**Catholic Nonviolence Initiative**

**April 2016 Vatican Conference on Nonviolence and Just Peace**

***Recommendations***

**Living Gospel Nonviolence and Just Peace**

In that spirit we commit ourselves to furthering Catholic understanding and practice of active nonviolence on the road to just peace. As would-be disciples of Jesus, challenged and inspired by stories of hope and courage in these days, we call on the Church we love to:

* Continue developing Catholic social teaching on nonviolence. In particular, ***we call on Pope Francis to share with the world an encyclical on nonviolence and Just Peace***;
* Integrate Gospel nonviolence explicitly into the life, including the sacramental life, and work of the Church through dioceses, parishes, agencies, schools, universities, seminaries, religious orders, voluntary associations, and others;
* Promote nonviolent practices and strategies (e.g., nonviolent resistance, restorative justice, trauma healing, unarmed civilian protection, conflict transformation, and peacebuilding strategies);
* Initiate a global conversation on nonviolence within the Church, with people of other faiths, and with the larger world to respond to the monumental crises of our time with the vision and strategies of nonviolence and Just Peace;
* ***No longer use or teach “just war theory”; continue advocating for the abolition of war and nuclear weapons***; and,
* Lift up the prophetic voice of the church to challenge unjust world powers and to support and defend those nonviolent activists whose work for peace and justice put their lives at risk.

**TRADITIONAL “JUST WAR” PRINCIPLES**

***Jus ad Bellum: Why and when recourse to war is permissible.***

**Just Cause:** 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.

**Competent Authority:** War must be declared by those with authority deemed legitimate by a society and by outsiders to the society, not by private groups or individuals.

**Comparative Justice:** Are the values at stake critical enough to override the presumption against war? That is, do the rights and values involved justify killing?

**Right Intention:** The only permissible objective of a just war is to redress an injury; for example, self-defense against an armed attack is always considered to be a just cause. A state may have a just cause, but act from a wrong intention, such as punishing another state, obtaining the resources of another state, causing unwarranted destruction, conducting the war for longer than is necessary, or imposing unreasonable conditions such as unconditional surrender.

**Last Resort:** All peaceful alternatives must have been exhausted before the use of force can be justified.

**Probability of Success:** Deaths, injuries and destruction incurred in a hopeless cause are not morally justifiable. This is to prevent irrational resort to force when the outcome will clearly be disproportionate or futile.

**Proportionality:** The damage to be inflicted and the costs incurred by war must be *proportionate* to the good expected by taking up arms.

*Note that the principle of Proportionality applies to both Jus ad Bellum and Jus in Bello. As such, this principle applies both to the decision to initiate warfare as well as to conduct throughout the war.*

***Jus in Bello: How war may be waged (strategy, tactics, individual actions).***

**Proportionality:** Determines how much force is morally permissible in warfare. It suggests that the injury caused should be proportional to the objective desired, and that the extent and violence of warfare must be tempered to minimize destruction and casualties.

**Discrimination:** Prohibits directly intended attacks on non-combatants and non-military targets.

*These two principles, in all their complexity, must be applied to the range of weapons - conventional, nuclear, biological, and chemical - with which nations are armed today.*