

Notes for Roundtable 3 Panel
Nonviolence workshop, Rome, April 2019
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Peacebuilding through active nonviolence is the natural and necessary complement to the Church's continuing efforts to limit the use of force by the application of moral norms; she does so by her participation in the work of international institutions and through the competent contribution made by so many Christians to the drafting of legislation at all levels. Jesus himself offers a "manual" for this strategy of peacemaking in the Sermon on the Mount.

Pope Francis WDP 2017 §6

1. **Background on Roundtable 3**

- A. Read the quote above.
- B. RT3 effort to keep stringent JWTers in the conversation. Incl. moral theologians.
 - (1) Terry Rynne a couple of times in side conversations in 2016: *Why don't moral theologians get it?* I.e. why do even those who see the power of active nonviolence, want to move to a just peace framework, etc., still hold on to the possibility of just war?
 - (2) Terry said this to me because he trusted my commitment to Jesus' way of active nonviolence. But I want to defend my fellow theologians (and by implication, my own warnings lest we alienate allies who consider themselves stringent just-war thinkers).
 - (3) Part of our job as moral theologians: anticipate multiple issues, insist on consistency, and avoid unintended consequences.
 - (4) E.g.: physician-assisted suicide:
 - (a) Can make an argument that allowing it is compassionate toward those nearing death anyway and suffering terrible pain.
 - (b) But warning: What will policies do to the disabled whom society deems "unproductive," or who are tempted to think of themselves that way?
- C. So I understand the worries of some of my colleagues in the discipline of moral theology about the Appeal's call to abandon JWT:
 - (1) To be sure: I defended the appeal in Catholic press in the US (*Commonweal*, June 17, 2017). Decisive considerations concerning JWT:
 - (a) It's failure to form a people of peace. Telling people that a war can be just has given them an excuse to short-circuit the process of using JW criteria to actually scrutinize any given call to arms. Again and again, down through the centuries.
 - (b) And if the claim is that the need for exceptional need for military action is more realistic than either early Christian pacifism, or modern Gandhian nonviolence, then that failure to form our people is also a datum.
 - (c) I.e. if you are going to claim that JWT is more realistic, you have to be realistic all the way down. Can't turn around and hold it up as an "ideal", if only people would apply it consistently.
 - (2) But if we want to abandon or move beyond the JWT, or transcend the long impasse between JWT and Christian pacifism with a JP framework that makes active nonviolence the norm in the face of injustice, we need all the more to anticipate side effects. If the Church abandons JWT, ...
 - (a) ... will Vatican diplomats, bishops, and their staff people have the language the need to engage government leaders in order to urge restraint?
 - (b) For that matter, will grassroots activists advocating on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers and civilian noncombatants generally have to cease appealing to Geneva Conventions and other international accords?

- (c) The JWT helped shape international law, after all. I didn't hear anyone in at our previous meeting in 2016 calling on the Church to cease appealing to international law.
- (3) One of the crucial roles that Roundtable 3 played, therefore, was to work very hard to keep stringent just-war thinkers in the conversation.
2. **My reading of Francis's statement in §6 of his WDP17 statement:**
- A. Support for our call to move the Church decisively toward thoroughgoing practice of active nonviolence.
 - B. Restraint at the very point where he might have called for a continuing limited role for JW thinking.
 - C. But also a message to those of us who advocate active NV and are skeptical of the JWT: *You are going to have to fill the space that JW thinking has traditionally filled for the Church.*
 - D. For while he did not name the JWT, he did name the space it has filled.
3. **This is what we have tried to do, or at least tried to begin to do, in the RT3 report, in at least two ways: .**
- A. Signalled our desire to engage and develop church tradition and its best intentions by using Latin terms to name the overarching categories in a Just Peace moral framework: *jus in conflictione, jus ex bellum, & jus ad pacem*
 - (1) In and of itself, this is of course symbolic but perhaps superficial. Additional reasons, however:
 - (2) Just Peace has a conceptual advantage that is nonetheless a pedagogical disadvantage: Peace richer but more complex than war.
 - (3) Both the JWT and Pacifism are easier to name because each in its own way tells you what not to do. Negative norms.
 - (4) Just Peace, on the other hand involves positive norms, and positive norms are infinite — they name the countless things that a flourishing community or society will be doing to build up healthy relationships.
 - (5) One way or another, then, a JP moral framework needs to explain itself in a way that is as pedagogically elegant as possible.
 - (6) So the Latin terms signal continuity with church tradition wherever possible,
 - (7) but they also prepare us to rival — pedagogically — both the JWT (whose criteria one can list on a single page) and pacifism (which needs only one negative norm) as we explain JP for purposes of catechesis and formation.
 - B. And more substantively we tried to at least begin filling the space that Pope Francis named, the space that the Church has tried to fill with the JWT:
 - (1) We collated our norms with legitimate building-block principles that have been part of the JWT and must still be operative in nonviolent social movements, e.g.
 - (a) right intention
 - (b) proportionality
 - (c) probability of success
 - (d) just cause
 - (e) what the JWT has called noncombatant immunity but that would still apply to nonviolent campaigns in the form of bystander immunity
 - (2) We named the possible need for just policing and the nonviolent responsibility to protect, even if we didn't have a strong consensus.
 - (3) We reaffirmed the use of "diplomatic power and legislative influence"
 - (4) We affirmed the need for governance and institutionalizing nonviolence.
 - (a) For some this need is obvious, but all too often social movements wait too long to anticipate what they will do if they actually win.
 - (b) Active nonviolence has been far more effective than most historians and commentators have been ready to notice, but if you step back from our list of nonviolent victories, they almost name double negatives: resisting oppression, overthrowing tyrants. A double negative in pure mathematics may be a positive, but in social affairs, one needs more. One needs to govern on the day after.