

# Just War...

## What the church teaches

*There is much discussion today about war, peace, and our responsibilities as Christians in a troubled world. What does the Catholic Church teach about when war can be justified, and how are we called to be peacemakers?*

Join us on Thursday, June 18 at 7:00pm  
Connolly Hall



# Just War Tradition – Faith, Morality, and our world today

# Goal



To understand Catholic teaching on war, evaluate moral criteria, and apply principles to real-world situations. Then pray over how to be a peacemaker.



## **Jubilee Year of Saint Francis of Assisi**

**10 JANUARY 2026 - 10 JANUARY 2027**

**- MAKE ME AN INSTRUMENT OF YOUR PEACE -**

# **The Peace Prayer St. Francis of Assisi**

**Alternating verses, Men and women**

## Men

Lord, make me an instrument of your  
peace:

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;

Where there is sadness, joy.

# Women

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
To be consoled as to console,  
To be understood as to understand,  
To be loved as to love.

# Together

For it is in giving that we  
receive,  
It is in pardoning that we are  
pardoned,  
And it is in dying that we are  
born to eternal life.  
Amen.



## A few little suggestions

Introduce  
yourself to the  
people at your  
table.

Take a moment  
to read the  
table tent  
guidelines



# Icebreaker

**"Is war ever justified? Why or why not?"**

# Agenda



## Foundation of Catholic Teaching on War Biblical Roots

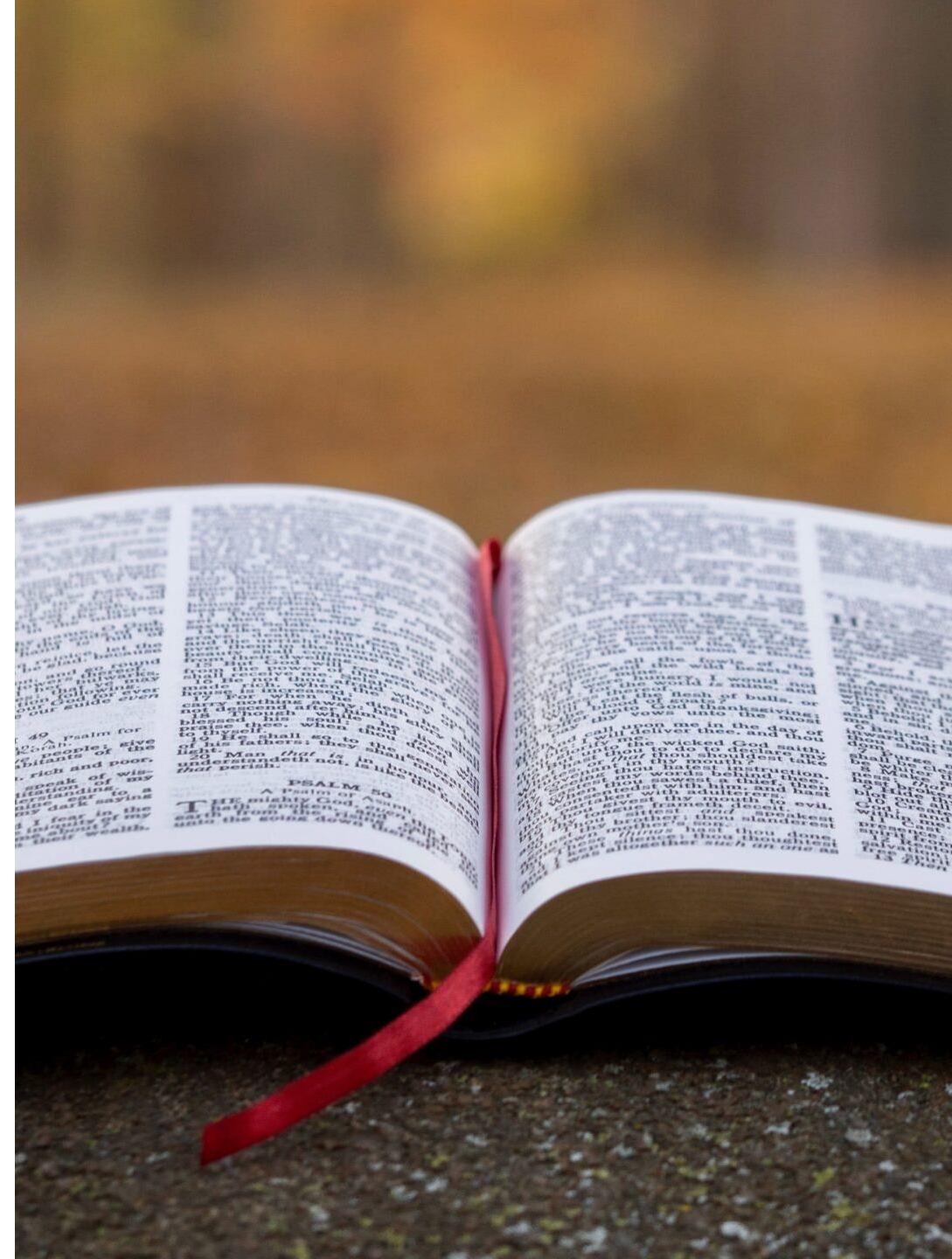
- Early church perspective
- Development of the Just War Thought
  - St. Augustine
  - St. Thomas Aquinas

# Biblical

human sin,  
the struggle for power,  
divine judgment,  
the defense of the innocent, and  
the ultimate hope for peace.

Jesus

James





## Human Sin



Human Sin

**"Come, let us  
build ourselves a  
city and a tower  
with its top in the  
heavens, and  
make a name for  
ourselves"**



**Pride and the Desire for Power**



**War as divine judgment**



# War in Defense of Justice and the Vulnerable

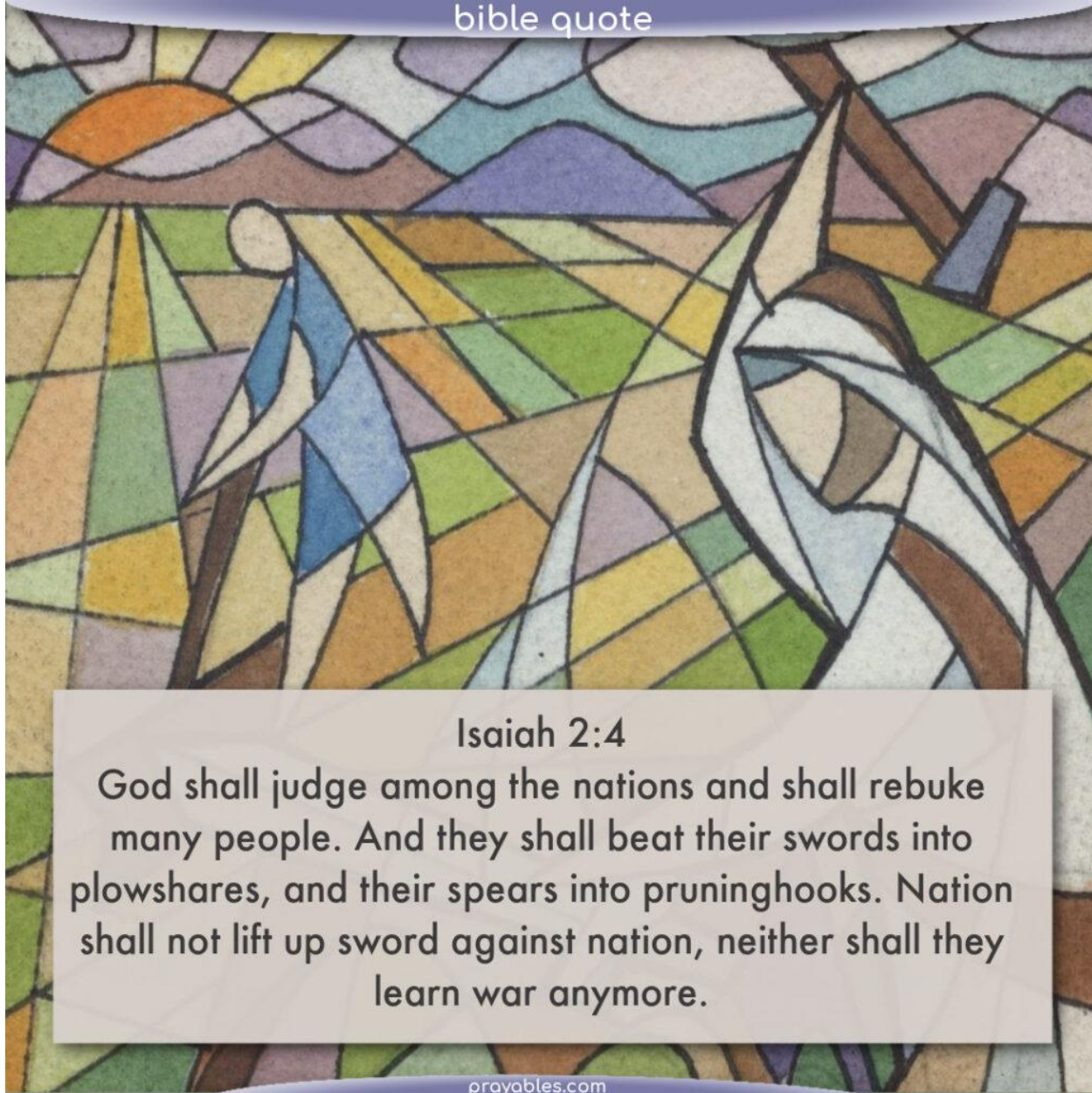
- "When you draw near to a town to fight against it, offer it terms of peace" (Deuteronomy 20:10).





# The Prophetic Vision of Peace

bible quote



Isaiah 2:4

God shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people. And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

prayables.com

# The Prophetic Vision of Peace



**Jesus**

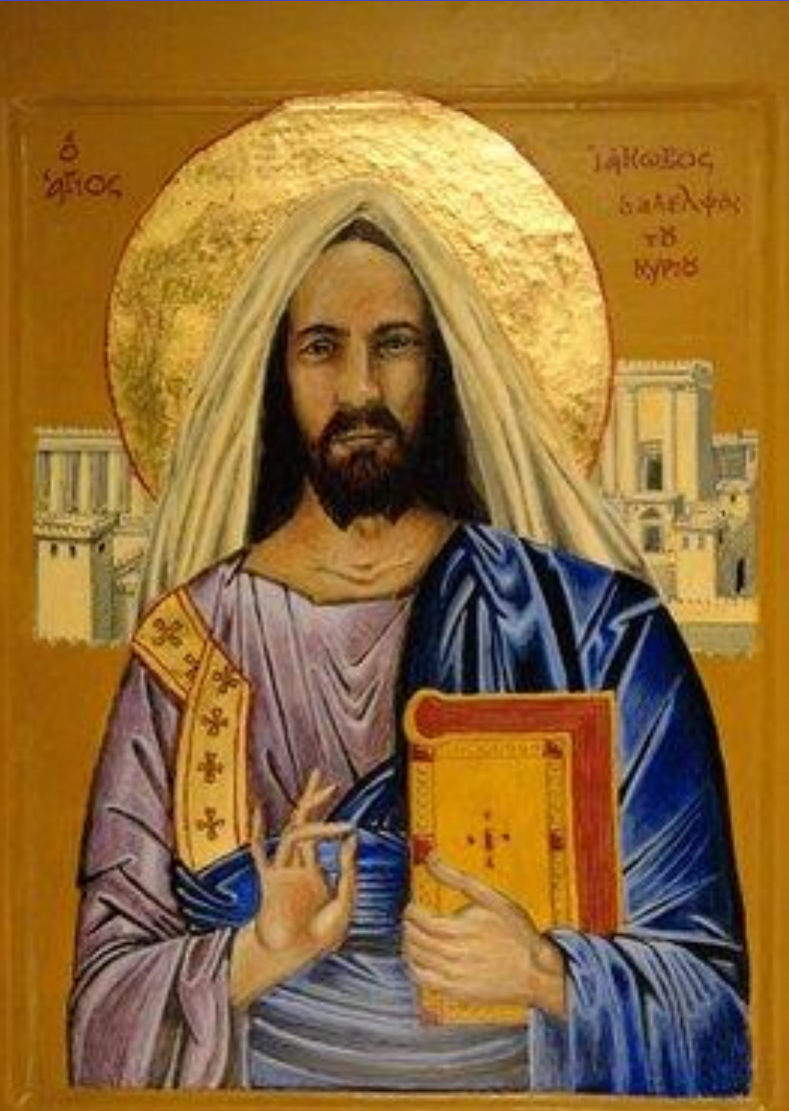
# Jesus



- Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God (Matt 5:9)
- "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).
- Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. (Matt 26:52)

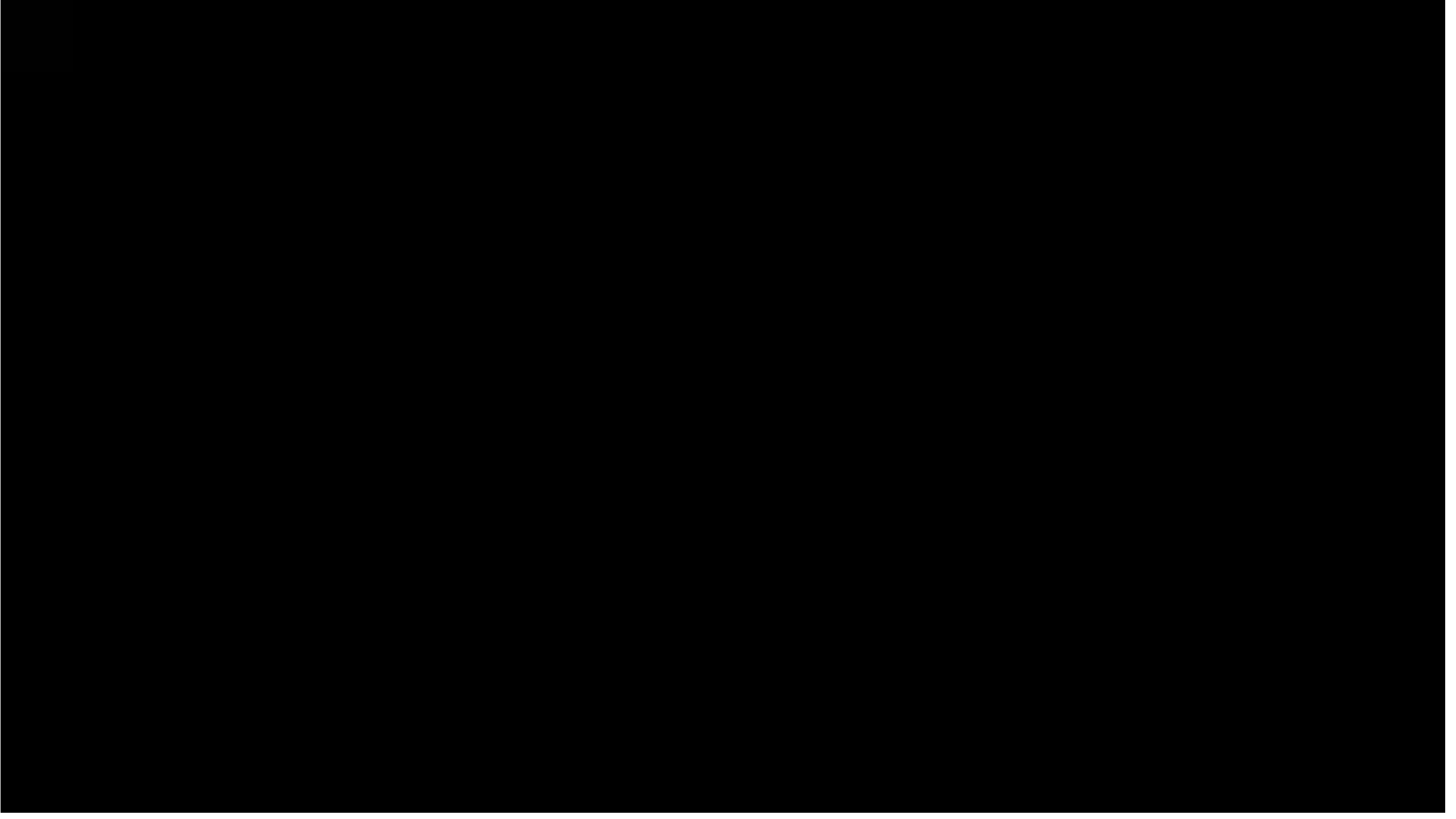
# War According to the Letter of James

- Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you?" (James 4:1).



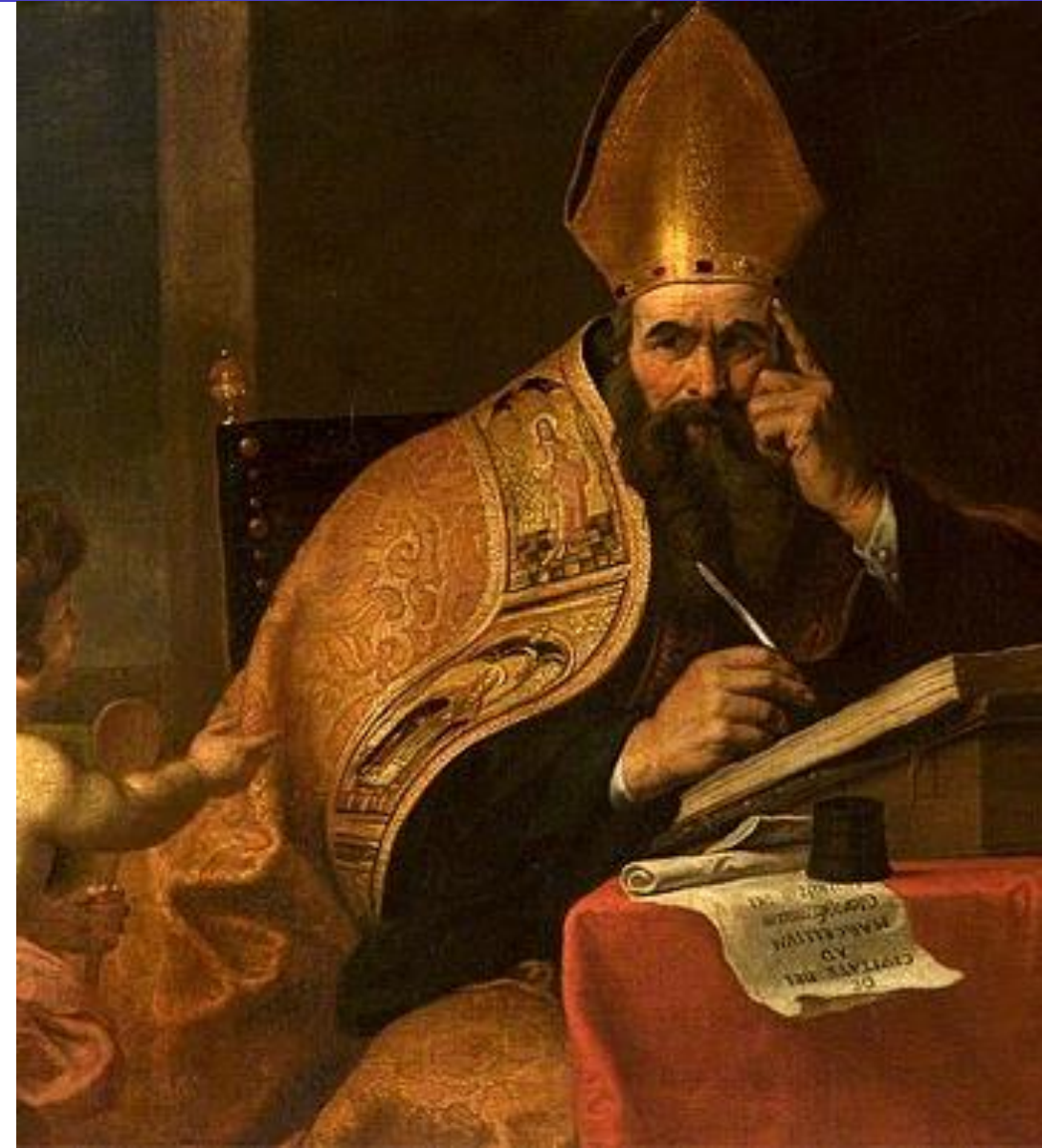


**What does this mean for  
us?**



## The Just War (Augustine AD 354-430)

- **Jesus' call to peace, love, and forgiveness**, including loving one's enemies (Matthew 5:44). **The responsibility of governments to protect innocent people and maintain justice.**





**The Just War (Aquinas AD 1225-1274)**

# **The Just Was Criteria**

Jus ad Bellum  
(Right to Go to War)

Jus in Bello (Right  
Conduct in War)

Jus ad Bellum  
(Right to Go  
to War)

# 1. Just Cause (defense against aggression)

- The primary reason for war must be to correct a grave, public wrong.
- Self defence against an armed attack or humanitarian intervention to protect oppressed innocents.
- The damage inflicted by the aggressor must be lasting grave-----
- Last resort
- Legitimate authority--The authority must be a public sovereign responsible for the protection and welfare of the community
- Comparative justice
- Probability of success
- Public function-- private wars

## 2. Right Intention

- The war must be waged to defend justice and restore peace, rather than for territorial gain, vengeance, or cruelty.

# 3. Probability of Success

- There must be serious, realistic prospects of success to prevent needless destruction and loss of life.
- Not about complete domination.
- Conflict will improve the state of affairs to neutralise the grave evil.
- All other peaceful means of putting an end the aggressor's harm have been shown to be impractical or ineffective.

# 4. Proportionality

- The overall destruction and evils from warfare must not outweigh the moral good achieved.
- Determining if it's right to go to war
- Determining how to fight once the war has started

Jus in Bello  
(Right  
Conduct in  
War)

# 1. Discrimination (protect civilians)

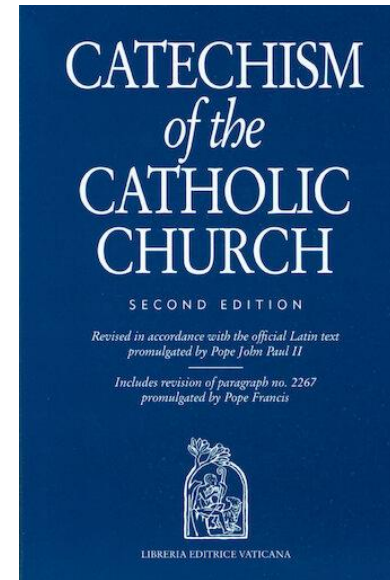
- **Discrimination (or distinction):** Combatants must distinguish between military targets and civilians. Civilians should not be intentionally targeted.
- **Proportionality:** The military advantage gained from an attack must outweigh the harm caused, especially to civilians and civilian property.

## 2. Proportionality (limit force)

- **Military necessity:** Force should only be used to achieve legitimate military objectives.
- **Humane treatment:** Prisoners of war, wounded soldiers, and civilians must be treated humanely.

# Catechism Reference

## Catechism of the Catholic Church (2307-2317)

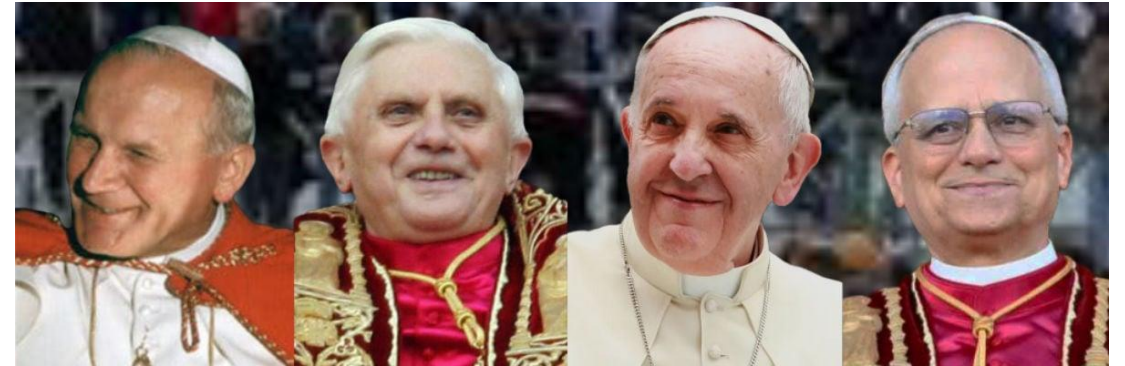


The image is a screenshot of a website interface for the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The background is a light beige color with a subtle paper texture. At the top left, there is a small logo of the Vatican. To its right are navigation arrows and a 'Help' button. The main title 'CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH' is centered in a serif font. Below the title, there is a link for 'Credits'. A small paragraph of text explains that the site is a hypertextualized version of the text with wordlists and concordances. Below this, there is a link for 'Table of Contents'. The main content area lists the structure of the catechism, starting with 'PROLOGUE' and 'PART ONE: THE PROFESSION OF FAITH'. Under 'PART ONE', it lists 'SECTION ONE "I BELIEVE" - "WE BELIEVE"', which includes 'CHAPTER ONE MAN'S CAPACITY FOR GOD' and 'CHAPTER TWO GOD COMES TO MEET MAN'. The list is formatted with bullet points and sub-bullets.

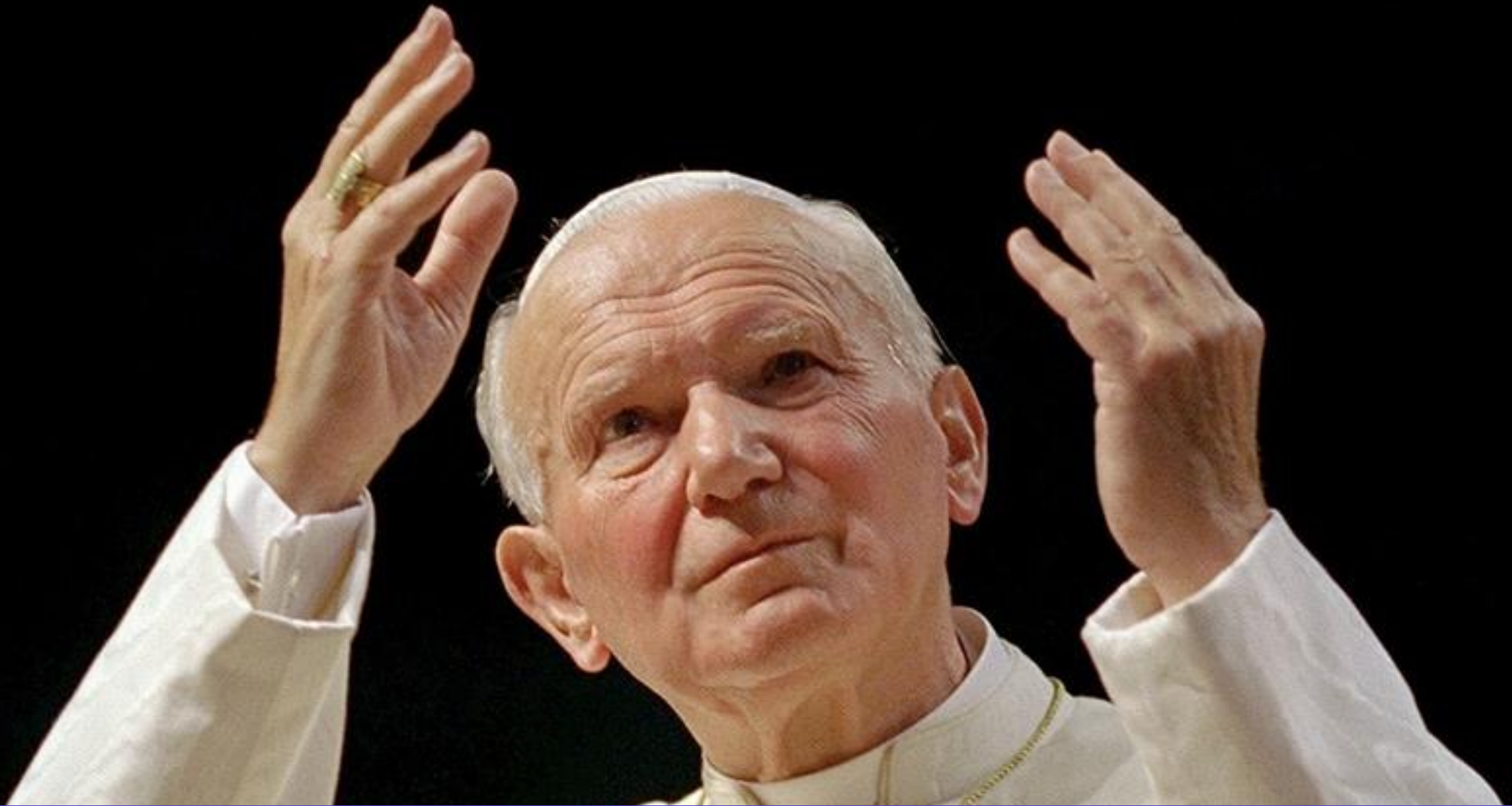
# Vatican II (*Gaudium et Spes*)

- *Gaudium et Spes* seeks to explain how the Church should engage with the modern world rather than withdraw from it. It addresses issues such as:
  - Human dignity
  - Marriage and family life
  - Culture and education
  - Economic and social justice
  - Politics and peace
  - War and international cooperation
  - The relationship between faith and modern society

# Recent and Current Popes



- John Paul II
- Benedict XVI
- Francis
- Leo XIV



**Pope John Paul II (1978-2005)**



**Benedict  
XVI  
(2005-  
2013)**



**Pope  
Francis  
(2013-  
2025)**



**Pope Leo XIV (2025-present)**




# Contemporary Issues

- Nuclear weapons
- Terrorism
- Cyber Warfare
- Chemical and Germ Warfare



# Nuclear weapons

- Mass murder
- Indiscriminate combatants versus civilians
- Disproportionality
  - The immense destruction outweighs any possible good

A close-up photograph of a book page. The text is in a serif font. The word "Terrorism" is highlighted with a bright pink marker. The surrounding text is slightly out of focus.

for what is  
to be best i  
point of vie  
**Terrorism**  
use of viol  
threats to  
political  
for what

# Terrorism

- Intrinsic evil
- blasphemy in the name of God
- sanctity of life
- just tries rather than builds up



# Cyber warfare

- Attacks on Critical Infrastructure
- Espionage
- Sabotage
- Disinformation and Psychological Warfare
- Difficulty of Attribution
- Civilian Impact



# Chemical and Germ Warfare

- Chemical weapons are inherently indiscriminate and inflict unnecessary, disproportionate suffering on both combatants and non combatants
- uncontrollable damage

# PEACE

— WE ALL HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY —



**CHOOSE KINDNESS**  
in your words  
and actions



**BUILD COMMUNITY**  
that uplifts  
everyone



**RESPECT NATURE**  
and protect  
our planet



**EMBRACE DIVERSITY**  
we are stronger  
together



**PRACTICE FORGIVENESS**  
and let go  
of hate



**BE A PEACEMAKER**  
wherever  
you go



*Small acts. Big impact.*

**TOGETHER, WE CAN CREATE A WORLD OF PEACE.**



# Sr. Dorothy Stang



# Case Studies



- Work in table groups
- Each table has a unique scenario
- Each table to select a spokesperson to share the struggles you faced and solutions you suggest.
- You have six minutes
- The Just War Doctrine and the CCC are on the tables

# What is mine to do?

- Role of Catholics:
  - Peacemaking
  - Advocacy
  - Prayer
  - Supporting veterans and victims



# Peacemaking

- healing divisions,
- forgiving others,
- building understanding, and
- promoting justice



# Advocacy

- Stay informed
- Encourage peaceful solutions



# Prayer

- Begins with each of us
  - Political leaders
  - Military leaders
  - Victims of war
  - Refugees, and
  - Our enemies



# Supporting veterans and victims

- Care for veterans,
- Support families who have been displaced, lost loved ones, livelihoods.



# Further Opportunities & Education

- LA Archdiocese Office of Life, Justice and Peace
- Pax Christi Peace Movement
- Education for Justice (Ignatian Solidarity Network)
- Maybe we want to create a support ministry here at Holy Family



# Personal Reflection

- Silent reflection then writing answers:
  - How am I called to be a peacemaker?
  - What shapes my views on war and peace?Write answers on the 3x5 cards and place them on prayer table
- Remain standing around the prayer table as we sing/pray our closing prayer

# Closing Prayer

## "Litany of Peace"

By: Barbara Bridge

MIDI Dem©: Chris Urrutia



**Thank you**

