather, Wilson suggests simply forgetting them entirely. He continues,
offering the possibility for the two opposing parties to, “Meet on common ground. That
might not be as difficult as it seems at first. When you think about it, our metaphysical
differences have remarkably little effect on the conduct of our separate lives. If I may
conclude my short survey of Wilson’s thought in this text by offering a Catholic

32 See ibid., 73-81.
33 Ibid., 81. “Phanerozoic” refers to the current geologic time period, which dates over 540 million years.
34 Ibid., 165.
35 See ibid., 167.
36 Ibid., 167-8.
Wilson is absolutely correct in suggesting that scientists and people of any religion meet on common ground: this is one of the guiding principles of interreligious dialogue, which has been an integral part of Catholic teaching for more than fifty years. I would maintain that responsible science on the part of Catholics, and other people of faith, could enable the “common ground” to grow in its scope. What would be the result of such growth? Quite simply, this enlarged common ground would lead to a new relationship between secular scientists and people of faith – scientists or not – on issues of how best to attack the climate crisis. If all we do now is rest on the laurels of being in agreement on certain moral points, it is still unlikely that we will make any progress together. I agree that Wilson’s point is a necessary first step, but if we stop there, the end result will once again be stagnation.

There will also be times in which people of faith must also go far beyond what Wilson is arguing. In his recent text, The Meaning of Human Existence, Wilson does provide something of an impasse for Catholics and all people of faith in coming to meet him on the common ground to which I allude above. Wilson contends that tribalism is at the heart of everything that is wrong with organized religion. He explains that the fundamental tenet of each religious tradition “teaches that members of other religions worship the wrong gods, use wrong rituals, follow false prophets, and believe fantastic creation stories. There is no way around the soul-satisfying but cruel discrimination that

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37 I do this although I am fully aware that Wilson was writing to a Southern Baptist pastor and not a Catholic priest, much less the pope. However, I think it is important for there to be at least a hint of dialogue after such a long open letter.
organized religions by definition must practice among themselves.”

Edward O. Wilson

Wilson also makes it clear that religious faith is at the heart of many evil actions that human beings carry out on one another, and presumably, the natural world: “The true cause of hatred and violence is faith versus faith, an outward expression of the ancient instinct of tribalism. Faith is the one thing that makes otherwise good people do bad things.”

I contend that this type of rhetoric is both incorrect and also unhelpful in the interreligious movement to care for creation that I lay out above. Faith should be the primary thing that moves people to care for creation. This is a topic that Pope Francis has picked up as a clear aspect of religious belief.

Bill McKibben

At the forefront of the ecological movement today is Pope Francis, who promulgated his second encyclical, *Laudato si’,* on 24 May 2015. In this document, he turns the world’s attention to the environmental crisis. As another prominent ecological scientist Bill McKibben (b. 1960) reflects upon reading the document,

My own sense, after spending the day reading this remarkable document, was of great relief. I’ve been working on climate change for a quarter century, and for much of that time it felt like enduring one of those nightmarish dreams where no one can hear your warnings. In recent years a broad-based movement has arisen to take up the challenge, but this marks the first time that a person of great authority in our global culture has fully recognized the scale and depth of our crisis, and the consequent necessary rethinking of what it means to be human.

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38 Edward O. Wilson, *The Meaning of Human Existence* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 2014), 151. This is the beginning of the basis for his unease with religious traditions, which is also connected to a weak philosophical outlook.

39 Ibid., 154.

McKibben is one of the most important ecological scientists of our time. What makes him especially significant for the purposes of this study is that he has taken and run with the encouragement of Wilson for scientists and people of faith to find common ground. He is able to do this himself because, as he writes in the preface to his *The Comforting Whirlwind: God, Job, and the Scale of Creation*, “I am by training a writer and an environmentalist, and by coincidence a Methodist Sunday school teacher.” As the subtitle suggests, the book in question is a brief examination of the Book of Job.

Towards the end of his work, McKibben provides a helpful answer to a challenging query: “Why are we here? At least in part, or so God implies in his answer to Job, to be a part of the great play of life, but only a part. We are not bigger than everything else – we are *like* everything else, meant to be exuberant and wild and *limited.*” As McKibben explains, our humanity is meant to be a blessing in that it comes directly from God’s creative power, but also in the sense that our limited nature means that we need not create things without God’s aid and issue our authority over things. Rather, human autonomy is practiced through solidarity with all of creation rather than domination of it. That an ecological scientist writes these words is further proof that faith and reason are not inimical. Christians can (and should) be scientists, just as scientists can be (and often are!) Christians.

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42 Ibid., 66. Emphasis in original.
Before returning to Pope Francis’s landmark contribution to Catholic social teaching on ecology, I do wish to bring to light one more issue that many ecological scientists have brought to the fore: the overpopulation of the earth. Writing in this text as both a scientist and an exegete of the Book of Job, McKibben makes the very interesting observation that the only of God’s commandments we have managed to follow is to be fertile and multiply: “We have done it – we have filled the earth. In fact, we may have overdone it, overfilled the earth to the point where our reproduction throws into question every other goal God set for us. This is one injunction we can cross off our list, and the sooner the better.”43 In advancing this particular argument, McKibben is thinking along the lines of some of the other scientists mentioned here and others like Jeffrey Sachs44 and Norman Myers.45 On the point of population control, Catholic teaching remains firmly opposed to anything other than natural family planning. Yet, it must be said that as long as the magisterium supports even this type of (natural) birth control, the door remains at least cracked that the doctrine could develop to support other means of (artificial) birth control in the future. Perhaps, further dialogue with the scientific world will lead to such a decision.

43 Ibid., 36. He goes on: “Having accomplished this goal, we can set forthrightly about the task of international family planning, providing as a nation access to birth control for people everywhere. And we can practice what we preach at home as well – we are used to thinking of overpopulation as a developing world problem, but of course a child born in suburban America will produce forty times the CO$_2$ and other waste in a lifetime as a child born in sub-Saharan Africa” (36).

44 See Jeffrey D. Sachs, Common Wealth: Economics for a Crowded Planet (New York: Penguin Press, 2008). It should be noted that Sachs, despite his views on population control, has been a frequent advisor to the Vatican. He has advised in the writing of at least two papal encyclicals (Centesimus annus and Laudato si’).

Responsibly managing the population of the environment is a part of caring for the planet. It is also a fundamental respect for all life and a preferential love for the poor. I note this here in a section that deals with ecological science not because of these scientists' view that there is an ecological crisis on this planet. That is now a matter of accepted scientific thought. Rather, I bring up this in this section of the study in order to place the Catholic thought on the environment within its proper context. After World War II, it became apparent that the rising human population and rising industrial and technological powers pushing new scales of production and consumption were having a rising impact on the natural ecosystems that are so critical to the wellbeing of all societies. Therefore, it became important during the last three pontificates for the popes to speak about these issues. Likewise, theologians began taking up the issue in their own work, adding to the papal thought on the topic. In the next two sections of this chapter, I turn explicitly to these two sets of contributions, beginning with the theological output.

The Bible, Theology, and the Natural World: Foundational Thoughts for Catholic Social Teaching

Creation in the Hebrew Scriptures

There is little confusion that the natural world plays a crucial role in the creation stories in Genesis. As many theologians have pointed out, however, there is significant confusion among Christians regarding what God intended the relationship to be between human beings and nonhuman creation. A careful reading of the creation stories sheds some light on this problem and speaks to how Catholic social teaching should address this relationship. We see in the Priestly account of creation in Genesis 1:26 that God commands the protological humans “to have dominion over” the nonhuman creation
already upon the earth (Gen 1:26). As Richard J. Clifford explains, “In the ancient Near East, the king imaged or ‘re-presented’ his divine patron in heaven by acting for the god and thus resembling this god in a dynamic rather than static way. The king promulgated laws establishing divine justice on earth.”46 As Randall Smith eloquently notes, there is a sense in these first pages of the Hebrew Bible that God is calling human beings to a role much very much like that of a farmer: “An experienced farmer understands that one either learns the ways of animals – how and when to feed them, what and when not to feed them, how large a pen they need, how much exercise they must have, how they give birth to their young, how long they must stay with their mother – or farmer and animals alike will not survive.”47

There is another interpretation of these texts that is decidedly less helpful for Christian ecological ethics in the twenty-first century: the portrait of a hierarchically organized world where human beings and angels reside atop of the “Great Chain of Being” while nonhuman creatures and vegetation occupy incrementally inferior positions. As Elizabeth Johnson wittily remarks of the non-human creation finding itself below humans on this resulting Chain of Being, “That these creatures might have their own reasons for existing apart from human use does not enter the picture.”48 The creation


story of Genesis 1, however, is not the primary creation narrative. Instead, as Clifford comments, it is meant to introduce the reader to the next ten chapters of Genesis and highlight “that the human race is part of a system, only here the length and sophistication of the story illustrate the historical, cultural, and ecological dimensions of the system. The story belongs to the genre of creation-flood epic that explores human culture through narrative.”

This close relationship that human beings have with the earth is a fundamental aspect of a proper reading of the texts in the Hebrew Scriptures. It comes out in a number of places. Allow me to take only one further example, this from beyond the first chapters of Genesis: the book of Job. The beleaguered Job has come before God seeking to bring God to task for Job’s misfortunes. Johnson focuses intently on the question that God asks of Job in this account: “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the Earth?” (Job 38:4). Where, indeed, was Job when God created the Earth? The question, however, merits a more anthropological response than it does a personal response from the biblical character in question. As Clifford comments, “even Job, legendary for his wisdom and justice, cannot fathom the world God has created. The book forces the reader to reinterpret biblical anthropocentrism within an irreducible theocentrism.” If God is responsible for the creation and sustenance of all creation, then it is impossible to

continue acting as if the ways of human beings are far and above the ways of all other creatures. Most fundamentally, it is God whose ways are far and above the ways of all of Her creatures. Moreover, this also suggests that all life forms have their own distinct relationships with God, quite apart from their usefulness to humanity.

These distinct relationships with God that each creature enjoys are partially explained by the process theology of John Haught. The primary aspect of process theology that Haught outlines is that the beauty of the universe is enhanced by all of creation, and in a particular way, by human beings: “Process theology calls us not only to the preservation but also to the compounding of cosmic beauty. It goes without saying that such a vocation requires us to attend constantly to the welfare of all levels of cosmic reality without which this adventure of maximizing beauty would be impossible.” In many ways, Haught’s work points to the doctrine of panentheism, which posits that God is inherently found in each creature. Or, as Haught describes it elsewhere, “A metaphysics of hope thinks of God as both the inspiration and the everlasting recipient of all the events that make up the larger cosmic story.” The hope to which Haught refers is found primarily in the ministry of Jesus. It is to the doctrine focusing on Christ that I will now turn.

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54 Ibid., 35.
New Creation and Salvation in Jesus Christ

The chasm between God’s ways and the ways of the created order is hammered home in the teaching and ministry of Jesus. Some of the most groundbreaking work on the relationship between Jesus and environmental ethics has been done by Australian theologian Denis Edwards. Edwards has written eloquently about the symbiotic relationship between creation and incarnation. These two theological doctrines are brought together in a fully human and fully divine way through Jesus. Edwards describes Jesus of Nazareth as the Wisdom of God, hearkening back to the book of Wisdom (sophia). He writes, “A Wisdom Christology sees creation and incarnation as intrinsically connected in the one divine plan, while still insisting that the incarnation was a totally free act of God. In this view, there can be no separation of creation and redemption.”

In fact, for St. Paul, it was clear that Christ proved to be the point of unity for the entire created order. Speaking of Christ, Paul writes: “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominion or rulers or powers – all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col 1:15-17). This is an incredibly rich text for the church. It is an especially important place to start in interpreting the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. If in Christ “all things hold together,” how do we human beings interpret our unity with the rest of creation? It would be impossible to see any

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57 While there is some genuine debate on the authorship of this epistle, the evidence is convincing that Paul did write these words.
separation at all between humans and nonhuman creation while looking at the world through the Pauline lens. As Jürgen Moltmann puts it, “Christ died in solidarity with all living things.”

Paul himself establishes this solidarity even further, for if Christ holds all things together, then all of creation holds divine importance in its own right. Many writers have written eloquently on the following passage from Paul’s letter to the Romans that substantiates the point even further: “For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (Rom 8:19-21). Paul here alludes to creation as though creation itself were a person, or a child of God. He continues with a poignant observation: “We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now” (Rom 8:22). In today’s world where human beings are responsible for so many of these “labor pains,” we must each ask ourselves to what extent we are responsible and how we can curb our sinful behavior.

The most prominent answer to this question in the Christian tradition is found in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As that source of unity for all of creation, Christ points the way to salvation for the whole world. The primary way he does this is through his suffering on the cross. This view of salvation is accepted by a wide range of thinkers. Where there is some parting of ways is regarding the direct connection between Christ and the cosmos. In many studies there remains an emphasis on Christ having taken

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on human flesh as opposed to Christ having taken on flesh in a general sense, which places him in greater solidarity with the cosmos. However, these scholars focus in on what is carried out on the cross. For instance, Jon Sobrino notes, “If from the beginning of the gospel God appears in Jesus as a God with us, if throughout the gospel God shows himself as a God for us, on the cross he appears as a God at our mercy and, above all, as a God like us.”59 Throughout the twentieth century, most dominant streams of Christian theology understood the “us” that Sobrino speaks of to be human beings. The “us” would show humanity as distinctive creation set apart from other animals. While Sobrino was writing from the particular perspective of the human beings who suffer, I wish to make the extension to say that Christ is also in solidarity with the “whole creation” that is suffering.

Like Sobrino’s, the christology of Joseph Ratzinger – who would later become Pope Benedict XVI – is also characterized in part by too much focus on humanity and not enough on the cosmos. However, like Sobrino, Ratzinger does introduce a central attitude towards the cross that is helpful for our attempt to integrate Christ and the cosmos. Writing in dialogue with Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Ratzinger alludes to Teilhard’s understanding of the human being as ultimately encompassed by God, or the “mysterious superego.” Ratzinger concludes, “As an ‘I,’ man is indeed an end, but the whole tendency of his being and of his own existence shows him also to be a creation belonging to a ‘super-I’ that does not blot him out but encompasses him; only such an association can bring out the form of the future man, in which humanity will achieve complete

fulfillment of itself.”60 In the very next paragraph, Ratzinger cites Paul’s letter to the Galatians in which the community is informed, “You are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28).61 Some interpreters may be justifiably confused as to why Ratzinger did not choose the verse I cited above from Paul’s letter to the community at Colossae that includes an even broader unity in Christ. To think of humanity in “fulfillment of itself” is to think of an anthropocentric focus, which may help to explain how later in his thought (as Pope), Ratzinger would be inclined to taking seriously humanity’s relationship with nature.

In her own christology, Lisa Sowle Cahill relates humans with nonhuman creation as a single integral creation that is to be redeemed fully and together in Christ. Through Christ’s resurrection, the entire created order comes together in a new way of life. This new creation, however, is conditional, based on the way human beings treat their nonhuman counterparts on Earth: “Humans exist as material, embodied, evolved, living, and social only in their ecological niche; they have a place in the world that is really a point in a network of indefinitely extenuating relations. Human existence will not be resurrected fully without its constitutive relations to other creatures.”62 This is something of an incredible statement because it turns many understandings of Christ’s redemption of the world on their heads. Simply because the incarnation was carried out with human flesh does not mean that human beings are of greater moral worth than nonhuman creation.

61 Ibid., 239.
While Walter Kasper, like Sobrino and Ratzinger, also falls into an overly anthropocentric christology at times, he makes other salient points that link his own thought on the nature of Jesus Christ to the aforementioned thinkers, especially Cahill. Kasper concludes, with Saint Paul, that Christ’s resurrection leads to a new freedom for all Christians. Kasper notes three things from which followers of Christ now have freedom: sin, death, and the law. I wish to focus only on the first of these. Kasper explains that in being freed from sin through the cross, Christians experience “primarily freedom from external and internal pressures.” However, he goes on to note that these pressures manifest themselves in created things which are good in themselves, since they are created by God. He continues that these things “deprive us of freedom only when they take on an anti-creative power of their own and become ultimates, idols which no longer serve man but are served by him…They are a choice of life in transient flesh instead of in God who makes the dead live.” What is crucial here is that “the God who makes the dead live” actually takes on flesh in Jesus of Nazareth. This flesh – *sарх* – is the flesh that connects Jesus to all of creation in a way that perfectly links the human and divine. Choosing “life in the transient flesh,” then, would mean choosing to create a chasm between human flesh and nonhuman flesh, instead of proclaiming a common flesh that is redeemed through the death and resurrection of Christ.

Finally, in the christological studies of Roger Haight and Terrence Tilley, we turn again to the particulars of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ. The resurrection is the fundamental Christian doctrine of salvation for the whole cosmos. Human beings have

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had no problem acknowledging its salvific meaning for them, but have historically balked at extending this final victory over death to nonhuman members of the created order. Why? Haight’s explanation of Jesus’ role in revealing God’s salvation is worth citing at length:

Relative to creation, love is the primary affection that God bears God’s creation…Jesus points to a creator who is a benevolent, loving savior prior to and in the very act of creating, but creation is not a past event; it is the always present activity of God. This was the very tradition which Jesus received. Creating, providential caring, saving are reductively aspects of the same activity of God…Salvation flows from the love that is prior to an integral part of God’s creating; it is God’s effective loving of what God creates…Jesus does not constitute but reveals something that has always been operative.64

Even though Haight does seem to bring forth a more inclusive picture of salvation in this passage, there is still some confusion since a good deal of the talk of the resurrection deals exclusively with its effect on human beings.65 Among these principal effects are the Christian practices of forgiveness and reconciliation, two themes to which I now turn.

Part of living an authentic life of Christian discipleship is recognizing the need for forgiveness. Terrence W. Tilley picks up the themes of forgiveness and reconciliation in his christology, which calls followers of Christ to recognize these practices as being at the very heart of their lives of faith. Tilley argues that without the resurrection, Jesus’ disciples would have had every reason to despair their lives: “Jesus’ appearances gave the disciples reason for their hope. The memory of the resurrection carried in the Jesus-

65 For example, in ibid., Haight states that after the resurrection, “Everything about human life is thus transformed by this new dimension of reality, an absolute future” (362). One could easily argue that since “everything about human life is thus transformed” that would mean a new type of fulfilled human existence in communion with the entirety of God’s creation. This hypothesis notwithstanding, it would be clearer to make that precise claim rather than leave it to the reader’s imagination.
movement offers the hope that despite the powers arrayed against it and the lures of other ways of life, there is hope that God will ultimately reconcile all to Godself.66 Like Haight and many others, Tilley still tends to favor human creation in his own christology, but the statement, “there is hope that God will ultimately reconcile all to Godself” still leaves room for reasonable doubt on this point. Unlike Haight, however, Tilley believes that without the historical fact of the resurrection, there would be no hope for the disciples.67 The point remains that until recent christological work, the dominant consensus served more as an obstacle to eco-responsibility than a helpful resource for it.

Along with Cahill’s view noted above, the most comprehensive and integral christology is that of Elizabeth A. Johnson. Even in her early work, Johnson points to the reality that the salvation emanating from the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is abounding and without limits among creation. In reading Johnson’s study of Jesus Christ, we must ask, “What type of figure was resurrected?” In doing so, we recall the many actions and teachings in the earthly life of Christ. In point of fact, it is the entire life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ that brings salvation to the world. As Johnson recalls, “Many of his parables and sayings reveal [that] he was in tune with the beatitudes of the earth, seeing in them a reflection of aspects of God who sends rain on the just and unjust. Exploitation and destruction of the earth and its creatures are foreign to this kind


67 In *Jesus Symbol of God*, Haight expresses his belief that “Jesus’ message is true, and his life a revelation of God, even if, contrary to fact, there had been no explicit experience of resurrection” (150). On this point, I must concur with Tilley et al.
of attitude.”⁶⁸ Some 25 years ago, Johnson presciently bemoaned the state of christological research that had not adequately opened itself to the burgeoning problems encountered by human sin against the natural world. Only four years later, during her presidential address of the Catholic Theological Society of America, Johnson saw the same need as a type of completion of the understanding of the salvation brought about by God: “The ecological crisis today is pushing the bodily and social dimensions of salvation even further, beyond the human race to include the whole earth and the cosmos itself (an ancient theme). This is the ultimate inclusion, bringing all creation into the circle of divine liberating and healing power.”⁶⁹

As Johnson and others have so helpfully remarked, though, what prompted such a wide net for salvation in the ministry of Jesus Christ (including his death and resurrection), what continued that ministry in the first Christians in the Acts of the Apostles and beyond, and what enlivens the church even today is the communion that is the Holy Spirit. This same Spirit enables the church to carry out the mission of ecojustice in contemporary Catholic social thought.⁷⁰ It is necessary to mention the Spirit in at least this truncated way because the Spirit has been all but ignored by most theologians, ethicists, and indeed, most Christians in recent centuries. The Holy Spirit, however, is at

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⁷⁰ I am fully aware that this study does not permit me the space necessary to present a full-fledged pneumatology. I am also aware that in the earlier parts of this section, I did not have the space necessary to present an adequate representation of Hebrew Scriptures and Christology. I note the brevity of this treatment however, because nothing useful from Catholic social thought is even possible without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Of course, the Spirit moves in ways that are not limited to the magisterial office.
the heart of the church’s teaching authority. It is to these authoritative statements that I now turn.

**Roman Catholic Social Teaching on the Natural Environment: Late to the Game?**

It is irrefutable that the Roman Catholic church has taken environmental issues seriously since at least 1990 and the promulgation of the aforementioned World Day of Peace message by Pope John Paul II. It also irrefutable that taking an issue seriously is not synonymous with giving that issue priority. Throughout the pontificates of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, ecological concerns never gained the prominence of other issues, especially those of abortion and family planning. Since 1990, the environment has been taken up repeatedly in a variety of different statements by popes and regional bishops’ conferences. As with John Paul II and Benedict XVI, however, most of these episcopal conferences did not promote the ecological agenda in the same ways they promoted other agendas. Moreover, a significant number of Catholic theologians have dealt with the topic in a direct manner.\(^71\) All of these points notwithstanding, in 1967, the environmentalist Lynn White, Jr., penned one of the most damning arguments against Western Christianity’s treatment of nature that has been written. White believed that the ecological crisis through which we are currently living, and which he detected even a half-century ago, is rooted in Western Christianity and the dualism that has marred many centuries of its practice. As White explains, “We shall continue to have a worsening ecologic crisis until we reject the Christian axiom that

\(^{71}\) It would be impossible here to do justice to all of this work. One of the best volumes on this issue, though, is Drew Christiansen, S.J., and Walter Grazer, eds. *“And God Saw That It Was Good”: Catholic Theology and the Environment* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1996).
nature has no reason for existence save to serve man.” Even though White was very clear about the upsetting ramifications of Western Christianity’s dualistic legacy, he did see hope for the future of Christianity vis-à-vis the natural world, especially through the figure of one exemplary Christian:

The greatest spiritual revolutionary in Western history, Saint Francis, proposed what he thought was an alternative Christian view of nature and man’s relation to it: he tried to substitute the idea of the equality of all creatures, including man, for the idea of man’s limitless rule of creation. He failed. Both our present science and our present technology are so tinctured with orthodox Christian arrogance toward nature that no solution for our ecologic crisis can be expected from them alone. Since the roots of our trouble are so largely religious, the remedy must also be essentially religious, whether we call it that or not. We must rethink and refuel our nature and destiny. The profoundly religious, but heretical, sense of the primitive Franciscans for the spiritual autonomy of all parts of nature may point a direction. I propose Francis as a patron saint for ecologists.

Whether it was in direct response to White’s critique or not, in his Apostolic Letter *Inter Sanctos*, Pope John Paul II declared Saint Francis as patron saint of “those who promote ecology” in 1979, some 12 years after White’s essay was written. And now, happily, a pope who is so close to Saint Francis that he adopted his name has taken seriously the call to revere all of the creation just as his saintly namesake did.

*Laudato si’* Within the Corpus of Catholic Environmental Teaching

When rumors began to surface that Pope Francis was preparing a social encyclical to focus primarily on the natural environment, the pope’s popularity and the urgent importance of the issue combined to make *Laudato si’* the most eagerly anticipated papal

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73 Ibid. White notes that the first Franciscans were heretical in declaring the “spiritual autonomy” of all of nature. I am not entirely sold on this point, as I hope I indicated in the previous section of this chapter, highlighting the theological foundations for an environmental theology.
encyclical since Pope Paul VI’s *Humanae vitae* of 1968, which upheld the church’s prohibition of artificial contraception. Indeed, a significant number of people – Catholic and non-Catholic alike – have read (at least some of) the document.\(^{74}\) This is a good development because Pope Francis addressed the letter to “every person living on this planet.”\(^{75}\) Part of the reason for such a broad audience is that Francis wanted to ensure this encyclical would impact the deliberations at the December 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference. Moreover, it is a positive response to an important political message. In this text, Francis builds on some key foundational beliefs about the natural environment that have been expressed in previous magisterial documents. It is worthwhile to examine this argument in light of the principle of solidarity.

Solidarity is one of the most important characteristics of Catholic social teaching. As Pope John Paul II put it, solidarity is the virtue that allows us to serve all of God’s human creation: “Thus the process of *development* and *liberation* takes concrete shape in the exercise of *solidarity*, that is to say in the love and service of neighbor, especially of the poorest.”\(^{76}\) Pope Benedict expanded this thinking of solidarity in his social encyclical of 2009, *Caritas in veritate*: “Every violation of solidarity and civic friendship harms the

\(^{74}\) This is no small feat, especially considering the length of the document. By any measurement, *Laudato si’* is the longest Catholic social encyclical that has ever been promulgated. Furthermore, the encyclical genre does not lend itself to wide reading by the public. Even when encyclicals have been addressed to audiences wider than clergy over the past decades, they have often only been read by theologians interested in the topic, and a sampling of priests and bishops. I should also mention that even though this message has gained some popular and secular attention, there remains ample room for improvement as far as the number of Catholics who should familiarize themselves with this text.

\(^{75}\) Pope Francis, *Laudato si’: On Care for Our Common Home* (24 May 2015), no. 3. Accessed April 2, 2016, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html. As Meghan Clark whimsically noted at a press conference for the occasion of the promulgation of the encyclical sponsored by *America Media* on 18 June 2015, “Pope Francis doesn’t care if people have good will or not.” Her comment was in response to the oft-used salutation in encyclicals over the past 50 years: “To all men and women of good will.”

environment, just as environmental deterioration in turn upsets relations in society.

Nature, in our time, is so integrated into the dynamics of society and culture that by now it hardly constitutes an independent variable.” 77 Even with the explication of solidarity given here by Benedict, there was still a divergence between the papal teaching on the topic of the natural environment and that offered by environmental scientists. There was substantial room for development of doctrine on this issue by Francis.

In *Laudato si’*, Pope Francis makes it clear that the historical definition of solidarity is no longer sufficient for understanding the relationship of human beings to non-human creation. He introduces a more nuanced reading of solidarity in his encyclical. I submit that we should understand him to endorse a radical, ecological solidarity. 78 Historically, the virtue of solidarity has been understood through a particularly human lens. Not only was it considered to be an action befitting virtuous human beings only, but it was always directed towards other human beings. In *Laudato si’*, Francis makes a careful movement forward in the discussion of solidarity. In line with Benedict, Francis understands that solidarity in the twenty-first century very much has to do with non-humans. Unlike Benedict, however, Francis makes it clear that we have been hampered in the past by “tyrannical anthropocentrism.” 79


78 Francis never uses this term; this is my term here. I do not wish to confuse the fact that Francis maintains that solidarity is still primarily a human virtue. By introducing the term “ecological solidarity,” I wish to make the term broader than its original meaning. Here, Francis indicates some new understanding of the term. In no. 14, he cites the South African bishops by calling for a “universal solidarity.” In nos. 159 and 162, he calls for an “intergenerational solidarity” that keeps in mind the needs of the future generations. Finally, in no. 240, Francis notes that a “global solidarity” comes directly from the Trinity.

79 Pope Francis, *Laudato si’*, no. 68. To my knowledge, the term “tyrannical anthropocentrism” does not appear elsewhere in the corpus of magisterial Catholic social teaching.
To turn away from tyrannical anthropocentrism means to turn towards a more holistic understanding of the relationship between human beings and non-human creation. Here, it is clear that Pope Francis wishes to return to some of the sources of patristic and medieval church mothers and fathers who reverenced all of creation.\textsuperscript{80} While the tradition hasn’t always strayed from an anthropocentric bias, there is material from which we can draw in order to avoid falling even deeper into this troubling condition today. Pope Francis believes that the gospels propel Christians to work for the good of all creation. Here, he is drawing on some fundamental concerns first introduced by his two immediate predecessors.

While there had been brief mentions of environmental issues as early as \textit{Gaudium et spes} in 1965, Pope John Paul II was the first pontiff to bring particular attention to the matter in his own magisterium. In his 1987 encyclical \textit{Sollicitudo rei socialis}, he makes it clear that the issue is one that affects us all. He points out that “natural resources are limited.” While this claim seems clear now, it was a novel thing to read in an encyclical of almost 30 years ago. Of natural resources, John Paul continues, “Using them as if they were inexhaustible, with \textit{absolute dominion}, seriously endangers their availability not only for the present generation but above all for generations to come.”\textsuperscript{81} Three years later, John Paul II dedicated a World Day of Peace message to the natural environment for the very first time. In this message, his thought matured even more to the point of making a clear connection between human actions and the already-serious environmental crisis that


\textsuperscript{81} Pope John Paul II, \textit{Sollicitudo rei socialis}, no. 34. Emphasis in original.
planet Earth was experiencing.\textsuperscript{82} To mark a century of modern Catholic social teaching, in his final social encyclical, \textit{Centesimus annus}, John Paul II continued his thread calling for greater care for creation at the expense of personal comfort and human destruction of nature for selfish reasons: “In his desire to have and to enjoy rather than to be and to grow, man consumes the resources of the earth and his own life in an excessive and disordered way.”\textsuperscript{83} There have been explicit charges of human connection with the earth’s destruction for the last quarter-century of magisterial Catholic social teaching.

In 2010, Pope Benedict XVI borrowed this concept from his predecessor by introducing the term “intergenerational solidarity.”\textsuperscript{84} By employing this particular term, he was building on the preceding argument of John Paul II in noting that with creation in present peril, human beings had the responsibility to act so that future generations of human beings might experience the same gifts of the natural world that current and previous generations had enjoyed. This commonality between the environmental thought of John Paul and Benedict could be traced to a fundamental belief that these two popes shared: there is a clear connection between the way that human beings treat the earth and the way they treat themselves. First introduced by John Paul, this belief is explained most

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{82} See Pope John Paul II, “Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation,” Message for the 1990 World Day of Peace (8 December 1989), no. 6. Accessed April 2, 2016, https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19891208_xxiii-world-day-for-peace.html. The key line: “The gradual depletion of the ozone layer and the related ‘greenhouse effect’ has now reached crisis proportions as a consequence of industrial growth, massive urban concentrations and vastly increased energy needs. Industrial waste, the burning of fossil fuels, unrestricted deforestation, the use of certain types of herbicides, coolants and propellants: all of these are known to harm the atmosphere and environment.”
\item \textsuperscript{83} Pope John Paul II, \textit{Centesimus annus} (1 May 1991), no. 37.
\end{itemize}
eloquently in Benedict’s 2009 encyclical *Caritas in veritate*. This encyclical letter was significant for a number of reasons. Not only was it Benedict’s only social encyclical, but it also shone a new spotlight on the issue of the environment within Catholic social teaching. Until the writing of this letter a total of only five paragraphs in all prior social encyclicals had dealt directly with the natural environment. In *Caritas in veritate* alone, Benedict devoted the same number of paragraphs to this pressing issue. This led to a number of commentators bestowing the moniker of “Green Pope” on Benedict to match the nickname “Green Patriarch” which had already been used to describe Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the leader of the Greek Orthodox community.85

In *Caritas in veritate*, Benedict notes, “*The way humanity treats the environment influences the way it treats itself, and vice versa.*”86 For Benedict, this is a way of saying that the environment brings to the fore the question of solidarity, as I noted earlier. The question remains, however: Has Francis brought anything new to the table with the promulgation of *Laudato si’*, or is his encyclical simply rehashing everything that his two predecessors have already introduced? In the remainder of this section, I will highlight some areas in which Pope Francis has made strides beyond John Paul and Benedict, then conclude with ways in which the encyclical could have been improved even further.

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The first area in which Francis has brought about a major evolution of the tradition is by introducing the term “integral ecology.” In past magisterial dealings with the natural environment, there have been clear distinctions between “human ecology” and “environmental ecology.” What is ironic about the way these two types of ecology had been discussed in previous papal statements on the environment is that they were meant by the popes in question to show the relationship between human beings and the environment. As I noted above, these two terms were mainly used to show the reader that the way humans treat the rest of creation would be emblematic of the way they treated each other. The irony, however, rests in the fact that the result of utilizing these two separate terms is that they were too easily seen as two distinct issues. Pope Francis has sought to avoid such a problem by introducing his fresh terminology.

What does it mean to promote an integral ecology? At the outset, it seems obvious that Pope Francis believes that such an ideological worldview is impossible without first understanding the present situation on this planet. By coming to a better understanding of the reality currently facing our society, it should become obvious that human beings have failed in their vocation as stewards of creation. Following in the footsteps of his predecessors, Francis makes it clear that human beings have become seduced by the attraction of worldly goods, especially technology. Francis is neither troglodyte nor Luddite; he acknowledges that “nuclear energy, biotechnology, information technology, knowledge of our DNA, and so many other abilities which we have acquired, have given

87 See especially Pope Francis, *Laudato si’*, nos. 137-162.
us tremendous power.”

However, this power is abused, Francis argues, when humans use their outstanding knowledge and gifted minds for purposes that contradict the moral order. He continues,

We need but think of the nuclear bombs dropped in the middle of the twentieth century, or the array of technology which Nazism, Communism and other totalitarian regimes have employed to kill millions of people, to say nothing of the increasingly deadly arsenal of weapons available for modern warfare. In whose hands does all this power lie, or will it eventually end up? It is extremely risky for a small part of humanity to have it.

Francis believes that we should take pains to measure the situation and understand that having such power at our disposal is not a good thing in an unqualified sense.

How does Francis suggest that we move forward in a way that maturely appropriates the technology at our disposal? In one of the most forthright passages of the encyclical, Francis proclaims there to be an “urgent need for us to move forward in a bold cultural revolution.” This revolution is one that must be rooted in the gospel but does not necessitate “a return to the Stone Age.”

The paradox at the heart of Francis’s revolutionary message is precisely what the Council Fathers called for during the final days of Vatican Council II: “the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the gospel.” To scrutinize the signs of the times in the twenty-first century and interpret them in the light of the gospel means to broaden our perspective to include new areas within the purview of Christianity. Pope Francis’s

89 Pope Francis, _Laudato si’_, no. 104.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid., no. 114.
92 Ibid.
93 _Gaudium et spes_, no. 4.
declaration that an “integral ecology” is necessary to carry out the gospel today also means that a careful scrutiny of the signs of the times makes it evident that human beings are at fault for much of the environmental degradation that we see around us. Even though John Paul II and Benedict XVI wrote about the natural environment, Francis’s pontificate has opened up a new priority in Catholic social thought. While the natural environment was an interest of his two immediate predecessors, even a cursory review of their pontificates proves that it was not a priority. For Francis, however, the degradation of the environment stands at the heart of his papal ministry.

Pope Francis makes it clear that one of the greatest challenges to an integral ecology in today’s society is “excessive anthropocentrism.” He continues by noting that such an outlook has brought human beings to a point in their existence where they believe themselves to be God’s ultimate gift to creation, to the exclusion of other creatures. Of this outlook, Francis concludes, “What was handed on was a Promethean vision of mastery over the world, which gave the impression that the protection of nature was something only the faint-hearted cared about. Instead, our ‘dominion’ over the universe should be understood more properly in the sense of responsible stewardship.”

This teaching is not new within Catholic thought, but it is an original papal insight. Here, Francis certainly remains faithful to the thought of his predecessors, but he also builds on their writing to introduce new magisterial terminology for Christian anthropology, an anthropology that, for the first time in the magisterial teaching of the church, is deeply informed by the findings of the ecological sciences.

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95 Ibid.
We have seen Francis’s explanation of what stands in the way of integral ecology. The question remains, “What adequately fulfills our calling to bring about integral ecology?” First, a careful understanding of the word “integral” is in order. Here, Francis is using the word to remind us that it means the “whole.” It is no surprise, then, that the most often repeated turn of phrase he uses in the encyclical is “everything is interconnected.” In other words, everything makes up the integral whole. The “human ecology” and “environmental ecology” come together in integral ecology. This comes out most clearly when Francis declares that human ecology shows forth “the relationship between human life and the moral law, which is inscribed in our nature and is necessary for the creation of a more dignified environment.” Put another way, human ecology is a pathway to integral ecology. Francis continues, “It is enough to recognize that our body itself establishes us in a direct relationship with the environment and with other living beings.”

By itself, human ecology has been an explicitly named part of Catholic social teaching for only 25 years. Implicitly, however, it has been crucial to Catholic thought for centuries. Pope Francis makes the key move toward integral ecology with a startling turn

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96 This phrase appears many times in the encyclical. Francis sometimes writes “everything is connected” or “everything is related” or “everything is interrelated.” See nos. 16, 70, 91, 92, 117, 120, 137, 138, 142, and 240.

97 Pope Francis, *Laudato si’*, no. 155.

98 Ibid. I should note that there has been no little controversy over this paragraph by a number of ethicists who – not without merit – declare that Francis has reverted into a gender essentialism in the following sentences. The point of this dissertation is not to focus on this particular issue, but suffice it to say that this controversial issue could easily detract from the fundamental point Pope Francis is trying to make in these lines: the relationship between human beings and the entirety of creation is one. It is one because God has created all of these things to have material bodies. Furthermore, all of this creation is fundamentally good because God has created it and deemed it be such. The social reality is more dependent upon this fact than on one’s masculinity or femininity.
of phrase that underlines the concept of universal interconnectedness: “We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it.” While his papal predecessors have always acknowledged that we are a part of nature, the concept of integral ecology is a first step towards moving beyond the “Great Chain of Being,” which I introduced above. The second evolution of the tradition brought forth by Francis is a new envisioning of this hierarchical “Chain,” a revision that proposes to lead Catholic social teaching toward an understanding of a “Great Circle of Being.”

There are two ways in which to understand the Great Chain of Being. The first such way – which I have already briefly introduced – is to view it as a hierarchical view of the cosmos. In this hierarchy, since human beings are far above the remainder of creation, they naturally dictate what becomes of other (non-rational) creatures. While Thomas Aquinas is not responsible for introducing it to the Christian worldview, he gets the most credit. As H. Paul Santmire explains, reading Thomas leaves us only with “ambiguity” in describing the theology of nature.

But why should the tradition’s treatment of nature be ambiguous at all? On one hand, Thomas says very clearly of God,

because His goodness could not be adequately represented by one creature alone, He produced many and diverse creatures, that what was wanting to one in the representation of the divine goodness might be supplied by another. For goodness, which in God is simple and uniform, in creatures is manifold and divided; and hence the whole universe together participates

99 Ibid., no. 139.
in the divine goodness more perfectly, and represents it better than any single creature whatever.  

As we know, however, this is not the entire story. The reality is that Thomas still held closely to a worldview that had a penchant for a particular type of ranking of things. Along these lines, Thomas held to the inequality of all created things, but for a very important reason:

Hence in natural things species seem to be arranged in degrees; as the mixed things are more perfect than the elements, and plants than minerals, and animals than plants, and men than other animals; and in each of these one species is more perfect than the others. Therefore, as the divine wisdom is the cause of the distinction of things for the sake of the perfection of the universe, so is it the cause of inequality. For the universe would not be perfect if only one grade of goodness were found in things.

The heart of what has been known as the Great Chain of Being is on display in this explanation. Therein lies the ambiguity to which Santmire points in his work. With human beings near the very top of the Great Chain of Being (only below the angels), there has been a hurdle within the Christian intellectual tradition to provide solid framework for the inherent goodness and dignity of all divine creation.

What is the second way to understand this Great Chain of Being, then? In fact, it is more appropriate to follow the work of the late Norris Clarke, S.J., who considered the great diversity of creation (which leads to the perfection of the universe) as “The Great Circle of Being.” Clarke’s proposal meets the inherent problem of the Great Chain of Being head on. As William French puts it, a potential problem with the “Chain” approach

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103 Ibid., I, q. 47, a. 2.
104 See Clarke, *The One and the Many*, 303-308.
is not so much that it naturally eliminates animal and plant life, but rather the fact that “over time, theological and ethical attention began to take the order of creation for granted and concentrated concern and attention on the distinct value of the human.”\(^{105}\) In the medieval worldview, the human person was set within a broader community of creation. The problem in question is what Pope Francis terms “excessive anthropocentrism.” The Great Circle of Being tries to correct this problem. This approach makes it clear that human beings are only one part of God’s creation. True, the Great Chain of Being, as originally projected, does the same thing. As we know, the resulting understandings over many centuries of this concept have led to something quite different. The result has been a society where human beings use all other created beings for their own purposes. The image of a circle works better than a chain here: the chain breaks irreparably when such an arrangement is in effect. The only movement away from self destruction is by establishing a new standard for humans’ treatment of non-human creation.

Clarke’s own thought here has one major shortcoming. He notes, “The rest of the vast material universe below the human is incapable, by its very nature, of attaining union with God, of contemplating its journey back to the One, its Source, by itself. It needs a mediator that can take it up into itself and somehow carry it back Home with itself. This is precisely what we humans can do, and we alone.”\(^{106}\) First, the phrase “below the human” is hardly comprehensible within the image of a circle; that is more akin to the

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\(^{106}\) Clarke, *The One and the Many*, 306. Emphasis in original.
“chain” language, which he otherwise consciously avoids. Second, though, it does appear that Clarke is onto an important insight in the remainder of the thought. It would turn on its head many centuries of poor relationships between human beings and the animal world to see humans actually act as mediators for other creation. Mediation is, of course, far superior to destruction! But, I must pose the question here: why can’t animals be mediators for human beings? Shouldn’t the intellectual superiority that humans enjoy give us the insight to allow ourselves to be mediated by plants and animals too? The only way that the image “Great Circle of Being” can work adequately is if all of creation is willing to work together. This requires one species – humans – to humble itself.

This all brings us back to Pope Francis, *Laudato si’*, and the Catholic social tradition. I submit that Francis – building off the work of his predecessors – makes it possible to employ the Great Circle of Being in the official magisterium of Catholic social teaching. Pope Francis rightly calls the entire world to a conversion of heart that will lead to a new relationship between the human family and the community of non-human creation. He calls human beings to cease being so caught up in selfish behaviors: “We are always capable of going out of ourselves towards the other. Unless we do this, other creatures will not be recognized in their true worth; we are unconcerned about caring for things for the sake of others; we fail to set limits on ourselves in order to avoid the suffering of others or the deterioration of our surroundings.”

There are three key things to take from this call to action. First, Francis is calling us to assign true worth as an “other” to non-human creatures. If we are able to see them as an other toward which we

107 Pope Francis, *Laudato si’*, no. 208.
can move in order to carry out a relationship, that is a first step toward actually doing it. Second, we need to drop the selfish behavior that has plagued the poor of the world. The natural environment is like the poor in the human family. They have both been neglected for too long. Third, we must be characterized not by our boundless power and strength, but rather by our boundless compassion and care.

In carrying out this change, or “ecological conversion,” Pope Francis is calling each person to realize that God has created more than only our individual selves. Moreover, Francis seeks in his reader

the awareness that each creature reflects something of God and has a message to convey to us, and the security that Christ has taken unto himself this material world and now, risen, is intimately present to each being, surrounding it with his affection and penetrating it with his light. Then too, there is the recognition that God created the world, writing into it an order and a dynamism that human beings have no right to ignore.109

If each human person understands that every creature – human and non-human alike – has inherent dignity because of its Creator, Pope Francis is arguing that there should be a natural change in human lifestyle. Only then will there be any possibility for a Great Circle of Being. Or, as Elizabeth Johnson explains, “Ecological conversion means falling in love with the Earth as an inherently valuable, living community in which we participate, and bending every effort to be creatively faithful to its well-being, in tune with the living God who brought it into being and cherishes it with unconditional love.”110

109 Ibid., no. 221.
110 Johnson, Ask the Beasts, 259. Johnson continues: “This turning is not done to the exclusion of other human beings, especially those poor and marginalized, but in view of their flourishing which is intertwined with ecological health on all levels” (259).
While I am confident that the magisterium of Pope Francis places us closer to an official ecclesial acceptance of this Great Circle of Being than ever before, I am also cognizant that we are still short of this ideal ethical model. There are still times in *Laudato si’* where Francis drifts back into language that is still more consistent with hierarchical ways of addressing non-human creation than with more “circular” language. Ironically, this is nowhere more evident than in the encyclical’s section dealing with the human cause of the environmental crisis. Francis maintains, “Christian thought sees human beings as possessing a particular dignity above other creatures; it thus inculcates esteem for each person and respect for others. Our openness to others, each of whom is a ‘thou’ capable of knowing, loving and entering into dialogue, remains the source of our nobility as human persons.”  

Francis addresses this very issue even more directly earlier in the text, while pointing to the universal communion that should be at work between God’s creation:

This is not to put all living beings on the same level nor to deprive human beings of their unique worth and the tremendous responsibility it entails. Nor does it imply a divinization of the earth which would prevent us from working on it and protecting it in its fragility. Such notions would end up creating new imbalances which would deflect us from the reality which challenges us. At times we see an obsession with denying any preeminence to the human person; more zeal is shown in protecting other species than in defending the dignity which all human beings share in equal measure. Certainly, we should be concerned lest other living beings be treated irresponsibly. But we should be particularly indignant at the enormous inequalities in our midst, whereby we continue to tolerate some considering themselves more worthy than others.

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111 Pope Francis, *Laudato si’*, no. 119.

112 Ibid., no. 90.
There is no mistaking Pope Francis for someone who believes that non-human species should be considered more important than human beings. I do not wish to propose that argument either. I do, however, believe that *Laudato si’* could have made an even stronger rhetorical argument than it does in its current state if it had omitted any discussion of human beings having a particular “preeminence” over other creatures, or a “particular dignity above other creatures.” The document could have made an even stronger argument for a Great Circle of Being than it already does if it had not used terms implying a vertical rather than a horizontal order to creation. Nevertheless, as Michael Schuck points out, there is clear development in the statement that “the natural world has intrinsic value.”

What does all of this say about *Laudato si’*? It says that the document represents a strong movement forward in the Catholic social tradition’s understanding of the natural environment, and the role of humanity in it. This point notwithstanding, it is also clear that Catholic social teaching is a tradition in flux. For many centuries, there has been an emphasis on the Great Chain of Being, which has not been without its merits. Now, though, Pope Francis is ushering Catholic social thought into a new epoch of its history. No longer is it so caught up in ordering every level of creation on a hierarchical chain, but it is finally opening the possibility for a Great Circle of Being. Even this movement, as I have shown, is not a seamless shift; even Francis wishes to maintain some level of uniqueness for human beings. The dynamic nature of the Catholic social

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114 I am cognizant of the fact that this section of my study allows an insufficient amount of space for an exhaustive reading of the encyclical. I have attempted to select the most instrumental parts of the text for discussion here.
tradition, though, shows us that its ecological thought is never static. Catholic ethicists must continue monitoring the tradition and searching for ways to expand it if we are to push it beyond what limits are currently in place. Likewise, this study will continue in the final chapter by bringing together the two major topics to this point: war/peace and the environment. In what follows in this study, I will envision what a future Catholic social encyclical might look like. This will involve a careful analysis of the relationship between violent conflict and the resulting degradation to the environment. In the next chapter, I will consider how the environment should be applied to just war thinking and examine how pacifists might view the natural environment.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE MORAL STATUS OF NATURE, JUST WAR THEORY STAGES, AND ECOLOGICAL PACIFISM

Until now, this study has dealt separately with two key areas of concern in Roman Catholic social thought: war and peace, and ecology. In this final chapter, I will examine them as one issue that will be fundamental for Catholic social thought in the twenty-first century and beyond. The first part of this chapter will consider the moral status of nature. Building off of the discussion begun in Chapter Three, I turn explicitly to this question through the lens of Saint Thomas Aquinas. I will focus on two areas of Thomistic thought that are crucial for the integration of ecology and the just war theory: justice and natural law. I have chosen natural law because it is pertinent insofar as I examine the moral status of nature itself. Of the four cardinal virtues, justice stands out because it lends itself to a “cosmic common good.” The concept of the common good, too, is important for carrying out Pope Francis’s agenda to fruition.

In an excursus, I will consider a case study that will show the necessity of reconsidering warfare through the lens of ecological ethics. The case in question will be a major tactic employed by the United States in their military operation in Iraq both before and during their invasion that began in 2003: the use of depleted uranium. Why is this a matter of particular concern for this study? The use of depleted uranium, as I will show
later in this chapter, causes both profound and long-lasting ecological degradation and human and non-human casualties among the created order.

The next major section of this chapter will return in an explicit way to the just war tradition. In particular, I will deal with the relationship of the moral status of nature to the chronological stages of the just war theory. This will serve as an extension of the criteria for justified conflict. In this section I will consider an additional category of just war criteria, *jus ante bellum*, or justice before war. This is necessary because, along with the *ad bellum*, *in bello*, and *post bellum* stages, it renders just war thinking – like pacifism – a coherent and sustained life commitment. Also, this section will continue part of the discussion from Chapter Two that dealt with justice after warfare, and in particular the role of restoring ecological stability and the practice of solidarity with the natural world. The greatest part of this section, however, will focus on fulfilling the counsel of the fathers of Vatican II, who wrote more than fifty years ago that it was already time “to undertake an evaluation of war with an entirely new attitude.”¹ This practice has, of course, already been part of the church’s discussion of war in the last half-century. Because the same Council fathers also reminded the church that we “always have the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the gospel,”² however, it is incumbent upon us in the present moment to view the condition of a world at war as a wearisome reality.

Instead of radical despair that is embodied by a feeling of helplessness, Christian ethics must proceed in a spirit of hope to answer the most difficult questions of our day.

² Ibid., no. 4.
Undoubtedly, one of these most pressing and challenging questions is the destructive nature of warfare. Even though Pope Francis does not connect the issue of war with environmental ecology very often in *Laudato si’*, his insistence that everything is connected provides the motivation for a new study of the *ad bellum* and *in bello* criteria of just war teaching that includes more concerted attention to ecology. As Francis notes in that encyclical, “War always does grave harm to the environment and to the cultural riches of peoples, risks which are magnified when nuclear power and biological weapons are borne in mind.”[^3] This section of the chapter will reconsider the *ad bellum* and *in bello* stages of conflict and will insert the natural environment into the existing criteria that must be met for a given war to be considered justified. In each case, I will reconsider the criterion in question to take into account the effects that violence would have on the natural environment, with its complex diversity of life forms.

Following this, I will present a final section of this chapter, which will serve as another alternative to the ecological rendering of just war theory stages and criteria. The alternative will be a new type of contingent pacifism to consider alongside those I listed in Chapter One of this study: ecological pacifism. In this final section of the chapter, I will explain what such a group might look like in the twenty-first century. Why will many forms of warfare appear morally illicit to this group of people? Will there ever be a type of war that could be morally justified for this group? What will be their relationship to pacifists? How will they regard the just war theory, even an updated rendering of the

[^3]: Pope Francis, *Laudato si’*, no. 57. This is the most explicitly that Francis speaks about this connection in the encyclical. He makes the direct connection between war and the natural environment elsewhere in paragraph nos. 66, 104, 200, and 220. There is some hope that the future of Francis’s pontificate would include another encyclical, perhaps devoted especially to this connection.
just war theory as I present it earlier in this chapter? These questions will provide a substantial starting point for a conversation about the relationship between adherents to just war theory and adherents to pacifism in this century.

**A Facelift for the Moral Status of Nature?**

As I noted in the previous chapter, Thomas Aquinas believes that all creation – albeit through varying levels – contributes to the perfection of the universe. As Jame Schaeffer has pointed out in her own study of Thomas’s ecological ethics, “Only the intellectual aspects of the human bear God’s image, whereas the nonintellectual aspects, those making up the physical body, retain only a likeness of God’s goodness through their existence.” And yet, we should all lament the fact that human beings have lorded their creation in the divine “image and likeness” over the remainder of creation that is created in the divine “likeness” only. This is lamentable precisely because of the Creator’s actual intent for all created beings. As John Kavanaugh puts it, each created thing has a particular goodness that no other created thing of a different type can duplicate. He concludes, “Everything that exists, consequently, is affirmable. Each diverse reality has its own proper goodness. That is why we humans, as a moral kind of being, are drawn to care for the earth and all its splendid kinds. For Aquinas, the affirmation of the truth of a being, the affirmation of its own goodness is what love is all about.” The new moral status of nature, then, must really demand a moral stance of love. In particular, this love is that which God pours out on all of creation and which must be

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practiced by human beings in their own ethical engagement with the natural environment and non-human animals.\(^6\)

Part of the way that divine love pours out on all creation is through the sacramental character of created things. As Thomas explains:

> It is man’s nature to acquire knowledge of the intelligible from the sensible. But a sign is that by means of which one attains to the knowledge of something else. Consequently, since the sacred things which are signified by the sacraments, are the spiritual and intelligible goods by means of which man is sanctified, it follows that the sacramental signs consist in sensible things: just as in the Divine Scriptures spiritual things are set before us under the guise of things sensible. And hence it is that sensible things are required for the sacraments.\(^7\)

The sacraments could never be effected by matter that is not inherently good; therefore, we see that all creation is good and receives God’s love. In light of this, it is necessary for us to re-evaluate the ways we humans treat nonhuman creation in the world today and discern the most virtuous behavior in relation to the created order. I will argue here for the further promotion of one particular virtue: justice.\(^8\)

Justice

Justice in particular will help us all strive towards what Daniel P. Scheid calls the “cosmic common good.”\(^9\) The common good is a fundamental aspect of Thomistic ethics because it shows the priority of the good of the collective over the good of the individual.

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\(^7\) Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, III., q. 60.

\(^8\) I do not select this virtue at the deliberate exclusion of the other virtues, either cardinal or theological. In fact, any of the virtues may be helpful in carrying out a more fruitful relationship with all of creation. I have settled on this one virtue, however, because of the role it plays in Thomas’s own theological enterprise and also because of the way it fits into a new vision of solidarity with all of creation, that fully realizes Pope Francis’s dictum that “everything is connected.”

in Thomas’s thought. In order to view Thomas’s idea of the common good in the twenty-first century, we must hold a wider view of creation. As Scheid concludes, “Given Aquinas’s understanding of the importance of biological diversity and ecological sustainability and the insights of contemporary science that highlight the interdependence among all earthly creatures, it seems reasonable to extend the meaning of the common good to include all creatures.”

In order to protect the common good, it would be helpful to turn, if only briefly, to Thomas’s treatment of the virtue.

Thomas takes on the Aristotelian definition of justice as “the constant and perpetual will to render to each one his right.” Now, it is clear, especially in the previous question and the very next article of the ST, that Thomas believes justice concerns the actions between human beings. He explains, “It is proper to justice, as compared with the other virtues, to direct man in his relations with others: because it denotes a kind of equality, as its very name implies.” Despite this baseline approach, it is also clear that we can say something more universal about justice in the twenty-first century. As Kenneth Himes suggests, “Within the Catholic tradition, justice is understood as a fundamental characteristic of what constitutes good community. Without justice, life together involves oppression, neglect, and harm.” Even if Himes’s key concern here is human life, it would be nearly impossible to consider the community in which humans live without simultaneously considering the other members of the created order that

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10 Ibid., 140.
11 Thomas Aquinas, ST, Ila IIae, q. 58, a. 1.
12 Ibid., Ila IIae, q. 57, a. 1; See also, Ila IIae, q. 58, a. 2, where Thomas clarifies further, “it belongs to justice to rectify human acts.”
inhabit the very same community. If we are committed to ignoring these created things or worse, committed to actions that positively damage or kill them, then we are also committed to impacting negatively our very own community. As ecologists have emphasized for the last half century, ecological damage redounds to damage human individuals and communities. This explicitly impacts what Thomas calls distributive justice.

Thomas breaks justice into two particular types or species: commutative and distributive. He explains that commutative justice is the type “concerned about the mutual dealings between two persons.”\textsuperscript{14} We may well agree that this particular type of justice may be, at least primarily if not exclusively, a matter between two individual human beings. On the other hand, distributive justice is slightly different in its object: “In the second place there is the order of the whole towards the parts, to which corresponds the order of that which belongs to the community in relation to each single person. This order is directed by distributive justice, which distributes common goods proportionately.”\textsuperscript{15} Even though Thomas clearly uses the word “person” in this description, our common experience makes it clear that if the common good does not extend to all of creation, then the entire community (humans included) suffers in common.

This common suffering means that acts of justice must be aimed not only from human beings to other human beings, but also from human beings to nonhuman creation. Thomas’s general explanation is that “good and evil should be understood specifically

\textsuperscript{14} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{ST}, IIa Iiæ, q. 61, a. 1.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
with reference to the good of the neighbor and the common good, in such a way that one does good by promoting the common good of the community and respecting the legitimate claims of other persons, and one avoids evil by avoiding harm to the community or to other individuals.”¹⁶ In arguing for the common good, I would extend Thomas’s explanation to include nonhuman animals and other created things as “neighbors” and as parts of the community. If human beings ignore other creatures and creation, they do positive harm and commit sins against justice. In order to understand justice from a Thomistic perspective, it is necessary to present the various “parts” of justice, each of which can help us better to see how justice for nonhuman creatures is an essential virtue.

For Thomas Aquinas, justice is about more than simply intending to do the right thing; it is actually doing the right, or just, thing. James Keenan explains the key difference from our more vague understanding of justice: “Contemporary notions of justice suggest that we are just when we want to be just, or when we love justice, or when we desire to be just and to act justly. In the Summa, however, concepts of desiring, wanting, or loving justice are conspicuously absent.”¹⁷ Therefore, carrying out acts of justice – whether to other human beings or to any other created being – is key. Being just actually involves doing just actions to the entirety of the created order, which encompasses a dramatic conversion from many of humanity’s current dominant productive and consumptive practices.

Acting justly towards the natural world necessarily involves a certain mindset and fundamental attitude towards nonhuman animals, for example. Why? Precisely because nonhuman animals are on the margins of society in the sense that, especially in modern western culture, animals have been understood simply as things to be used, not as “ends-in-themselves.” Human beings go to great lengths to hunt and kill these creatures for food.\textsuperscript{18} Charles Camosy has forcefully argued that the factory farming of our society today makes it impossible to ignore the injustice done to nonhuman animals.\textsuperscript{19} While I do not have the space here to treat the complex issue of vegetarianism, it is worth briefly noting Camosy’s emphasis on speciesism, originally coined by Peter Singer over forty years ago.\textsuperscript{20} Like racism and sexism, which claim that there are superior groups of people based on a given category, speciesism is the belief that some species of animals are simply superior to others. Singer and others use the term to refer to the way we humans simply assume our superiority over all other species. Camosy uses the interesting example of the outrage that followed the story of football quarterback Michael Vick in the wake of Vick’s organizing a dogfighting ring.\textsuperscript{21} Camosy suggests that the public outrage was due specifically to the fact that Vick used dogs, animals that are commonly held as pets by people in the United States.\textsuperscript{22} Camosy argues that this is an inconsistency on the part of those who were horrified by Vick’s actions and yet still eat meat that has

\textsuperscript{18} While I recognize the moral validity of vegetarianism, this study does not advance that particular line of thought as a moral necessity.


\textsuperscript{22} See ibid., 10.
been produced in the factory farming system of our society today.\textsuperscript{23} The point is helpful for viewing the moral status of animals in our society today, especially when considered in the context of warfare. After all, because modern war is so destructive to ecosystems and habitats, nonhuman animals are a particular type of innocent victim of warfare.

Water is another part of nature that calls out for just treatment by human beings.\textsuperscript{24} I wish to consider the importance of justice for nonhuman animals in the context of water because of water’s role in sustaining the vibrancy of the entire created order. Water is a critical part of the order of creation because it is the lifeblood of all creatures. In a very particular way, water is a foundational element in the ecosystems that sustain all plants and animal species. As Christiana Peppard notes, “Access to fresh water [is]…a justice issue: the goods of creation are meant for the benefit of everyone. Because people living in poverty are the most likely to feel the negative effects of fresh water scarcity or pollution, societies must take special care to protect the fresh water access of people living in poverty and at the margins of society.”\textsuperscript{25}

Today, justice demands of human beings that we extend our understanding of God’s creation to include in a conscientious way the whole array of nonhuman ecosystems and species. Liberation theology has taught us plainly that the poorest human

\textsuperscript{23} See ibid., 12-3.
\textsuperscript{24} I readily admit that referring to water precisely as a “creature” may sound a bit odd. Here, I follow the lead of \textit{The Catechism of the Catholic Church}, no. 1218, which describes water in the context of its teaching on baptism: “Since the beginning of the world, water, so humble and wonderful a creature, has been the source of life and fruitfulness.”
beings in the world are living at the margins of society, that is to say those living in poverty and oppression, and having few freedoms. Feminist theologians have carefully studied the tradition to highlight the position of women at the margins of society due to the workings of patriarchy and androcentrism. In both instances, these theologians have explained that God presents herself in a particular way on the margins. Now, we must be cognizant of the fact that nonhuman animals are likewise on the margins due to notions of their “lesser” status compared to human beings; water falls to the margins of society when it is wantonly polluted by human actions. In a particularly heinous way, all of these areas of God’s creation exist on the margins during the outbreak of war. Justice calls us to work for something greater, something which calls every part of the created order away from the margins and into communion. This is the vision of interrelatedness to which Pope Francis refers in \textit{Laudato si’}. It is the vision of justice that can only be carried out with a new understanding of warfare.

\footnote{26 See, for example, Gustavo Gutiérrez, \textit{A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation}, trans. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973); Jon Sobrino, \textit{The True Church and the Poor}, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984). I use the metaphor “margins of society” to indicate that the poorest and most vulnerable in society are not at the center of our moral concern and attention. The theologians I cite here, as well as Pope Francis, have argued for a shift in this thinking.}

\footnote{27 See Elizabeth A. Johnson, \textit{She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse} (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1992). Johnson defines patriarchy as, “a form of social organization in which power is always in the hand of the dominant man or men, with others ranked below in a graded series of subordinations reaching down to the least powerful who form a large base” (23). She defines androcentrism as “the name commonly given to the personal pattern of thinking and acting that takes the characteristics of ruling men to be normative for all humanity…Women, children, and those men who do not fit this standard are considered not fully human but secondarily so, in a way derivative from and dependent upon the normative man” (23-4).}

\footnote{28 In the first three years of Francis’s pontificate, one of his most common exhortations has been “go out to the peripheries.” This oft-repeated instruction is a clear indication that he believes the church’s ministry is best done where God is especially present.}
In the Catholic sense of the term, ecological justice makes a direct call upon each human being to work for the good of all creation in such a way that the community of the created order will live together in a mutually flourishing way. In a particular way, the commonalities between the things listed in the previous paragraph as being “on the margins” come to fruition in the ecological injustice currently being carried out by human beings. As philosopher of science Joshtrom Kureethadam acknowledges, ecological injustice impacts the marginalized first and foremost: “The poor in developing countries will experience far worse consequences of climate change, pollution, and other manifestations of the ecological crisis than the wealthy populations living mostly in the industrialized North.” Pope Francis likewise points to this reality throughout Laudato si’, noting the double injustice at play because not only are the poor not responsible for the heavy consumption of the natural resources of the earth, but they also will suffer disproportionately from the consequences of this resource use and depletion that benefits only the wealthier people of the world.

Natural Law

Since I have been referring to Thomas Aquinas and to nature in these pages, it is only fitting that I turn briefly to Thomas’s understanding of the natural law. It is in this context that the remainder of this final chapter unfolds. This is so essential to this study because of the clear connection between any law and the community. As Clifford G. Kossel explains, law concerns “the good of the whole community. So, as in other matters,}

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ordering to an end is the responsibility of the person(s) whose end it is.”\textsuperscript{31} As Thomas declares, the general definition of a law is “an ordinance of reason for the common good, made by him who has care of the community, and promulgated.”\textsuperscript{32}

According to Thomas, there are four types of law: positive (human) law, divine law, eternal law, and natural law. “It is evident,” Thomas writes, “that all things”—all things, not only human beings—“partake somewhat of the eternal law, in so far as, namely, from its being imprinted on them, they derive their respective inclinations to their proper acts and ends.”\textsuperscript{33} Only then does Thomas clarify that the natural law is “the rational creature’s participation of the eternal law.”\textsuperscript{34} But how could the natural law or the eternal law be promulgated, since no human being could make known the standards of such laws? Thomas foresaw such a query and poses a simple conclusion: “The natural law is promulgated by the very fact that God instilled it into man’s mind so as to be known by him naturally.”\textsuperscript{35} In simple point of fact, in the case of the natural law, God is the one who is doing the promulgating. Thomas goes on concerning the first precept of the natural law: “that \textit{good is to be done and pursued, and evil avoided}. All other precepts of the natural law are based upon this: so that whatever the practical reason naturally apprehends as man’s good (or evil) belongs to the precepts of the natural law as

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\item Clifford G. Kossel, S.J., “Natural Law and Human Law (Ia Iae, qq. 90-97) in Pope, \textit{The Ethics of Aquinas}, 170.
\item Thomas Aquinas, \textit{ST}, Ia Iae, q. 90, a. 4.
\item Ibid., Ia Iae, q. 91, a. 2.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid., Ia Iae, q. 90, a. 4, ad. 1.
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something to be done or avoided.”  

This distinction between good and evil is crucial in a holistic reading of the ST.

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the Great Circle of Being represents human beings as part of a continuum of mutual sustainability with all other created beings. This circle is the result of a reading of the entirety of the ST, rather than simply focusing on the supposed superiority of human beings. Thomas’s fellow Dominican and an expert in the ST, Thomas F. O’Meara, notes that “The ST is a plan of human life, a physics of God’s presence, a psychology of grace.” Therefore, in reading the ST, it is crucial to read the entire work as a whole, rather than simply reducing it to a work that is only focused on human beings. In analyzing the ST, it is difficult to focus entirely on the human person when Thomas himself focuses on the created order, or what William French terms a “creation-centered frame.” I point to this creation-centered frame in some detail in the previous chapter as I introduce the Great Circle of Being.

Lisa Cahill proposes one of the most intriguing fresh perspectives on the natural law. She explains that her own theory is slightly different than Thomas’s understanding of the natural law. She believes that what is “most worth recovering in natural law

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36 Ibid., Ia IIae, q. 94, a. 2. Emphasis in original.
37 Thomas F. O’Meara, O.P., Thomas Aquinas, Theologian (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 42. It is worthwhile to note that this citation leads to note 1, which reads, “The guiding intuition which directs the plan of the Summa Theologica wants to lead us to place human reason at the very heart of religious reality” (A.-I. Mennessier, Saint Thomas d’Aquain, L’Homme chrétien [Paris, 1965], 25)” (261). As I will discuss further, there should be a clear distinction in Thomistic thought between “human reason” and human superiority to other creatures. In other words, one may well hold the following thoughts simultaneously: 1) Human beings have superior reason to any other creature; 2) The welfare of human beings does not supersede the welfare of any other creature.
tradition is a view of human existence and of morality as purposeful (teleological); a conviction that basic moral values are ‘objective’ and shared among culturally different human beings; a moral epistemology of inductive, experience-based, critical practical reasoning.”

39 Cahill, like Thomas, does not deny the importance of human reason and action in her natural law theory. They both highlight the unique human ability to think and possess knowledge as foundational in creating a more just communal atmosphere for the entirety of the created order. Cahill herself makes it clear that environmental ecology is fundamental in creating this just society and in abiding by the natural law faithfully.

Cahill also makes clear that the preservation, respect, and care for nonhuman creation based on God’s creation of them (rather than solely for what they can provide for human beings) are key to bringing about the common good. As Michael S. Northcott reminds us, there is a key problem with human beings regarding the natural law: sometimes we don’t properly understand what brings us true happiness. Therefore, sometimes human beings act improperly under the auspices of acting well and towards achieving what is good for them. Northcott cautions, “If the good for us is to live in conformity with our nature, with the objective moral order of nature in us and in the non-human world, then the moral ends both of our individual actions and of human communities, must include within them reference beyond human life to the whole of the natural order.”

40 The whole of the natural order, as any observer of the natural world is aware, is teeming with conflict. Regarding conflict in nature, Cahill makes an important


and interesting side note, however, that may give us pause: “Just as with human society… neither respect for nature in its own right nor hope of creation’s ‘eternal life’ means that all competition and conflict can or will be replaced by earthly, natural harmony.”\(^{41}\)

The issue of conflict is obviously very important for this study which, in large part, concerns warfare. Before I turn explicitly to a case study concerning warfare and ecology, allow me a word about the presence of conflict in the natural world. In his magisterial study of conflicts of claims in debates over human rights, David Hollenbach proposes three “strategic moral principles” that evolve from Catholic social teaching: “1) The needs of the poor take priority over the wants of the rich; 2) The freedom of the dominated takes priority over the liberty of the powerful; 3) The participation of marginalized groups takes priority over the preservation of an order which excludes them.”\(^{42}\) Part of Hollenbach’s argument calls for clear rhetoric and an explicit presentation of ideological conflicts between groups of people. Conflict is, thus, a natural phenomenon in our world. Even as Hollenbach was writing specifically from the human rights tradition, it is not difficult to see how nonhuman creation can be accommodated by these three moral principles.

War is not synonymous with conflict. While conflict is a naturally-occurring phenomenon in society, war is something for which human beings are responsible, not out of our nature, but because of our fallen state. The Fall, however, is not an excuse for


\(^{42}\) David Hollenbach, *Claims in Conflict: Retrieving and Renewing the Catholic Human Rights Tradition* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 204.
every war; wars may be avoided by the same fallen humans who instead succumb to the seductions of power, prestige, dominance, or wealth. Conflicts between human beings are differences that may well be overcome with careful use of the human reason to which Thomas refers throughout the *ST*. Cahill makes it clear that not all creatures have such a luxury: “The suffering of some seems essential to the flourishing of others. In fact, there is a shocking, even grotesque, level of suffering in the natural world, not all of it ‘abnormal.’ Consider animals that ‘naturally’ survive by consuming the newborn offspring of other species, and predators who eat their victims alive.”

Conflict is something that all of the created order engages in at one point or another. War is a special type of conflict.

**Excursus: War as an Ecological Problem**

In this excursus, I wish to frame warfare as an ecological problem by presenting a case study that exemplifies what is at stake. As a case study, I will examine the effects of depleted uranium (DU) polluting water, air, and landmasses in Iraq since 1991, the onset of the first Gulf War. Obviously, and unfortunately, this means I cannot consider other parts of the environment that have been damaged by weapons in Iraq. To begin with, we know the horrible effects that DU has on human beings alone. Despite the Pentagon’s protestations, we may point to “the marked increase in childhood cancers and mysterious swollen abdomens among Iraqi children after the Gulf War…The health problems may be due in part to children playing with empty artillery shells made from ‘depleted

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uranium,” a byproduct of the nuclear industry that is desirable in weapons production because it is so hard.\textsuperscript{45} One scientific study explains further why DU is preferable for use in military combat: “It has been incorporated into both projectiles and armor by the military of the United States and other countries because of its density, availability, and low relative cost.”\textsuperscript{46} Here, we must return to the criteria for \textit{jus in bello}, and wonder whether either of these criteria were adequately met in choosing a product based on cost and ease rather than on justice owed to persons, ecosystems, and future generations. I will return to this question in the next section, which will address each of the chronological stages of warfare and the criteria in greater detail.

We can also be sure that the areas in Iraq affected by DU were not negligible. Already by the year 2000, more than three years before the latest invasion of Iraq even began, it was reported that “The region is now littered with as much as 300 tons of armor-piercing depleted uranium ammunition used by Coalition (largely US) forces. The Coalition forces dropped a total of 88,500 tons of ordnance…much of which targeted environmental infrastructure, such as sewage treatment plants, and some of which remained on the ground unexploded.”\textsuperscript{47} It is not hard to imagine that the impacts to the environment are deadly. Not only does this waste negatively affect human beings, but it also constitutes a threat to any living creature that relies on water or air for survival. With blatant disregard for these constitutive parts of the natural environment, it is impossible to

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wage a war that is just, because so much of creation remains unconsidered during the accounting of costs. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) issued a report in 2003 concerning the environment in Iraq, but this of course could not have taken fully into account the war which only began in that year. The findings of that study were accurate, but lacked some sense of urgency. It announced that in 2001, the World Health Organization had decided to investigate the ways that DU influenced the health of people in Iraq. Sadly, the report continues: “The study was to cover three areas – surveillance of diseases (especially cancers and congenital malformations), measurements of DU in potentially affected people, and prevention/research activities. However, due to the prevailing political context, no such investigation took place.”48 It is alarming that such high priorities as disease, humans impacted by DU, and preventive measures for the future were not considered in detail simply out of deference to a “prevailing political context.” These facts support the conclusion that DU is a dangerous material for human beings as well as for the physical environment where it resides.

That same 2003 report has very chilling words regarding the battles that would be waged. It predicted that further use of DU by the United States (which it singles out in the report as the only nation to admit using the material at the time) would lead to serious health and pollution problems in the air, through dust particles; the ground, through contamination, particles being buried below the surface, and particles remaining on the surface therefore subject to handling by human beings; and the water, which would affect all living creatures depending on that water for survival.49 Arthur Westing has noted that

48 UNEP, Desk Study, 69.

49 Ibid., 81.
the use of DU has had “unintentional impacts” on the environment. He contrasts this with “intentional impacts,” such as forest clearing, steam manipulation, and releases of oil. This concept is hugely important because it forces us to consider how using this type of material could ever be considered just, if this type of so-called “collateral damage” is taking place. Not only are innocent victims, including children and poor people as well as noncombatants at large, being adversely affected, but so too is the environment, which may in no way be considered an “unjust aggressor,” being systematically destroyed.

As I note above, the human impact of DU is beyond doubt. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has been clear about the negative effects of DU on human beings, reporting, “DU is especially dangerous when inhaled, or enters the body through the wound or by swallowing…it can cause cancer and genetic defects once it enters the body.” Medical researchers have found a frightening increase in the number of cases of terminal diseases in Iraq in the wake of the 2004 United States attack on Fallujah. These illnesses have now exceeded the number of those impacting survivors of the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, we cannot concern ourselves only with the impact on human beings; the UNEP study reports that DU has consistently contaminated the environments of every location in which it has been used. Such

50 Arthur H. Westing, “The Impact of War on the Environment,” in War and Public Health, ed. Barry S. Levy, and Victor W. Sidel, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 69-84, especially 69-75. I might remark that while these outcomes were unintentional, they were foreseeable.


radioactive contamination was particularly prevalent in groundwater, forcing one plant in Albany, New York, to close. What is most disturbing is that the United States military continued to use this material in its weapons, despite the far greater environmental impact in Iraq than in New York. This exposes a troubling double standard: The United States deems DU too dangerous for its own environment, but permissible for use against the environment in Iraq. In other words, this policy regards the innocent, noncombatant living creatures of Iraq as expendable collateral damage. This violates the criterion of proportionality in the just war theory. Furthermore, it raises a legitimate question: can this be called “collateral damage” since we are fully knowledgeable of the outcome?

Noting that DU has such an impact through its contamination of water in Iraq issues a reminder of the importance of water for the sustenance of God’s creation of life on earth. As one commentary on a case study reminds us, God uses water “for the flourishing of all creation, not just human life…(and) as a means for personal, social, and planetary transformation.” Polluting water is thus an affront to God; it makes a mockery of God’s plan for all created life to thrive on earth. Instead of providing nourishment and life, this contaminated water brings disease and death: clearly, this is the opposite of God’s plan for creation. The Christian sacramental mind, which highly prizes the importance of water in the plan of creation and salvation, should be shocked and confused by such abominations. Consider, for example, the United States Navy’s

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inadvertently dropping of bombs into Australia’s Great Barrier Reef in July 2013, which prompted Australian Senator Larissa Waters to quip, “Have we gone mad?”  

The fundamental sign of belonging to the Christian community, baptism, utilizes water as the matter of the sacrament. Instead of retaining its sacramental significance, the water polluted in Iraq by DU is perverted, becoming an anti-sacrament that has stifling rather than transformative effects. Taking part in the creation of such an abomination as this poisonous, anti-sacramental, life-taking rather than spiritually renewing water is a movement away from both creation and the God present in the Church’s sacramental life.  

Of course, DU is not the only way that war is implicated in the destruction of the natural environment. As J. Milburn Thompson points out, war preparation itself is tremendously harmful to the planet: “On September 21, 2010, for example, machine gun training by the National Guard once again sparked a serious fire in Utah. The manufacture and above-ground testing of nuclear weapons have dispersed radioactive materials locally, regionally, and globally.”  

Along with the preparation for warfare, the conflicts themselves can often be caused by a selfish desire on the part of one nation (or a

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56 For an interesting take on this point, see Peppard, *Just Water*, 114.


group of nations) to take possession of natural resources that belong to another nation.

This is, perhaps, most evident in the case of oil, which many experts believe was paramount in motivating the 2003 invasion of Iraq.59

Very interestingly, Thompson notes that there are three “sources of environmental scarcity” that have a particular impact on violence within a given state. In other words, they might have a prominent impact on causing a civil war. These three sources are “Resource depletion and degradation, which decreases the supply of a resource; Population growth and/or increased consumption, which boosts demand for a resource; [and] ‘Structural scarcity,’ which results from an imbalance in the distribution of a resource.”60 Even though the link between war and the environment is most often something that comes to fruition in the in bello stage, it is worth noting that the environment is also often implicated in the variety of causes that lead nations into war. Most certainly, as I noted in Chapter Two, environmental cleanup is a very prominent aspect of the situation post bellum.

As I have already noted above, during the course of fighting the battles of war itself, the environment falls especially into the line of fire. I do not maintain that militaries actually target the natural environment directly; however, the environment is undeniably among the “collateral damage” resulting from the acts of war. While DU is certainly one of the most prominent materials that causes this collateral damage today, historically other instruments of destruction have been at the heart of the environmental damage caused by and during wars. As Matthew Shadle insists in an insightful essay, the

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59 See ibid., 10.

60 Ibid., 11. Emphasis in original.
United States has long used other military tactics – even in the twentieth century – that cause great damage to the nonhuman creation: “During the Vietnam War, U.S. troops used napalm, a gasoline jelly, to destroy vegetation used as cover by the Viet Cong. For the same purpose, they also used Agent Orange, a chemical defoliant that also causes cancer, birth defects, and deaths among humans.”61 All of these actions show that, to one degree or another, the environment has been an afterthought within warfare. Now, however, even the Pentagon itself is admitting that global climate change will likely be an increasing cause of future wars.62 If we are to take creation seriously as having come directly from divine providence, then I contend that such tactics have serious moral ramifications in the Christian worldview.

In her own recent essay on the topic, Laurie Johnston has examined the clear relationship between war and the environment. Specifically, she does so in a collection of essays that ask the question, “Can war be just in the twenty-first century?” From her own essay, it is clear that Johnston answers that particular question in the affirmative. This is helpful in that it forces those (including the vast majority of Roman Catholics) who adhere to the just war tradition’s fundamental belief that in some unfortunate circumstances, war is a necessary evil, to be very stringent in applying the criteria for

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61 Shadle, “No Peace on Earth,” 415. As I noted in Chapter One of this study, the Catonsville Nine, led by Jesuit priest Daniel Berrigan, and his brother Philip, used homemade napalm as a means to burn hundreds of draft files. They chose this as a particular type of symbolism. As Daniel Berrigan commented in their trial afterwards, “My apologies for burning paper instead of children.” For the planning that went into that action, see Daniel Cosacchi and Eric Martin, eds. The Berrigan Letters: Personal Correspondence Between Daniel and Philip Berrigan (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2016).

justified violence. Part of Johnston’s argument relies especially on the just war criterion of proportionality.\(^\text{63}\) She also focuses on the constant need for two “environmental virtues,” humility and cosmic solidarity.\(^\text{64}\) Because solidarity is so fundamental to Catholic social teaching, I shall say a few words about this. Johnston remarks that cosmic solidarity is so important in considering the relationship between war and the environment because it “might be described as the virtue that prevents us from ever saying ‘that’s not my problem’ in relation to the suffering of others or the wasteful destruction of the environment.”\(^\text{65}\)

The virtue of solidarity makes it impossible to ignore any created thing. This virtue should compel us to reconsider the just war tradition from the perspective of all creatures – human and nonhuman – who are adversely affected by the violence perpetrated in combat. As Johnston concludes, “While there are certainly occasions when we must choose between protecting the environment and protecting human lives or livelihoods, I would contend that far more often it is possible to pursue the common good of both human and nonhuman nature.”\(^\text{66}\) The strict conditions of the just war theory demand of us that we focus on the flourishing of all creatures in considering the best course of action.

\(^{63}\) Actually, it may be more proper to refer to these as criteria, since proportionality is a criterion in the *ad bellum* and *in bello* stages of conflict. I do not focus so much on proportionality in this section since examining the criteria is the basis of the next section of this chapter. For this section of Johnston’s essay, see “Just War Theory and Environmental Destruction,” 104-7.

\(^{64}\) See ibid., 107-110.

\(^{65}\) Ibid., 109-110. This is also a fitting virtue to focus on here because of the attention I paid to its inclusion in the papal encyclical tradition in the previous chapter.

\(^{66}\) Ibid., 110.
Before bringing this section of the chapter to a close, I would be remiss if I did not mention Pope Francis’s landmark address to the United Nations during his apostolic pilgrimage to the United States on 25 September 2015. This was a step forward even from the connections he had only recently made in *Laudato si’* on the link between war and the environment. He boldly declared in the address, “War is the negation of all rights and a dramatic assault on the environment. If we want true integral human development for all, we must work tirelessly to avoid war between nations and peoples.”

This clear opposition to war makes a general statement that, interestingly, does not distinguish between justified and unjustified conflicts. In other words, Francis allows for the possibility that even wars that meet the criteria for justified violence still “negate all rights” and perpetrate “a dramatic assault on the environment.” This makes it clear that Christian ethicists must deliberate about whether the criteria as they currently stand are appropriate in a society in which we disregard the rights of the environment at our own peril.

In this excursus, I have briefly introduced some of the implications for the criteria of the just war theory as they currently stand within Catholic social thought. In the following two sections of this chapter, I look to use the paradoxical relationship between the just war tradition and the pacifist tradition as the groundwork for a way forward in thinking about issues of war and peace in the twenty-first century, when ecological deterioration is a rightly overriding concern. In these sections, I intend to present two

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structures that will be useful for adherents to the just war theory and pacifism alike. The first of these structures is a proposal to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to reinvigorate their just war theory as it was presented in The Challenge of Peace. The ecological degradation that is a well-known reality now – and one their very conference has addressed – was not yet a central concern for the bishops in 1983, even though many environmental scientists were already issuing warnings about the environment’s future. The final section of this chapter, then, will examine yet another form of contingent pacifism that is emerging in this century: ecological pacifism. These groups will bring with them insights that hold fast to the just war theory (just as all contingent pacifists do) as well as insights that pacifists can also take to heart.

An Ecologically-Informed Just War Theory

In their 1983 pastoral letter, The Challenge of Peace, the United States Catholic Bishops enumerated what stands as the most comprehensive modern treatment of the Roman Catholic understanding of the just war criteria. It has become clear of late that these criteria, which address the *jus ad bellum* (leading up to the war) and *jus in bello* (during the war) stages, do not fulfill the whole chronological picture of war. Many scholars have recently tackled the issue of postwar justice, or *jus post bellum*, which I address in Chapter Two of this study. A very few have also introduced the terminology “*jus ante bellum*” to refer to a situation which entails a holistic ethic for one’s entire life.\(^\text{68}\) In what follows in this section, I argue that the criteria initially set forth in The Challenge of Peace need to be updated in two ways: revising the existing criteria to meet

the moral challenges that we face vis-à-vis the natural environment, and including “official” *jus post bellum* and *jus ante bellum* standards.

Any discussion of just war theory should begin with the general admission that war is never a good to be praised. This first principle is eloquently summed up by the U.S. Catholic bishops as the “presumption against war” which I discuss at some length in Chapter One. As one proceeds through the bishops’ *ad bellum* criteria for a just war, however, it becomes obvious that the presumption against war exclusively focuses on the human impact of the impending violence. Therefore, I will here examine each criterion to explain how adding an ecological consideration can make the just war theory a more appropriate doctrine for the twenty-first century.

The first *ad bellum* criterion is the just cause, wherein the bishops contend that “War is permissible only to confront ‘a real and certain danger,’ i.e., to protect innocent life, to preserve conditions necessary for decent human existence, and to basic human rights.” If in 1983 the bishops were pushed for a greater explanation of what they meant by “innocent life,” I am confident they would confirm the phrase refers to innocent human life. I wish to pose the question now, though: can a non-human creature ever be “guilty” so as to warrant being identified as a direct target in an attack of war? I’d like to suggest that the answer to this question is no: non-human life is always innocent. If this is

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69 Richard B. Miller should be credited for arguing that the presumption against war should be deepened in his essay “Just-War Criteria and Theocentric Ethics” in *Christian Ethics: Problems and Prospects*, ed. Lisa Sowle Cahill and James F. Childress (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1996), 337-9. I am sympathetic to his argument, but take some issue with one general hypothesis: “given the importance of non-human goods (i.e. the environment) in a theocentric ethic, the destruction characteristically wrought by war would generate added presumptions against recourse to lethal force” (339). I am not at all convinced that a strict reading of the presumption against war does not already include such “presumptions against recourse to lethal force.” Whether the presumption is being interpreted strictly, however, may be another, more pertinent, question.

70 *The Challenge of Peace*, no. 86.
the case, then the question of the just cause takes on a totally new dimension in this reevaluation of the traditional just war theory. In a nation such as Iraq, for instance, which has already suffered serious environmental human-made disasters, we must continuously remind ourselves that a just cause for war can never be to take possession of oil or other non-renewable resources. 71

Second, the bishops consider the criterion of competent authority, writing: “war must be declared by those with responsibility for public order.” 72 Since the bishops claim that those in competent authority are responsible for the common good, 73 it is essential to re-imagine the realm of the common good without excluding any part of creation from it, as I have already argued above. This means considering not merely the good common to all human beings, but rather a good common to all of the created order. If this is the case, then all those individuals in positions of authority must acknowledge their responsibilities to care for the natural resources of the land as much as for the humans they serve. As I note in Chapter Three, Pope Francis calls for precisely this type of civil leadership both in Laudato si’ and elsewhere.

Third, the bishops emphasize the importance of comparative justice, which recognizes “that no state should act on the basis that it has ‘absolute justice’ on its side.” 74 In attempting to limit the force being prepared, this criterion seeks to keep

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71 However, an interesting idea is to consider if a legitimate just cause could be to protect creation that is being destroyed. I am not necessarily arguing in favor of this position, but based on a careful reading of the criterion in question, I am convinced that such a cause would in fact be more justified than many for which we have initiated wars in the recent past.

72 The Challenge of Peace, no. 87.

73 Ibid., no. 87. The bishops here are following in a tradition that can be traced at least as far back as Saint Ambrose.

74 Ibid., no. 93.
nations mindful of their role in a conflict. No nation is guiltless and infallible in any conflict, even a justified war. The mindset of comparative justice, traditionally utilized to prevent nations from feeling free to slaughter every person in the opposing country, can and should be expanded to protect the natural environment as well. Since no nonhuman animal can ever be guilty in a conflict, all of God’s creation should be spared as a part of the limits of a justified war, unless the conditions for human beings are so dire that environmental effects cannot be avoided.75

The fourth ad bellum criterion ensures that right intention motivates the impending conflict. Here, the bishops stress the importance of “avoiding unnecessarily destructive acts.”76 Once again, this language of “unnecessary destructiveness” has historically been applied to attacks aimed at human targets. But what about possible disagreements over the use of water? Would it ever be necessary to engage in destruction based on this environmental resource? Jeffrey McNeely reminds us that some “240 river basins are shared between two or more states…[and] [a]ccess to water remains one of the major—if generally unspoken—obstacles to peace in the Middle East today.”77 That this is “generally unspoken” is indicative of the larger problem: human beings take water, air,

75 I am cognizant of the fact that this last sentence will be controversial because it appears to place human beings above nonhuman creation in a hierarchical ordering that more closely resembles a “chain” of being rather than a “circle” of being, which I preferred in Chapter Three. I maintain this language here because I believe that this renewing of the just war theory should be something that the bishops could support based on their current strict standards for justified wars and their respect for all of creation. See the U.S. Bishops Pastoral Statements, Renewing the Earth: An Invitation to Reflection and Action on Environment in Light of Catholic Social Teaching (14 November 1991) and Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good (15 June 2001).

76 The Challenge of Peace, no. 95.

and other natural resources for granted. The bishops would do well to speak more, and more forcefully, about such assumptions.

Next, the bishops claim that war must always be a last resort. They bemoan “a tendency for nations or peoples which perceive conflict between or among other nations as advantageous to themselves.”78 An ecologically-informed just war theory needs to take into consideration that the last resort needs to be extended even further than this. A nation might well regard acquiring access to a particular natural resource as something that is “advantageous to [itself],” thus putting the natural environment in the position of implicitly motivating a conflict. As I have already noted, making use of such a resource can never be a just cause or right intention in warfare. Rather, to fulfill the responsibility of exhausting every possible peaceful alternative to violent conflict, nations must also consider the inherent innocence of nonhuman entities. Such a creation may never be treated as a motivating factor in creating conflict.

The penultimate ad bellum criterion is the probability of success. The bishops admit that it is “a difficult criterion to apply, but its purpose is to prevent irrational resort to force or hopeless resistance when the outcome of either will clearly be disproportionate or futile.”79 How does one define a successful war? Let’s take World War II as an example. One common naming of World War II is “The Good War” and from it the Allied Forces emerged “victorious.” Surely this war was “successful,” if any could be so catalogued. And yet, as with many wars since ancient times, a scorched earth policy was in effect during World War II. This sanctioned as part of military strategy the

78 The Challenge of Peace, no. 96.
79 Ibid., no. 98.
destruction of anything that could be potentially helpful to the enemy. The air
campaigns, for instance, destroyed countless urban centers. In addition, much ecosystem
destruction occurred. The result, of course, was the destruction of “nearly 1 million acres
of forest in France,” and the extinction of “numerous bird species.” Additionally, World
War II saw atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; these events polluted the
water and soil of the innocent land, and radiation wreaked havoc on innocent plant and
animal life.\textsuperscript{80} Is this “success”? As long as we are assured of the devastating capabilities
of our weaponry, how can we declare any war successful by the standard of protecting
the most innocent and vulnerable?

Finally, the bishops articulate the criterion of proportionality, which is both an \textit{ad
bellum} and \textit{in bello} criterion. They explain, “The damage to be inflicted and the costs
incurred by war must be proportionate to the good expected by taking up arms.”\textsuperscript{81} They
go on, noting the \textit{in bello} difficulty of employing this criterion: “It is of utmost
importance…to think about the poor and the helpless, for they are usually the ones who
have the least to gain and the most to lose when war’s violence touches their lives.”\textsuperscript{82}

Once again, the anthropocentric leaning of this text is clear. However, the general
principle of concern for the most vulnerable can be a guiding force in a revised criterion
of proportionality that reminds nations and individual soldiers that it is imperative to
protect all of God’s creation, not only the human race.

\textsuperscript{80} See Susan D. Lanier-Graham, \textit{The Ecology of War: Environmental Impacts of Weaponry and Warfare}

\textsuperscript{81} \textit{The Challenge of Peace}, no. 99.

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., no. 105.
Such a revision would also make it possible to fulfill an authentic respect for
the in bello criterion of noncombatant immunity, or discrimination. Here, actually, a little
human-centered thought might be helpful. While nature does have the capacity for
destruction, hurricanes or monsoons are not premeditated attacks to which military forces
can or should respond. Therefore, nature can never be understood as a combatant in times
of war. The bishops go to great lengths to list a wide variety of human persons who may
never be considered combatants, and so may never be attacked directly. This list includes
schoolchildren, hospital patients, the elderly, the ill, the average industrial worker
producing goods not directly related to military purposes, farmers and many others.\textsuperscript{83} I’d
like to suggest that after this helpful list, the bishops add something like the following:
“Prudence obviously excludes all non-human entities and natural resources such as water,
air and soil from direct attack.”

To add such an appendix to the episcopal teaching would also mean that the
bishops would suspend the use of double effect reasoning with regard to warfare, and in
particular, the justification for nonhuman collateral damage. The principle of double
effect states that the action itself is good or at least neutral, the direct effect is not
intrinsically evil, the intent of the actor is good, and “the good effect is sufficiently good
to compensate for allowing the evil effect.”\textsuperscript{84} In the new, ecological cases that I bring
forth in these pages, I suggest that the just war must be careful in using the principle of
double effect. My argument here is that at some point, the continued direct attacks on the

\textsuperscript{83} See ibid., no. 108.

aforementioned natural resources actually do more harm than good. In short, if attacking a nation to the point that it has no recourse to sustain the living creatures (human and otherwise) that remain there after a war has ended, then the principle of double effect actually fails, on account of the fourth step. In other words, the evil effect would obliterate any moral consideration of the good effect. This is a fine line.

Of course, two areas that the bishops do not address in their pastoral letter are *jus ante bellum* and *just post bellum*. *Jus ante bellum* is that period before war that would make warfare very unlikely, if not practically nonexistent. Mark Allman and Tobias Winright suggest that the topic of *jus ante bellum* is synonymous with the principles of just peacemaking, some of which I detail in Chapter Two above.\(^85\) Earlier, I expressed a concern with the nomenclature of *jus post bellum* as something that was specifically part of the just war theory because the standards of postwar justice are non-negotiable for adherents to the just war tradition and pacifists alike. In other words, *jus post bellum* is an area in the war/peace debate that has the ability to bring together people on both sides of the ideological divide. Likewise, *jus ante bellum* is not something meant only for those who accept the moral necessity of war on some regrettable occasions. *Jus ante bellum* is also meant for those who believe violence is never legitimate. In fact, these pacifists should be leading the way in creating justice before war with the goal of preventing that war from ever actually taking place.

While the implications of *jus ante bellum* have the potential to bring together just war adherents and pacifists, they also can serve as a way to differentiate between the two groups. Allman and Winright explain the idea of this *ante bellum* proposal: “This moral

\(^{85}\) See their *After the Smoke Clears*, 7, 10 and “Growing Edges of Just War Theory,” 175-6.
framework needs to be more comprehensive in order to better fulfill the right intent behind what would be a just war. In short, love for the enemy-neighbor, along with their families and fellow citizens, is not to be suspended or set aside either during or after a war. I submit that all adherents to just war thinking should enthusiastically support this point; however, it would be intellectually impossible for pacifists to agree with the entirety of this claim. Pacifists would surely agree that all people should more carefully consider the moral situation of the world so as to avoid war and would claim that love for the enemy is the cornerstone of a gospel ethic of life. Finally, though, pacifists could not rally behind this idea of *jus ante bellum* without great reservations. Pacifists claim that the more comprehensive we get in applying the just war theory, the more obvious it becomes that war cannot ever be morally justified. Moreover, it remains laughable to Christian pacifists that love for one’s enemies could ever be demonstrated through killing them, regardless of the motivation behind such an act. Bearing this in mind, while I certainly see some crossover appeal on the topic of *jus ante bellum*, I am also not convinced it can be wholly accepted by pacifists; therefore, I see some deterrents from its acceptance as part of just peacemaking theory, which is supposed to be attractive to just war adherents and pacifists alike. As long as there is any room for war, no pacifist could accept *jus ante bellum* without reservation.

On the other hand, *jus post bellum*, as I note in Chapter Two, is perhaps the greatest achievement to date in fruitfully bringing together just war adherents and pacifists. This development fits comfortably in both traditions: whether an individual believes a war to be justified or not, Catholic social ethics must cling to the rights of all

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creation to life. Once a war has reached its termination, all groups should intensify their efforts at bringing peace to the ravaged land and its inhabitants, for the attainment of peace should have been the intended goal of the war in the first place. Allman and Winright highlight the duties owed to the vanquished nation specifically with regard to the environment in their work on *jus post bellum*. They highlight the dangers of DU, cluster bombs and land mines. Because of these weapons that pollute the land, all states should be concerned about potential wars yet to be waged specifically for the environmental consequences of such warfare. As Allman and Winright state, the weapons “challenge the just war theory to consider the countless future victims of war, most of whom are civilians and some of whom have not yet even been born, thereby extending the effect and moral responsibilities of war well beyond active combat.”

As I have suggested elsewhere in this study, though, an unadulterated natural environment does not just benefit the human beings who inhabit the nation(s) in question; rather, caring for the water, land and air of a region actually benefits the natural habitat of the place itself. Yes, the human occupants are beneficiaries, but nonhuman animals can also once again thrive; if the vegetation is dying on account of polluted water or outright destruction from warring parties, then *jus post bellum* has not been achieved. Once a war has ended, the *post bellum* restoration phase expectation of environmental cleanup should require nations to assist in bringing a vanquished land to a better living situation than it experienced before the warfare began in the first place. As Allman and Winright remind

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87 Allman and Winright, *After the Smoke Clears*, 165-172.

88 Ibid., 171.
us, “Restoration is a logical consequence of the aim of all just wars, namely a just peace.”\footnote{Ibid., 171.}

I would like to suggest that the United States Catholic bishops once again seriously take up the questions of warfare and the environment. To reframe the interest of the Catholic laity in these two issues, the bishops must bring these debates to their own conference and perhaps issue a statement that addresses the clear intersection of these issues. This statement should attend to a new understanding of the status of all of God’s creation (hopefully invigorated by \textit{Laudato si’}) and, as I have argued, to a rejuvenation of the just war criteria. The bishops would also do well to discuss justice after war has ended, or \textit{jus post bellum}. In the postwar phases of conflict, it has become abundantly clear that environmental restoration is a crucial part of any movement toward authentic justice. Finally, just as the bishops upheld the virtues of pacifism in \textit{The Challenge of Peace}, they would benefit the entire Christian community by redoubling such efforts now in light of the environmental crisis and the injustice directed toward innocent creatures, who are all beings created by God. These forgotten corners of creation cry out to heaven for redress. We must urge our local ordinaries to bring these concerns to future meetings of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. In my final section of this chapter, I turn to a specific type of contingent pacifism that is motivated by respect for ecological concerns.

**Ecological Pacifism**

Ecological pacifism, like nuclear pacifism or personal pacifism, is a variety of contingent pacifism that does not maintain that all violence, in all circumstances, is necessarily unjustified. For instance, ecological pacifism may not necessarily adhere to
the Augustinian rejection of self-defense. However, it does clearly state that all
violence that does any kind of substantial harm to the natural environment is unjustified
at its very core. There can be no saving grace to this type of action and no way that it can
be considered just. Just as Pope John XXIII, Thomas Merton, David Hollenbach and
other nuclear pacifists would claim that any use of nuclear weapons would automatically
contravene the just war theory, environmental pacifists would claim that any military
action that wantonly disregarded the natural environment would similarly disregard the
just war theory.

In his classic volume, *Nevertheless: The Varieties and Shortcomings of Religious
Pacifism*, John Howard Yoder summarized some twenty-nine arguments against warfare.
Yoder explains, “‘Pacifism’ is not just one specific position, spoken for authoritatively by
just one thinker. Instead it is a wide gamut of views that vary and are sometimes even
contradictory.”90 I have explained that pacifism, strictly understood, differs from these
types since it does concede the legitimacy of any violence whatsoever. Already in the
first chapter I have mentioned a few examples of differing types of pacifism, such as
personal and nuclear. Ecological pacifism91 represents a new such variety. As a means of
concluding, I wish to offer a Yoderian analysis of this new variety of religious,
contingent pacifism.92 I will proceed by following Yoder’s framework: giving a

91 If I were also keeping in line with Yoder’s model of titling chapters, I might have entitled this particular
type of pacifism as “The Pacifism of Ecological Consciousness.”
92 By “Yoderian analysis” I mean to offer a simple explanation of the variety of ecological pacifism; the
axiom underlying the type of pacifism in question; a shortcoming of the type of pacifism; a “nevertheless”
statement about ecological pacifism, and a final conclusion under the sub-heading “after all” lamenting the
summation of the variety of pacifism in question, positing an underlying axiom concerning environmental pacifism, proposing a potential shortcoming for this type of pacifism, moving beyond that shortcoming, and explaining the failures inherent without this type of pacifism.93

Ecological pacifism stems from my own inclination to take seriously God’s reaction to creation in the first chapter of the book of Genesis. Looking upon the entirety of the created order, God concluded, “it was very good” (Gen 1:31). The goodness of creation is closely linked with the belief that human beings should not destroy it. In fact, the goodness of creation is intimately connected with God’s instruction to human beings to “have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth” (Gen 1:28b). By so entrusting dominion of these living creatures to human beings, God has confirmed in human beings the responsibility which is theirs to help God’s “very good” creation not only to continue surviving as species, but also to prosper and thrive in their habitats on earth.94 As Pope John Paul II laments in his encyclical Centesimus annus, “Instead of carrying out his role as a

93 For a similar approach, see Christopher Hrynkow and Dennis O’Hara, “Earth Matters: Thomas Berry, the Pacifism of Religious Cosmology and the Need for Ecojustice,” The Journal for Peace and Justice Studies, 22.2 (2012), 3-28. My method differs from Hrynkow and O’Hara’s in three significant ways: First, the ultimate result of ecological pacifism is clearly delineated as a lifestyle by which war will be ruled out in particular circumstances, whereas the pacifism of religious cosmology results in something closer to absolute pacifism. Second, my study focuses primarily on the social tradition of the Roman Catholic church, while Hrynkow and O’Hara use Thomas Berry as the lens through which they confront a similar issue. Third, and finally, I utilize Yoder’s method as a way to show more clearly the relationship between this variety of pacifism and Yoder’s work, whereas Hrynkow and O’Hara do not.

94 Here, the biblical story of God’s covenant with Noah is instructive: “Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, “As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth” (Gen 9:8-11).
cooperator with God in the work of creation, man sets himself up in place of God and thus ends up provoking a rebellion on the part of nature, which is more tyrannized than governed by him.”  

Whatever human beings do to diminish these species of non-human animals – especially by destroying the natural environment in which they live – is clearly an affront against God and foreign to God’s view of the created order.

One of the most obscene ways in which human beings carry out this environmental destruction and large-scale annihilation of living creatures is through the means of warfare, some of which were alluded to above. Human beings who carry out operations of vast destruction to the natural environment, especially under the guise of bringing about justice for society, are acting in direct opposition to God’s act of trust, which is placed in all of humanity. This act of trust to safeguard non-human creation and help it to prosper is not carried out in the use of such things as depleted uranium, napalm, and nuclear weapons. Such actions sin against both God and divine creation.

Furthermore, in *Caritas in veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI highlights the cyclical nature of human selfishness and environmental degradation: “Every violation of solidarity and civic friendship harms the environment, just as environmental deterioration in turn upsets relations in society.”  

*The Axiom:* Underlying ecological pacifism is the belief that divinely-inspired care for the environment is a rejection of an anthropocentric point of view.

Simultaneously, however, it is also in the interest of human beings to protect the natural environment. When water, land, and air are contaminated and polluted, human beings

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95 Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 37.
96 Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, no. 51.
suffer as do non-human animals. The relationship between the entirety of the created order is one that is so close as to unite all living things intimately in the created order. Clearly, it is also in the best interest of human beings themselves to safeguard the existence of the rest of the created order. Nature has both intrinsic value and important instrumental value for humans. As Hildegard of Bingen writes from God’s perspective in her *Book of Divine Works*,

> I remain hidden in every kind of reality as a fiery power. Everything burns because of me in such a way as our breath constantly moves us, like the wind-tossed flame in a fire. All of this lives in its essence, and there is no death in it. For I am life. I am also Reason, which bears within itself the breath of the resounding Word, through which the whole of creation is made. I breathe life into everything so that nothing is mortal in respect to its species. For I am life.\(^97\)

God’s presence in all things means that we human beings are closely related to the rest of creation. This is a relationship that is hinted at in the papal writings I cite especially in Chapter Three above. Magisterial teachings, both papal and episcopal, must continue moving closer to a model of solidarity with all of creation in order to embrace the ideals put forth in ecological pacifism, modeling themselves after the groundbreaking example of *Laudato si’*. The close relationship between human beings and the entirety of creation is one that should always refer back to that repeated statement of Hildegard’s referring to the divine presence: “For I am life.” Each time human beings carry out widespread violence on the environment, we should be mindful that it is a crucifixion of sorts. It is an attempt to stifle God’s dynamic presence in all of creation. It is a sin. As Moses is recorded as proclaiming in the Book of Deuteronomy, “I call heaven and earth

to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and
curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live” (30:19).

_A Shortcoming:_ The technology that is always advancing with the creation of new
weapons to be used in warfare means that subscribers to ecological pacifism must always
be careful to determine how certain weapons may impact the entirety of the created order.
It is important to note a crucial difference here between those who fall under this variety
of pacifism vis-à-vis strict pacifists. Pacifists simply claim that no matter how “smart” a
weapon is, it still kills whomever it strikes: this is unacceptable for the pacifist. The
ecological pacifist, however, may find it morally acceptable to use conventional weapons
or newer technology that can ensure that only the military target is to be struck down
without causing substantial collateral damage to the environment.

As with all types of contingent pacifism, there may also be disagreements among
members of the group all of whom claim to be ecological pacifists. For instance, in the
case of nuclear pacifism some might claim to be nuclear pacifists when it comes to the
use of nuclear weapons but may also allow for the development of nuclear weapons as a
means of deterrence, while others would maintain that nations may not even possess
nuclear weapons. Similarly, some ecological pacifists may disagree now, or even more in
the future, over which weapons may be licit and which may not.

As a matter of practical example, let’s consider the use of unmanned aerial
vehicles, more commonly referred to as drones. Drones may be an instance of
fundamental disagreement between ecological pacifists. There is one group who would
claim that since drones are monitored and controlled remotely, and since they can be used
for “targeted killing,” they pose little danger to the natural environment or any
noncombatants at all. Another group of ecological pacifists would insist, though, that no weapon such as a drone can be completely safe. They might reference the incident I describe above in which two United States Naval jets conducted an emergency jettison of four bombs weighing some 4,000 pounds into Australia’s Great Barrier Reef, causing consternation to Australian government officials and citizens alike. The more stringent group of ecological pacifists would argue that if such a dangerous action could occur when actual human beings were piloting these jets, then surely some sort of computer error could also result in vast destruction in the case of drones.\(^\text{98}\)

Moreover, there is another side to the shortcoming here. I am referring to the most common critique leveled at pacifists by just war theorists: realism. In other words, many who believe that warfare is sometimes a tragic necessity accuse pacifists of a naïveté that is willing to sacrifice the lives of countless innocents. In the field of systems analysis, there has long been a distinction between “wicked” and “tame” problems. Political scientists have taken on this mantle as a way of describing the problem of fragile and failed states.\(^\text{99}\) Kenneth Menkhaus explains that wicked problems are “complex planning and systems design challenges that, unlike tame problems, are not solvable.”\(^\text{100}\) There are two primary challenges for the ecological pacifist. First, is war actually a tame problem?; and second, is ecological damage a tame problem?

\[^{98}\text{On the topic of drones, see Kenneth R. Himes, O.F.M., Drones and the Ethics of Targeted Killing (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015).}\]

\[^{99}\text{For a very insightful article on the topic, see Kenneth J. Menkhaus, “State Fragility as a Wicked Problem,” Prism 1, no. 2 (March 2010): 85-100.}\]

\[^{100}\text{Ibid., 86.}\]
The question of whether warfare is a wicked or tame problem is an ancient one, even though the terminology itself is relatively new. Pacifists (and to a lesser degree, contingent pacifists) believe that war is a wicked problem: there are no solutions found in the actual fighting of battles. Like pacifists, proponents of the “holy war,” which I discuss in Chapter One, also believe war to be a wicked problem. Their response (not a solution!), however, is much different than the pacifists’. Since they believe that fighting war is a divine command, it actually does not have in mind a solution at all; rather, the waging of the war itself is a solemn duty. Catholic social teaching denies this mindset outright. On the other hand, just war theory and just peacemaking theory both believe that war is a tame problem, which Menkhaus describes as something that

Possesses a well-defined and stable problem; has a well-defined stopping point, where the solution has been reached; has a solution that can be objectively evaluated as right or wrong; belongs to a class of similar problems that are all solved in a similar way; offers solutions that are easily tried and abandoned; and comes with a limited set of alternative solutions.\textsuperscript{101}

It seems that this description of tame problems describe just war theory and just peacemaking rather nicely.

The second challenge for ecological pacifists is the concern as to whether ecological damage itself is a wicked or tame problem. It would seem that while some ecological pacifists may still believe warfare to be a wicked problem, all ecological pacifists would consider the ecological crisis itself a tame problem. The challenge, then, rests in the reality of fragile and failed states throughout the world, of which there is no shortage. Menkhaus reports that nearly three quarters of the states in the world are “either

critical, in danger, or borderline for state failure.”

There is the added problem that many of these states present an increased security risk. This is the very reality that has divided just war theorists and pacifists. The special categories of contingent pacifists, which include ecological pacifists, are stuck somewhere in the middle. The existential reality is such that just war theorists cannot deny that sometimes violence in the form of warfare must be necessary. Pacifists, on the other hand, are committed to a worldview that believes the closest approximation to the Kingdom of God involves no killing, regardless of the legitimacy of the matter. Ecological pacifists are stuck somewhere in the middle, trying to discern their response.

Nevertheless: When it comes to the questions of war and peace, we can ill afford to ignore any longer the concerns about the environment. As Saint Paul wrote to the Romans, “We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies” (Rom 8:22-23). Just as human beings await with hope the promise of salvation in the resurrection, all of creation waits for redemption from death, because as Hildegard puts it above, “For I am life.” Even though fallen humanity selfishly and sinfully attempts to squelch God’s love for all creation, this divine love is too dynamic to be drowned out by death. The ultimate fate of the created order is everlasting life in Christ. Environmental concern

remains the only way for Christians to avoid what Pope Francis aptly terms “tyrannical anthropocentricism.”

_After All_: The environment has been and continues to be so often forgotten by those responsible for planning, carrying out, and cleaning up after wars in the past and present. Even by simply inserting ecological concerns into the just war theory as it currently stands, as I do in the preceding section, there is a major risk that nations will overlook the immunity of the water, land, and air, just as it has overlooked the innocence of children, women, and men who have had nothing to do with a given war. Writing in 1973, E.F. Schumacher proposed that peace was intricately linked with permanence. He notes, “Nothing makes economic sense unless its continuance for a long time can be projected without running into absurdities.” What is painfully obvious in the early stages of the twenty-first century is that projecting anything “for a long time” is itself an absurdity, thanks in large part to the human destruction of the natural world. According to Schumacher, technological developments, combined with human greed and envy, have led to the destruction of nature that has been at the center of this dissertation. This combination is so deadly to the natural world precisely because defenses aren’t found in nature. As Schumacher explains,

> Nature is virtually defenceless. There are no natural agents to attack and break them down. It is as if aborigines were suddenly attacked with machine-gun fire: their bows and arrows are of no avail. These substances, unknown to nature, owe their almost magical effectiveness precisely to

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104 Pope Francis, _Laudato si’_, no. 68.
106 Ibid., 19-20.
nature’s defencelessness – and that accounts also for their dangerous ecological impact.¹⁰⁷

As Schumacher prophetically announced more than four decades ago, the relationship between human technological advances that create these substances to destroy the earth and warlike societies was one of impermanence. In his own way, Schumacher was a proto-ecological pacifist. His suggestion can be taken as a starting point for ecological pacifism: “Stop applauding the type of economic ‘progress’ which palpably lacks the basis of permanence and give what modest support we can to those who, unafraid of being denounced as cranks, work for non-violence: as conservationists, ecologists, protectors of wildlife…and so forth? An ounce of practice is worth more than a ton of theory.”¹⁰⁸ This is the principle resting at the heart of ecological pacifism as I propose it.

In 1996, then-Secretary of State Madeline Albright confirmed on 60 Minutes a UNICEF report that over 500,000 Iraqi children aged five and under had died as a result of United States sanctions. She concluded, “The price is worth it.” We need only ask ourselves what the price is today when considering the fragility of our environment and the destructive capacity of our weaponry. The final analysis of Christian ecological pacifism is that its fruits will be known by the practice of nonviolence for the sake of the earth.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 7.
¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 25.
CONCLUSION

On 8 December 2015, Pope Francis opened the Jubilee Year of Mercy in the Catholic church. The announcement of this jubilee year was both a surprise – it was not convoked at the ordinary 25-year interval – and also an opportunity to refocus on what is often considered a forgotten virtue in the life of faith. Mercy’s importance, however, has never been lost on Pope Francis. When he was consecrated a bishop in 1992, he took as his episcopal motto *miserando atque eligendo*, meaning “looked upon with mercy and chosen.” Even more recently, in the days leading up to his election as pontiff, Pope Francis was given a book on the topic of mercy by its author, Cardinal Walter Kasper. In that text, Kasper laments the fact that mercy is usually “treated only briefly and then only after the attributes that derive from God’s metaphysical essence.”¹ For both Francis and his colleague Kasper, there needs to be a renaissance of mercy in the church. It was very propitious that this call for a renewed focus on mercy took place during the course of my work on the present study. Sustained, critical, and ethical discussions of the relationship of war and the natural environment have a natural and important place in the merciful worldview for which Pope Francis longs.

In the ultimate analysis, mercy is actually what both just war theorists and pacifists claim to be pursuing in their approach to the questions of war and peace. In the first chapter of this study, I attempted to trace these two strands of the tradition in order to

allow for the possibility that these two groups might have more common ground than either side readily admits. In fact, both sides of this intellectual debate agree on quite a great deal. They both agree, for example, that holy war is always impermissible. They can work together to form standards and principles for just peacemaking. They can both agree that once fighting in a war has ended, they need to work together in order to bring peace to the vanquished land. Ultimately, they both believe they are striving for mercy, although perhaps neither side believes that the other side is merciful at all. In World War II, for instance, it would be difficult to imagine that the staunch pacifist Dorothy Day would assent to the assassination of even a criminal as heinous as Adolf Hitler, even on account of mercy.

In this study, I have argued that there is the possibility that just war thinking could become irrelevant if it continues along the same path that it has followed throughout the twentieth century. That is precisely why I have relied time and again on the prescient words of the fathers of Vatican II, who implored that the church “undertake an evaluation of war with an entirely new attitude.”² These words remain as true in 2016 as they did in 1965, when they were first promulgated by that enlightened group of Catholic bishops from all countries of the world. Even now, over fifty years after those words moved the church to reconsider its exclusive relationship with the just war tradition, I am afraid that we have remained in neutral on the study of war and peace. Still today, there are too many of us who rely solely on the same ad bellum and in bello criteria for modern warfare. What Pope John XXIII said about nuclear weapons in Pacem in terris remains as true today as the day he uttered them. However, just as Saint Augustine could never

² Vatican II, Gaudium et spes, no. 80.
imagine the destructive capabilities of nuclear weapons, John could have never imagined the new weapons technologies which are still being developed on a daily basis. He could not have included the word “drone” in the magisterium, for instance.

This ever-changing face of warfare is the particular reason why I contend that the bishops of the world, and particularly of the United States, have done a grave injustice to the global community by not paying closer attention to the issue in recent decades. At times in these pages I have been explicit, and at other times implicit, in my strong belief that warfare presents the most fundamental moral priority to the leaders of any religious community in the twenty-first century. However, the United States bishops have not uttered a single word on warfare since their 1993 document *The Harvest of Justice is Sown in Peace*, which marked ten years since the more substantial pastoral letter, *The Challenge of Peace*. Despite the fact that this is an issue that ravages the entire world, and an issue in which the United States is both implicated and affected in unique ways, the bishops have by their silence confirmed that that they have nothing new to offer on this topic. Simultaneously, however, at each and every opportunity, that episcopal conference votes to address the same list of pastoral priorities time and again: abortion, same-sex marriage, and religious freedom.

At the Spring 2015 Annual Assembly of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Bishop Yousif Habash, of the Syrian Catholic Church of Newark, NJ, begged his confreres to pay more attention to the violent persecution of Christians in his native land and less attention to the less-urgent issues of domestic constructions of religious
freedom. In a moving statement, he pleaded, “I am burning. Christianity is burning.” Bishop Habash was correct to say that Christianity is burning; he should not have been shocked, however, by the bishops’ ineptitude in responding to his concerns. As Charles Curran has reported, the resources of money and time that the United States bishops have spent on their go-to issues mentioned above would make it nearly impossible to expect that they would focus on warfare in any meaningful way. The result, of course, is that not only Christianity, but the whole world has the potential to burn if we focus our attention away from the violence of warfare. We ignore war at our own peril, and the peril of future generations.

Another primary concern of future generations is the wellbeing of the natural environment. The air they will breathe, the water they will drink, and the food they will eat are all our responsibility right now. As Pope Francis writes in *Laudato si’*, “Doomsday predictions can no longer be met with irony or disdain. We may well be leaving to coming generations debris, desolation and filth. The pace of consumption, waste and environmental change has so stretched the planet’s capacity that our contemporary lifestyle, unsustainable as it is, can only precipitate catastrophes.” I have tried to maintain in these pages that it is impossible to separate the issues of war and ecology in the twenty-first century. Even having seen the damage that war has done to God’s creation in the twentieth century makes it clear that grave consequences are always

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3 Personal transcription from the video from the event, formerly located at the link: http://www.usccb.org/about/leadership/usccb-general-assembly/video-on-demand.cfm. Since the footage is always updated, the footage in question is no longer available.


5 Pope Francis, *Laudato si’*, no. 161.
likely. We may well say that almost any war waged now is a war on the natural environment.

And so, I return to the Jubilee Year of Mercy toward which Pope Francis has directed us. As I noted in Chapter Three, a mantra of Pope Francis’s encyclical *Laudato si’* is the oft-repeated phrase, “everything is connected.” Since everything is connected, it is easy to see that mercy is connected with war and ecology. Pope Francis, through his reminding us of the centrality of mercy in the Christian life, also reminds us that mercy is connected to everything. In that sense, I believe that this particular jubilee year has a special meaning beyond a year-long celebration of mercy. Pope Francis is pushing for a world and a church community that act in such a way that poverty comes to an end through tangible signs and works of mercy, both corporal and spiritual. In the first place, this Jubilee Year of Mercy calls for us all to recall that God showers us with mercy, not just in special jubilee years, but at all times. As Francis writes in his Bull of Indiction for the jubilee year, *Misericordiae vultus*, mercy has a unique place in the life of the church. He begins that document by noting the centrality of the doctrine of mercy: “Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy. These words might well sum up the mystery of the Christian faith.”⁶ To focus continually on this central aspect of the Christian faith is to recall that God’s mercy is not only a gift to us, but also an expectation that we will share the same gift with others and with the entire created order.

Sharing God’s mercy with all of creation necessarily means sharing God’s gift of mercy with other people, nonhuman animals, and all creation. Becoming more like God

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is precisely what Pope Francis is challenging us to do, starting now in the midst of this Year of Mercy, in which we are supposed to live up to the mercy that God shows all of creation. In a particular way, Pope Francis shows his true Jesuit colors when he reminds us how God’s love works: “Love, after all, can never be just an abstraction. By its very nature, it indicates something concrete: intentions, attitudes, and behaviors that are shown in daily living…Just as [God] is merciful, so we are called to be merciful to each other.” In his “Contemplation to Attain Divine Love” in the Spiritual Exercises, Saint Ignatius of Loyola makes it clear that “love ought to be expressed in deeds more than in words.” As the late Dean Brackley, S.J. put it, this means, “God’s love should stir up active love in us.” Or, as we might say less eloquently than either Saint Ignatius or Brackley, “talk is cheap!”

Pope Francis believes that because talk is cheap, in order to love as God loves and to show mercy as God shows mercy, human beings must go through a conversion that echoes deep in their soul and makes an irrevocable change in their entire life. As Sallie McFague bluntly puts it, when it comes to ecological destruction, “The most responsible person is a first-world, usually white, usually male, entrepreneur involved in a high-energy, high-profit business.” This is the very type of person Francis is looking to reach by calling everyone to a conversion. In Laudato si’, Francis calls for a “bold cultural

7 Pope Francis, Misericordiae vultus, no. 9.
8 Saint Ignatius Loyola, Spiritual Exercises, no. 230.
Then, in an interview leading up to the Jubilee Year of Mercy, Francis explained that he is seeking a “revolution of tenderness.” These two revolutions are intimately connected to one another. Both revolutions require a widespread act of conversion on the part of all people. Of each and every instance where an individual or group does not act mercifully, Francis reminds us that, even then, God is merciful, and we are called to repent and convert. Just as *Laudato si’* calls for an “ecological conversion,” *Misericordiae vultus* calls for all of its readers to go through a conversion, especially readers who fit McFague’s above description.

Going through a conversion towards mercy means that each convert will experience greater awareness of God’s mercy and greater movement towards showing mercy. In a particular way, all human beings must show mercy towards the earth. In the introduction of this project, I claimed that the thesis I would advance is that striving towards ecological renewal in the twenty-first century will necessarily require a renaissance in the debate between just war thinking and pacifism. I am convinced that it will be impossible to go on treating war using the same models that have been in common ecclesial parlance for the last centuries. While I believe that the tradition has a great deal to teach us concerning the debate between war and peace, I am also certain that the longstanding, if understated, tradition of care for all creation is at the very heart of the way forward in dialogue between pacifists and just war adherents. Ultimately, even as

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13 See Pope Francis, *Laudato si’,* nos. 216-221.
human beings strive to live in communion with all of creation, hopefully forming a “Great Circle of Being,” the final hope for peace remains with God alone. The differences between pacifists and just war theorists are often severe. Their disagreements, however, paled in comparison to those between the Jews and Gentiles in the years immediately after Christ’s death and resurrection. In his epistle to the Ephesians, Saint Paul instructed the Gentiles how they should live after their conversion. We would do well to imagine him speaking to divided groups today. Even in the midst of their division, Christ’s salvific death and resurrection are a means of reconciliation for all people. It is up to us to work for peace and for environmental flourishing, and up to Christ to bring it to fruition:

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you are also built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God. (Eph 2:13-22)
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