

# Catholic Social Teaching Overview—Anti-violence/Peace

## Biblical References

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### Old Testament

#### Psalms

**11:4**The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD'S throne is in heaven. God's eyes keep careful watch; they test all peoples.

**11:5** The LORD tests the good and the bad, hates those who love violence,

**11:6** And rains upon the wicked fiery coals and brimstone, a scorching wind their allotted cup.

**11:7**The LORD is just and loves just deeds; the upright shall see his face.

#### Sirach

**10:5** Sovereignty over every man is in the hand of God, who imparts his majesty to the ruler.

**10:6** No matter the wrong, do no violence to your neighbor, and do not walk the path of arrogance.

**10:7** Odious to the LORD and to men is arrogance, and the sin of oppression they both hate.

**10:8** Dominion is transferred from one people to another because of the violence of the arrogant.

#### Ezekiel

**45:9** Thus says the Lord GOD: Enough, you princes of Israel! Put away violence and oppression, and do what is right and just! Stop evicting my people! says the Lord GOD.

### New Testament

#### Matthew

**5:43** "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

**5:44** But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you,

**5:45** that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust.

**5:46** For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same?

**5:47** And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same?

**5:48** So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.

#### Romans

**14:17** For the kingdom of God is not a matter of food and drink, but of righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Spirit;

**14:18** whoever serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by others.

**14:19** Let us then pursue what leads to peace and to building up one another.

## Catechism of the Catholic Church

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**1869** Thus sin makes men accomplices of one another and causes concupiscence, violence, and injustice to reign among them. Sins give rise to social situations and institutions that are contrary to the divine goodness. "Structures of sin" are the expression and effect of personal sins. They lead their victims to do evil in their turn. In an analogous sense, they constitute a "social sin."

### The witness of sacred history

**2259** In the account of Abel's murder by his brother Cain, Scripture reveals the presence of anger and envy in man, consequences of original sin, from the beginning of human history. Man has become the enemy of his fellow man. God declares the wickedness of this fratricide: "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand."<sup>58</sup>

**2260** The covenant between God and mankind is interwoven with reminders of God's gift of human life and man's murderous violence:

For your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning. . . . Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image.<sup>59</sup>

The Old Testament always considered blood a sacred sign of life.<sup>60</sup> This teaching remains necessary for all time.

**2261** Scripture specifies the prohibition contained in the fifth commandment: "Do not slay the innocent and the righteous."<sup>61</sup> The deliberate murder of an innocent person is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human being, to the golden rule, and to the holiness of the Creator. The law forbidding it is universally valid: it obliges each and everyone, always and everywhere.

**2262** In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord recalls the commandment, "You shall not kill,"<sup>62</sup> and adds to it the proscription of anger, hatred, and vengeance. Going further, Christ asks his disciples to turn the other cheek, to love their enemies.<sup>63</sup> He did not defend himself and told Peter to leave his sword in its sheath.<sup>64</sup>

### Legitimate defense

**2263** The legitimate defense of persons and societies is not an exception to the prohibition against the murder of the innocent that constitutes intentional killing. "The act of self-defense can have a double effect: the preservation of one's own life; and the killing of the aggressor. . . . The one is intended, the other is not."<sup>65</sup>

**2264** Love toward oneself remains a fundamental principle of morality. Therefore it is legitimate to insist on respect for one's own right to life. Someone who defends his life is not guilty of murder even if he is forced to deal his aggressor a lethal blow:

If a man in self-defense uses more than necessary violence, it will be unlawful: whereas if he repels force with moderation, his defense will be lawful. . . . Nor is it necessary for salvation that a man omit the act of moderate self-defense to avoid killing the other man, since one is bound to take more care of one's own life than of another's.<sup>66</sup>

**2265** Legitimate defense can be not only a right but a grave duty for one who is responsible for the lives of others. The defense of the common good requires that an unjust aggressor be rendered unable to cause harm. For this reason, those who legitimately hold authority also have the right to use arms to repel aggressors against the civil community entrusted to their responsibility.

**2266** The efforts of the state to curb the spread of behavior harmful to people's rights and to the basic rules of civil society correspond to the requirement of safeguarding the common good. Legitimate public authority has the right and duty to inflict punishment proportionate to the gravity of the offense. Punishment has the primary aim of redressing the disorder introduced by the offense. When it is willingly accepted by the guilty party, it assumes the value of expiation. Punishment then, in addition to defending public order and

protecting people's safety, has a medicinal purpose: as far as possible, it must contribute to the correction of the guilty party.<sup>67</sup>

**2267** Assuming that the guilty party's identity and responsibility have been fully determined, the traditional teaching of the Church does not exclude recourse to the death penalty, if this is the only possible way of effectively defending human lives against the unjust aggressor.

If, however, non-lethal means are sufficient to defend and protect people's safety from the aggressor, authority will limit itself to such means, as these are more in keeping with the concrete conditions of the common good and more in conformity to the dignity of the human person.

Today, in fact, as a consequence of the possibilities which the state has for effectively preventing crime, by rendering one who has committed an offense incapable of doing harm - without definitely taking away from him the possibility of redeeming himself - the cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity "are very rare, if not practically nonexistent."<sup>68</sup>

### **Intentional homicide**

**2268** The fifth commandment forbids *direct and intentional killing* as gravely sinful. The murderer and those who cooperate voluntarily in murder commit a sin that cries out to heaven for vengeance.<sup>69</sup>

Infanticide,<sup>70</sup> fratricide, parricide, and the murder of a spouse are especially grave crimes by reason of the natural bonds which they break. Concern for eugenics or public health cannot justify any murder, even if commanded by public authority.

**2269** The fifth commandment forbids doing anything with the intention of *indirectly* bringing about a person's death. The moral law prohibits exposing someone to mortal danger without grave reason, as well as refusing assistance to a person in danger.

The acceptance by human society of murderous famines, without efforts to remedy them, is a scandalous injustice and a grave offense. Those whose usurious and avaricious dealings lead to the hunger and death of their brethren in the human family indirectly commit homicide, which is imputable to them.<sup>71</sup>

*Unintentional* killing is not morally imputable. But one is not exonerated from grave offense if, without proportionate reasons, he has acted in a way that brings about someone's death, even without the intention to do so.

### **Abortion**

**2270** Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person - among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life.<sup>72</sup>

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.<sup>73</sup>  
My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth.<sup>74</sup>

**2271** Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable. Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law:

You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the newborn to perish.<sup>75</sup>  
God, the Lord of life, has entrusted to men the noble mission of safeguarding life, and men must carry it out in a manner worthy of themselves. Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception: abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes.<sup>76</sup>

**2272** Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense. The Church attaches the canonical penalty of excommunication to this crime against human life. "A person who procures a completed abortion incurs excommunication *latae sententiae*,"<sup>77</sup> "by the very commission of the offense,"<sup>78</sup> and subject to the conditions provided by Canon Law.<sup>79</sup> The Church does not thereby intend to restrict the scope of mercy. Rather, she makes clear the gravity of the crime committed, the irreparable harm done to the innocent who is put to death, as well as to the parents and the whole of society.

**2273** The inalienable right to life of every innocent human individual is a *constitutive element of a civil society and its legislation*:

"The inalienable rights of the person must be recognized and respected by civil society and the political authority. These human rights depend neither on single individuals nor on parents; nor do they represent a concession made by society and the state; they belong to human nature and are inherent in the person by virtue of the creative act from which the person took his origin. Among such fundamental rights one should mention in this regard every human being's right to life and physical integrity from the moment of conception until death."<sup>80</sup>

"The moment a positive law deprives a category of human beings of the protection which civil legislation ought to accord them, the state is denying the equality of all before the law. When the state does not place its power at the service of the rights of each citizen, and in particular of the more vulnerable, the very foundations of a state based on law are undermined. . . . As a consequence of the respect and protection which must be ensured for the unborn child from the moment of conception, the law must provide appropriate penal sanctions for every deliberate violation of the child's rights."<sup>81</sup>

**2274** Since it must be treated from conception as a person, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed, as far as possible, like any other human being.

*Prenatal diagnosis* is morally licit, "if it respects the life and integrity of the embryo and the human fetus and is directed toward its safe guarding or healing as an individual. . . . It is gravely opposed to the moral law when this is done with the thought of possibly inducing an abortion, depending upon the results: a diagnosis must not be the equivalent of a death sentence."<sup>82</sup>

**2275** "One must hold as licit procedures carried out on the human embryo which respect the life and integrity of the embryo and do not involve disproportionate risks for it, but are directed toward its healing the improvement of its condition of health, or its individual survival."<sup>83</sup>

"It is immoral to produce human embryos intended for exploitation as disposable biological material."<sup>84</sup>

"Certain attempts to *influence chromosomal or genetic inheritance* are not therapeutic but are aimed at producing human beings selected according to sex or other predetermined qualities. Such manipulations are contrary to the personal dignity of the human being and his integrity and identity"<sup>85</sup> which are unique and unrepeatable.

## **Euthanasia**

**2276** Those whose lives are diminished or weakened deserve special respect. Sick or handicapped persons should be helped to lead lives as normal as possible.

**2277** Whatever its motives and means, direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick, or dying persons. It is morally unacceptable.

Thus an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator. The error of judgment into which one can fall in good faith does not change the nature of this murderous act, which must always be forbidden and excluded.

**2278** Discontinuing medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary, or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be legitimate; it is the refusal of "over-zealous" treatment. Here one does not will to cause death; one's inability to impede it is merely accepted. The decisions should be made by the patient if he is competent and able or, if not, by those legally entitled to act for the patient, whose reasonable will and legitimate interests must always be respected.

**2279** Even if death is thought imminent, the ordinary care owed to a sick person cannot be legitimately interrupted. The use of painkillers to alleviate the sufferings of the dying, even at the risk of shortening their days, can be morally in conformity with human dignity if death is not willed as either an end or a means, but only foreseen and tolerated as inevitable. Palliative care is a special form of disinterested charity. As such it should be encouraged.

## **Suicide**

**2280** Everyone is responsible for his life before God who has given it to him. It is God who remains the sovereign Master of life. We are obliged to accept life gratefully and preserve it for his honor and the salvation of our souls. We are stewards, not owners, of the life God has entrusted to us. It is not ours to dispose of.

**2281** Suicide contradicts the natural inclination of the human being to preserve and perpetuate his life. It is gravely contrary to the just love of self. It likewise offends love of neighbor because it unjustly breaks the ties of solidarity with family, nation, and other human societies to which we continue to have obligations. Suicide is contrary to love for the living God.

**2282** If suicide is committed with the intention of setting an example, especially to the young, it also takes on the gravity of scandal. Voluntary co-operation in suicide is contrary to the moral law. Grave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide.

**2283** We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives.

## **II. RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY OF PERSONS**

### **Respect for health**

**2288** Life and physical health are precious gifts entrusted to us by God. We must take reasonable care of them, taking into account the needs of others and the common good. *Concern for the health* of its citizens requires that society help in the attainment of living-conditions that allow them to grow and reach maturity: food and clothing, housing, health care, basic education, employment, and social assistance.

**2289** If morality requires respect for the life of the body, it does not make it an absolute value. It rejects a neo-pagan notion that tends to promote the *cult of the body*, to sacrifice everything for its sake, to idolize physical perfection and success at sports. By its selective preference of the strong over the weak, such a conception can lead to the perversion of human relationships.

**2290** The virtue of temperance disposes us to *avoid every kind of excess*: the abuse of food, alcohol, tobacco, or medicine. Those incur grave guilt who, by drunkenness or a love of speed, endanger their own and others' safety on the road, at sea, or in the air.

**2291** The *use of drugs* inflicts very grave damage on human health and life. Their use, except on strictly therapeutic grounds, is a grave offense. Clandestine production of and trafficking in drugs are scandalous practices. They constitute direct co-operation in evil, since they encourage people to practices gravely contrary to the moral law.

### **Respect for the person and scientific research**

**2292** Scientific, medical, or psychological experiments on human individuals or groups can contribute to healing the sick and the advancement of public health.

**2293** Basic scientific research, as well as applied research, is a significant expression of man's dominion over creation. Science and technology are precious resources when placed at the service of man and promote his integral development for the benefit of all. By themselves however they cannot disclose the meaning of existence and of human progress. Science and technology are ordered to man, from whom they take their origin and development; hence they find in the person and in his moral values both evidence of their purpose and awareness of their limits.

**2294** It is an illusion to claim moral neutrality in scientific research and its applications. On the other hand, guiding principles cannot be inferred from simple technical efficiency, or from the usefulness accruing to some at the expense of others or, even worse, from prevailing ideologies. Science and technology by their very nature require unconditional respect for fundamental moral criteria. They must be at the service of the human person, of his inalienable rights, of his true and integral good, in conformity with the plan and the will of God.

**2295** Research or experimentation on the human being cannot legitimate acts that are in themselves contrary to the dignity of persons and to the moral law. The subjects' potential consent does not justify such acts. Experimentation on human beings is not morally legitimate if it exposes the subject's life or physical and psychological integrity to disproportionate or avoidable risks. Experimentation on human beings does not conform to the dignity of the person if it takes place without the informed consent of the subject or those who legitimately speak for him.

**2296** *Organ transplants* are in conformity with the moral law if the physical and psychological dangers and risks to the donor are proportionate to the good sought for the recipient. Organ donation after death is a noble and meritorious act and is to be encouraged as an expression of generous solidarity. It is not morally acceptable if the donor or his proxy has not given explicit consent. Moreover, it is not morally admissible to bring about the disabling mutilation or death of a human being, even in order to delay the death of other persons.

## Respect for bodily integrity

**2297** *Kidnapping* and *hostage taking* bring on a reign of terror; by means of threats they subject their victims to intolerable pressures. They are morally wrong. *Terrorism* threatens, wounds, and kills indiscriminately; it is gravely against justice and charity. *Torture* which uses physical or moral violence to extract confessions, punish the guilty, frighten opponents, or satisfy hatred is contrary to respect for the person and for human dignity. Except when performed for strictly therapeutic medical reasons, directly intended *amputations*, *mutilations*, and *sterilizations* performed on innocent persons are against the moral law.<sup>91</sup>

**2298** In times past, cruel practices were commonly used by legitimate governments to maintain law and order, often without protest from the Pastors of the Church, who themselves adopted in their own tribunals the prescriptions of Roman law concerning torture. Regrettable as these facts are, the Church always taught the duty of clemency and mercy. She forbade clerics to shed blood. In recent times it has become evident that these cruel practices were neither necessary for public order, nor in conformity with the legitimate rights of the human person. On the contrary, these practices led to ones even more degrading. It is necessary to work for their abolition. We must pray for the victims and their tormentors

**2302** By recalling the commandment, "You shall not kill,"<sup>94</sup> our Lord asked for peace of heart and denounced murderous anger and hatred as immoral. *Anger* is a desire for revenge. "To desire vengeance in order to do evil to someone who should be punished is illicit," but it is praiseworthy to impose restitution "to correct vices and maintain justice."<sup>95</sup> If anger reaches the point of a deliberate desire to kill or seriously wound a neighbor, it is gravely against charity; it is a mortal sin. The Lord says, "Everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment."<sup>96</sup>

**2303** Deliberate *hatred* is contrary to charity. Hatred of the neighbor is a sin when one deliberately wishes him evil. Hatred of the neighbor is a grave sin when one deliberately desires him grave harm. "But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven."<sup>97</sup>

**2304** Respect for and development of human life require peace. Peace is not merely the absence of war, and it is not limited to maintaining a balance of powers between adversaries. Peace cannot be attained on earth without safeguarding the goods of persons, free communication among men, respect for the dignity of persons and peoples, and the assiduous practice of fraternity. Peace is "the tranquillity of order."<sup>98</sup> Peace is the work of justice and the effect of charity.<sup>99</sup>

**2305** Earthly peace is the image and fruit of the *peace of Christ*, the messianic "Prince of Peace."<sup>100</sup> By the blood of his Cross, "in his own person he killed the hostility,"<sup>101</sup> he reconciled men with God and made his Church the sacrament of the unity of the human race and of its union with God. "He is our peace."<sup>102</sup> He has declared: "Blessed are the peacemakers."<sup>103</sup>

**2306** Those who renounce violence and bloodshed and, in order to safeguard human rights, make use of those means of defense available to the weakest, bear witness to evangelical charity, provided they do so without harming the rights and obligations of other men and societies. They bear legitimate witness to the gravity of the physical and moral risks of recourse to violence, with all its destruction and death.<sup>104</sup>

## Avoiding war

**2307** The fifth commandment forbids the intentional destruction of human life. Because of the evils and injustices that accompany all war, the Church insistently urges everyone to prayer and to action so that the divine Goodness may free us from the ancient bondage of war.<sup>105</sup>

**2308** All citizens and all governments are obliged to work for the avoidance of war.

However, "as long as the danger of war persists and there is no international authority with the necessary competence and power, governments cannot be denied the right of lawful self-defense, once all peace efforts have failed."<sup>106</sup>

**2309** The strict conditions for *legitimate defense by military force* require rigorous consideration. The gravity of such a decision makes it subject to rigorous conditions of moral legitimacy. At one and the same time:

- the damage inflicted by the aggressor on the nation or community of nations must be lasting, grave, and certain;
- all other means of putting an end to it must have been shown to be impractical or ineffective;
- there must be serious prospects of success;
- the use of arms must not produce evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated. The power of modern means of destruction weighs very heavily in evaluating this condition.

These are the traditional elements enumerated in what is called the "just war" doctrine.

The evaluation of these conditions for moral legitimacy belongs to the prudential judgment of those who have responsibility for the common good.

**2310** Public authorities, in this case, have the right and duty to impose on citizens the *obligations necessary for national defense*.

Those who are sworn to serve their country in the armed forces are servants of the security and freedom of nations. If they carry out their duty honorably, they truly contribute to the common good of the nation and the maintenance of peace.<sup>107</sup>

**2311** Public authorities should make equitable provision for those who for reasons of conscience refuse to bear arms; these are nonetheless obliged to serve the human community in some other way.<sup>108</sup>

**2312** The Church and human reason both assert the permanent validity of the *moral law during armed conflict*. "The mere fact that war has regrettably broken out does not mean that everything becomes licit between the warring parties."<sup>109</sup>

**2313** Non-combatants, wounded soldiers, and prisoners must be respected and treated humanely.

Actions deliberately contrary to the law of nations and to its universal principles are crimes, as are the orders that command such actions. Blind obedience does not suffice to excuse those who carry them out. Thus the extermination of a people, nation, or ethnic minority must be condemned as a mortal sin. One is morally bound to resist orders that command genocide.

**2314** "Every act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God and man, which merits firm and unequivocal condemnation."<sup>110</sup> A danger of modern warfare is that it provides the opportunity to those who possess modern scientific weapons especially atomic, biological, or chemical weapons - to commit such crimes.

**2315** The *accumulation of arms* strikes many as a paradoxically suitable way of deterring potential adversaries from war. They see it as the most effective means of ensuring peace among nations. This method of deterrence gives rise to strong moral reservations. The *arms race* does not ensure peace. Far from eliminating the causes of war, it risks aggravating them. Spending enormous sums to produce ever new types of weapons impedes efforts to aid needy populations;<sup>111</sup> it thwarts the development of peoples. *Over-armament* multiplies reasons for conflict and increases the danger of escalation.

**2316** The *production and the sale of arms* affect the common good of nations and of the international community. Hence public authorities have the right and duty to regulate them. The short-term pursuit of private or collective interests cannot legitimate undertakings that promote violence and conflict among nations and compromise the international juridical order.

**2317** Injustice, excessive economic or social inequalities, envy, distrust, and pride raging among men and nations constantly threaten peace and cause wars. Everything done to overcome these disorders contributes to building up peace and avoiding war:

Insofar as men are sinners, the threat of war hangs over them and will so continue until Christ comes again; but insofar as they can vanquish sin by coming together in charity, violence itself will be vanquished and these words will be fulfilled: "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."<sup>112</sup>

## Rape

**2356** Rape is the forcible violation of the sexual intimacy of another person. It does injury to justice and charity. Rape deeply wounds the respect, freedom, and physical and moral integrity to which every person has a right. It causes grave damage that can mark the victim for life. It is always an intrinsically evil act. Graver still is the rape of children committed by parents (incest) or those responsible for the education of the children entrusted to them.

## Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church: Chapter 11

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**488.** *Before being God's gift to man and a human project in conformity with the divine plan, peace is in the first place a basic attribute of God: "the Lord is peace" (Jdg 6:24). Creation, which is a reflection of the divine glory, aspires to peace. God created all that exists, and all of creation forms a harmonious whole that is good in its every part (cf. Gen 1:4,10,18,21,25,31). Peace is founded on the primary relationship that exists between every human being and God himself, a relationship marked by righteousness (cf. Gen 17:1). Following upon the voluntary act by which man altered the divine order, the world experienced the shedding of blood and division. Violence made its appearance in interpersonal relationships (cf. Gen 4:1-16) and in social relationships (cf. Gen 11:1-9). Peace and violence cannot dwell together, and where there is violence, God cannot be present (cf. 1 Chr 22:8-9).*

**494.** *Peace is a value [1015] and a universal duty [1016] founded on a rational and moral order of society that has its roots in God himself, "the first source of being, the essential truth and the supreme good".[1017] Peace is not merely the absence of war, nor can it be reduced solely to the maintenance of a balance of power between enemies.[1018] Rather it is founded on a correct understanding of the human person [1019] and requires the establishment of an order based on justice and charity.*

*Peace is the fruit of justice,[1020] (cf. Is 32:17) understood in the broad sense as the respect for the equilibrium of every dimension of the human person. Peace is threatened when man is not given all that is due him as a human person, when his dignity is not respected and when civil life is not directed to the common good. The defense and promotion of human rights is essential for the building up of a peaceful society and the integral development of individuals, peoples and nations.[1021]*

**497.** *The Magisterium condemns "the savagery of war"[1032] and asks that war be considered in a new way.[1033] In fact, "it is hardly possible to imagine that in an atomic era, war could be used as an instrument of justice".[1034] War is a "scourge" [1035] and is never an appropriate way to resolve problems that arise between nations, "it has never been and it will never be".[1036] because it creates new and still more complicated conflicts.[1037] When it erupts, war becomes an "unnecessary massacre".[1038] an "adventure without return"[1039] that compromises humanity's present and threatens its future. "Nothing is lost by peace; everything may be lost by war".[1040] The damage caused by an armed conflict is not only material but also moral.[1041] In the end, war is "the failure of all true humanism",[1042] "it is always a defeat for humanity": [1043] "never again some peoples against others, never again! ... no more war, no more war!" [1044]*

## Quotes From Various Church Documents

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### The Gospel of Life, John Paul II, 1995

**3.** "Whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, or willful self-destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torments inflicted on body or mind, attempts to coerce the will itself; whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where people are treated as mere instruments of gain rather than as

free and responsible persons; all these things and others like them are infamies indeed.

They poison human society, and they do more harm to those who practice them than to those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are a supreme dishonor to the Creator".

**56.** In this context we have to place the problem of the death penalty. In the church and civil society there is a growing tendency to apply it in a very limited way or to abolish it completely. This problem should be viewed in the context of a penal justice ever more in line with the dignity of the human person and God's plan for humanity and society. The violation of personal and societal rights must be adequately punished as a condition for the offender to regain the exercise of his or her freedom. In this way the public order is defended, public safety is ensured, and the offender is offered an incentive to change and be rehabilitated.

The nature and extent of the punishment ought not to go to the extreme of executing the offender, except in cases of absolute necessity: in other words, when it would not be possible otherwise to defend society. Today, however, as a result of steady improvements in the organization of the penal system, such cases are very rare if not practically nonexistent.

**64.** In this context the temptation grows to have recourse to euthanasia, that is, to take control of death and bring it about before its time, "gently" ending one's own life or the life of others. In reality, what might seem logical and humane, when looked at more closely is seen to be senseless and inhumane. Here we are faced with one of the more alarming symptoms of the "culture of death", which is advancing above all in prosperous societies, marked by an attitude of excessive preoccupation with efficiency and which sees the growing number of elderly and disabled people as intolerable and too burdensome.

**65.** Taking into account these distinctions, in harmony with the Magisterium of my Predecessors<sup>[81]</sup> and in communion with the Bishops of the Catholic Church, I confirm that euthanasia is a grave violation of the law of God, since it is the deliberate and morally unacceptable killing of a human person.

### **Justice in the World, World Synod of Catholic Bishops, 1971**

**5.** Listening to the cry of those who suffer violence and are oppressed by unjust systems and structures, and hearing the appeal of a world that by its perversity contradicts the plan of its Creator, we have shared our awareness of the Church's vocation to be present in the heart of the world by proclaiming the Good News to the poor, freedom to the oppressed, and joy to the afflicted. The hopes and forces which are moving the world in its very foundations are not foreign to the dynamism of the Gospel, which through the power of the Holy Spirit frees people from personal sin and from its consequences in social life.

### **The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response, USCCB, 1983**

**20.** We propose, therefore, to discuss both the religious vision of peace among peoples and nations and the problems associated with realizing this vision in a world of sovereign states, devoid of any central authority and divided by ideology, geography, and competing claims. We believe the religious vision has an objective basis and is capable of progressive realization. Christ is our peace, for he has "made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility ... that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God" (Eph. 2:14-16). We also know that this peace will be achieved fully only in the kingdom of God. The realization of the kingdom, therefore, is a continuing work, progressively accomplished, precariously maintained, and needing constant effort to preserve the peace achieved and expand its scope in personal and political life.

**105.** When confronting choices among specific military options, the question asked by proportionality is: once we take into account not only the military advantages that will be achieved by using this means but also all the harms reasonably expected to follow from using it, can its use still be justified? We know, of course, that no end can justify means evil in themselves, such as the executing of hostages or the targeting of non-combatants. Nonetheless, even if the means adopted is not evil in itself, it is necessary to take into account the probable harms that will result from using it and the justice of accepting those harms. It is of utmost importance, in assessing harms and the justice of accepting them, 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.

**333.** In the words of our Holy Father, we need a "moral about face." The whole world must summon the moral courage and technical means to say "no" to nuclear conflict; "no" to weapons of mass destruction; "no" to an arms race which robs the poor and the vulnerable; and "no" to the moral danger of a nuclear age which places before humankind indefensible choices of constant terror or surrender. Peacemaking is not an optional commitment. It is a requirement of our faith. We are called to be peacemakers, not by some movement of the moment, but by our Lord Jesus. The content and context of our peacemaking is set, not by some political agenda or ideological program, but by the teaching of his Church.

### **When I Call for Help: A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence Against Women, Tenth Anniversary Edition, USCCB, 1992**

As pastors of the Catholic Church in the United States, we state as clearly and strongly as we can that violence against women, inside or outside the home, is *never* justified. Violence in any form—physical, sexual, psychological, or verbal—is sinful; often, it is a crime as well. We have called for a moral revolution to replace a culture of violence. We acknowledge that violence has many forms, many causes, and many victims—men as well as women

### **Confronting a Culture of Violence: A Catholic Framework for Action, USCCB, 1994**

Not all violence is deadly. It begins with anger, intolerance, impatience, unfair judgments and aggression. It is often reflected in our language, our entertainment, our driving, our competitive behavior, and the way we treat our environment. These acts and attitudes are not the same as abusive behavior or physical attacks, but they create a climate where violence prospers and peace suffers. We are also experiencing the polarization of public life and militarization of politics with increased reliance on "attack" ads, "war" rooms and intense partisan combat in place of the search for the common good and common ground.

The Catholic community is in a position to respond to violence and the threat of violence in our society with new commitment and creativity. More of the same is not sufficient. Business as usual is not enough. Our faith and facilities can be beacons of hope and safety for those seeking refuge from violent streets and abusive homes. People can become peacemakers in their homes and communities. Parishes can organize mentoring programs for teen parents. The Church can be the first point of referral for spousal abuse. We can incorporate ways to handle family conflict in our religious education and sacramental preparation programs. We can work for public policies that confront violence, build community and promote responsibility. Finally, we can join with other churches in developing a community wide strategy for making our neighborhoods more safe, welcoming and peaceful.

### **Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice, USCCB, 2000**

**4.**A Catholic approach begins with the recognition that the dignity of the human person applies to both victim and offender. As bishops, we believe that the current trend of more prisons and more executions, with too little education and drug treatment, does not truly reflect Christian values and will not really leave our communities safer. We are convinced that our tradition and our faith offer better alternatives that can hold offenders accountable and challenge them to change their lives; reach out to victims and reject vengeance; restore a sense of community and resist the violence that has engulfed so much of our culture.

**60.**The Option for the Poor and Vulnerable: This principle of Catholic social teaching recognizes that every public policy must be assessed by how it will affect the poorest and most vulnerable people in our society. Sometimes people who lack adequate resources from early in life (i.e. children—especially those who have been physically, sexually, or emotionally abused—the mentally ill, and people who have suffered discrimination) turn to lives of crime in desperation or out of anger or confusion. Unaddressed needs—including proper nutrition, shelter, health care, and protection from abuse and neglect—can be steppingstones on a path towards crime. Our role as Church is to continually work to address these needs through pastoral care, charity, and advocacy.

## Various Definitions of “Violence” & “Peace”

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### vi-o-lence

–noun

1. swift and intense force: *the violence of a storm.*
2. rough or injurious physical force, action, or treatment: *to die by violence.*
3. an unjust or unwarranted exertion of force or power, as against rights or laws: *to take over a government by violence.*
4. a violent act or proceeding.
5. rough or immoderate vehemence, as of feeling or language: *the violence of his hatred.*
6. damage through distortion or unwarranted alteration: *to do editorial violence to a text.*

### peace

–noun

1. the normal, non-warring condition of a nation, group of nations, or the world.
2. (*often initial capital letter*) an agreement or treaty between warring or antagonistic nations, groups, etc., to end hostilities and abstain from further fighting or antagonism: *the Peace of Ryswick.*
3. a state of mutual harmony between people or groups, esp. in personal relations: *Try to live in peace with your neighbors.*
4. the normal freedom from civil commotion and violence of a community; public order and security: *He was arrested for being drunk and disturbing the peace.*
5. cessation of or freedom from any strife or dissension.
6. freedom of the mind from annoyance, distraction, anxiety, an obsession, etc.; tranquility; serenity.
7. a state of tranquility or serenity: *May he rest in peace.*
8. a state or condition conducive to, proceeding from, or characterized by tranquility: *the peace of a mountain resort.*
9. silence; stillness: *The cawing of a crow broke the afternoon's peace.*
10. (*initial capital letter, italics*) a comedy (421 b.c.) by Aristophanes.
11. (used to express greeting or farewell or to request quietness or silence).
12. *Obsolete.* to be or become silent.
13. **at peace**
  - a. in a state or relationship of non-belligerence or concord; not at war.
  - b. untroubled; tranquil; content.
  - c. deceased.
14. **hold** or **keep one's peace**, to refrain from or cease speaking; keep silent: *He told her to hold her peace until he had finished.*
15. **keep the peace**, to maintain order; cause to refrain from creating a disturbance: *Several officers of the law were on hand to keep the peace.*
16. **make one's peace with**, to become reconciled with: *He repaired the fence he had broken and made his peace with the neighbor on whose property it stood.*
17. **make peace**, to ask for or arrange a cessation of hostilities or antagonism.