

# A Pastoral Message: Living With Faith and Hope After September 11

*U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops*

*November 14, 2001*

Blessed are they who mourn,  
for they will be comforted....  
Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they will be satisfied.  
Blessed are the merciful,  
for they will be shown mercy....  
Blessed are the peacemakers,  
For they will be called children of God.  
Mt. 5:4,6,7,9

These words of Jesus challenge us and offer us hope today as our community of faith responds to the terrible events of September 11 and their aftermath. As Catholic Bishops, we offer words of consolation, criteria for moral discernment, and a call to action and solidarity in these troubling and challenging times.

After September 11, we are a wounded people. We share loss and pain, anger and fear, shock and determination in the face of these attacks on our nation and all humanity. We also honor the selflessness of firefighters, police, chaplains, and other brave individuals who gave their lives in the service of others. They are true heroes and heroines.

In these difficult days, our faith has lifted us up and sustained us. Our nation turned to God in prayer and in faith with a new intensity. This was evident on cell phones on hijacked airliners, on stairways in doomed towers, in cathedrals and parish churches, at ecumenical and interfaith services, in our homes and hearts. Our faith teaches us about good and evil, free will and responsibility. Jesus' life, teaching, death and resurrection show us the meaning of love and justice in a broken world. Sacred Scripture and traditional ethical principles define what it means to make peace. They provide moral guidance on how the world should respond justly to terrorism in order to reestablish peace and order.

The events of September 11 were unique in their scale, but they were not isolated. Sadly, our world is losing respect for human life. Those who committed these atrocities do not distinguish between ordinary civilians and military combatants, and there is the threat of possible terrorist use of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons in the future.

The dreadful deeds of September 11 cannot go unanswered. We continue to urge resolve, restraint and greater attention to the roots of terrorism to protect against further attacks and to advance the global common good. Our nation must continue to respond in many ways, including diplomacy, economic measures, effective intelligence, more focus on security at home, and the legitimate use of force.

In our response to attacks on innocent civilians, we must be sure that we do not violate the norms of civilian immunity and proportionality. We believe every life is precious whether a person works at the World Trade Center or lives in Afghanistan. The traditional moral norms governing the use of force still apply, even in the face of terrorism on this scale.

No grievance, no matter what the claim, can legitimate what happened on September 11. Without in any way excusing indefensible terrorist acts, we still need to address those conditions of poverty and injustice which are exploited by terrorists. A successful campaign against terrorism will require a combination of resolve to do what is necessary to see it through, restraint to ensure that we act justly, and a long term focus on broader issues

of justice and peace.

In these brief reflections, we seek to articulate traditional Catholic teaching as a guide for our people and nation, offering a moral framework, rather than a series of specific judgements on rapidly changing events. We believe our faith brings consolation, insight and hope in these challenging days.

## **Confronting Terrorism**

The war-like acts of September 11 were appalling attacks on our nation, our citizens and citizens of many other countries. The Holy Father rightly called these acts crimes against humanity. Terrorism is not a new problem, but this terrorist threat is unique because of its global dimensions and the sheer magnitude of the terror its authors are willing and able to unleash. It is also new for us because we have not experienced war-like acts of violence on our own soil for many decades.

### **The role of religion**

We are particularly troubled that some who engage in and support this new form of terror seek to justify it, in part, as a religious act. Regrettably, the terrorists' notion of a religious war is inadvertently reinforced by those who would attribute the extremism of a few to Islam as a whole or who suggest that religion, by its nature, is a source of conflict.

It is wrong to use religion as a cover for political, economic or ideological causes. It compounds the wrong when extremists of any religious tradition radically distort their professed faith in order to justify violence and hatred. Whatever the motivation, there can be no religious or moral justification for what happened on September 11. People of all faiths must be united in the conviction that terrorism in the name of religion profanes religion. The most effective counter to terrorist claims of religious justification comes from within the world's rich religious traditions and from the witness of so many people of faith who have been a powerful force for non-violent human liberation around the world.

A deeper appreciation of the role that religion plays in world affairs is needed, as is a deeper understanding of and engagement with Islam. The Catholic community is engaged in dialogue and common projects with Muslims at many levels and in many ways in this country and around the world. To cite just one example, in many countries Catholic Relief Services is involved in fruitful collaboration with Muslim organizations committed to peace, justice and human rights. More should be done at all levels to deepen and broaden this dialogue and common action.

### **The duty to preserve the common good, protect the innocent, and reestablish peace and order**

Our nation, in collaboration with other nations and organizations, has a moral right and a grave obligation to defend the common good against mass terrorism. The common good is threatened when innocent people are targeted by terrorists. Therefore, we support efforts of our nation and the international community to seek out and hold accountable, in accord with national and international law, those individuals, groups and governments which are responsible. How the common good is defended and peace is restored is a critical moral issue. While military action may be necessary, it is by no means sufficient to deal with this terrorist threat. From bolstering homeland security and ensuring greater transparency of the financial system to strengthening global cooperation against terrorism, a wide range of non-military measures must be pursued. Among these measures is a persistent effort to pursue negotiations that would work to protect the interests of both Afghanistan and the United States

Considerable sacrifice by all will be needed if this broad-based, long-term effort in defense

of the common good is to succeed. We must never lose sight, however, of the basic ideals of justice, freedom, fairness, and openness that are hallmarks of our society. We must not trade freedom for security. We must not allow ourselves to be captured by fear. Acts of ethnic and religious intolerance towards Arab-Americans, Muslims, or any other minorities must be repudiated. It is the glory of our nation that out of many, we are one.

As criminal and civil investigations proceed and essential security measures are strengthened, our government must continue to respect the basic rights of all persons and in a special way of immigrants and refugees. Care must be taken to avoid assigning collective guilt to all newcomers or undermine our history as a land of immigrants and a safe haven for the world's persecuted. The United States must not shrink from its global leadership role in offering protection to refugees who flee terror in their homelands. Proposals to ensure the security of our legal immigration system and refugee program must avoid harming immigrants and refugees who represent no security threat. Enforcement actions must not be indiscriminate in their application or based upon ethnic background, national origin, or religious affiliation. The suspension of refugee admissions is particularly inappropriate.

### **The use of military force**

As part of its broader effort to combat terrorism, our nation has undertaken military action in Afghanistan and may be considering intervention elsewhere. As we pray for our service men and women who are risking their lives and for all those in Afghanistan who are suffering, we also consider how the Church's long and rich tradition of ethical reflection on war and peace might help guide the momentous decisions being taken.

National leaders bear a heavy moral obligation to see that the full range of non-violent means is employed. We acknowledge, however, the right and duty of a nation and the international community to use military force if necessary to defend the common good by protecting the innocent against mass terrorism. Because of its terrible consequences, military force, even when justified and carefully executed, must always be undertaken with a sense of deep regret.

Every military response must be in accord with sound moral principles, notably such norms of the just war tradition as non-combatant immunity, proportionality, right intention and probability of success. [See [Appendix](#)]

Even if the cause is just, the grave moral obligation to respect the principles of non-combatant immunity and proportionality remains in force and must govern our nation's political and military decisions. Indiscriminate attacks on innocent people, whether by terrorists or in war, threaten the common good. The continuing priority must be to ensure that military force is directed at those who use terror and those who assist them, not at the Afghan people or Islam. We welcome the stated commitment to do everything possible to avoid civilian casualties, a commitment that must be sustained over the long-term. We must not only act justly but be perceived as acting justly if we are to succeed in winning popular support against terrorism.

In light of the Church's teaching that the use of arms must not produce disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated, the effect of military action on the Afghan people must be closely monitored on an ongoing basis. At the same time, there is a special need to maintain and fortify our efforts to do everything possible to address the long-standing humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, especially the risk of mass suffering and starvation this winter. This humanitarian effort should continue to be primarily in response to the overwhelming human need rather than in the service of military and political objectives. The United States and other nations have a moral responsibility to continue aid to Afghan refugees and displaced persons and to assist them in returning to their homes in safety where possible, or offer them other durable solutions.

We must do what we can to work with the United Nations and all interested parties to help

Afghans rebuild the political, economic, and cultural life of their country after this war is over. The actions of our nation and other nations must ensure a just war now and a just peace later.

Probability of success is particularly difficult to measure in dealing with an amorphous, global terrorist network. Therefore, special attention must be given to developing criteria for when it is appropriate to end military action in Afghanistan.

Policy makers and all citizens must struggle with serious moral questions and make informed judgments about how our nation can respond justly to a terrifying threat. While we have offered our own judgment about aspects of this question, we recognize that application of moral principles in this situation requires the exercise of the virtue of prudence. Some Christians profess a position of principled non-violence, which holds that non-military means are the only legitimate way to respond in this case. This is a valid Christian response. While respecting this position and maintaining a strong presumption against the use of force, the Church has sanctioned the use of the moral criteria for a just war to allow the use of force by legitimate authority in self-defense and as a last resort. Those who subscribe to the just war tradition can differ in their prudential judgments about its interpretation or its application.

True peacemaking can be a matter of policy only if it is first a matter of the heart. Without both courage and charity, justice cannot be won. In the absence of repentance and forgiveness, no peace can endure. We need to do more to share the Church's teaching on war and peace, and to foster Christian communities where peaceable virtues can take root and be nourished. We need to nurture among ourselves *faith and hope* to strengthen our spirits by placing our trust in God, rather than in ourselves; *courage and compassion* that move us to action; *humility and kindness* so that we can put the needs and interests of others ahead of our own; *patience and perseverance* to endure the long struggle for justice; and *civility and charity* so that we can treat others with respect and love.

## Pursuing Justice and Peace After September 11

September 11 made ever more clear that globalization is a reality requiring greater moral scrutiny. If the problems of Afghanistan or Central Asia seemed irrelevant to Americans before, that is no longer the case. Our nation, as a principal force for economic globalization, must do more to spread the benefits of globalization to all, especially the world's poorest. The injustice and instability in far away lands about which we know too little can have a direct impact on our own sense of peace and security. Maintaining a strong military is only one component of our national security. A much broader, long-term understanding of security is needed. In a world where one-fifth of the population survives on less than \$1 per day, where some twenty countries are involved in major armed conflict, and where poverty, corruption, and repressive regimes bring untold suffering to millions of people, we simply cannot remain indifferent. We should also recognize how the export of some negative aspects of our culture can help undermine other societies as well as our own.

Our nation must join with others in addressing policies and problems that provide fertile ground in which terrorism can thrive. Years ago, Pope Paul VI declared, "if you want peace, work for justice." This wisdom should not be misunderstood. No injustice legitimizes the horror we have experienced. But a more just world will be a more peaceful world. There will still be people of hate and violence, but they will have fewer allies, supporters and resources to commit their heinous acts.

Each situation must be addressed on its own merits. Stopping terrorism must be a priority but foreign policy cannot be wholly subsumed under this campaign. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the suffering of people in Iraq, the lack of participation in political life, the abuse

of human rights, endemic corruption, grinding poverty amidst plenty, and threats to local cultures are sources of deep resentment and hopelessness which terrorists seek to exploit for their own ends. Regardless of terrorists' claims, creative and constructive U.S. engagement, particularly with the Arab and Muslim worlds, in resolving these problems will help restore a peace based on justice. Given the prominence of our country, it is incumbent upon our citizens to pursue in whatever ways they can a more just international political, social and economic order. Reasonable persons may differ on the means to employ, but Catholics cannot remain neutral with respect to that goal. Moreover, the means chosen must be consistent with this goal, since unjust means cannot ultimately result in justice. We must work for the common good, measured not just in economic, political, or security terms, but also in terms of culture, basic human rights such as religious freedom, and all that is needed for a virtuous and spiritual life consistent with authentic human dignity. While our first responsibility is to the common good of our own society, we have an inescapable obligation to promote the global common good as well.

We highlight here a few specific aspects of the common good that deserve special attention. These are matters our bishops' conference has addressed before and in greater depth, but they take on added urgency at this time.

**The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.** This decades-old conflict must receive urgent attention from all parties, including the United States, to put an end to the violence and to return to comprehensive negotiations leading to a just and peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that respects human rights and international law. We support real security for Israel and the establishment of a viable state for Palestinians. We recognize that each side in this conflict has deep, long-standing and legitimate grievances that must be addressed if there is to be a just and lasting peace. Engagement by the U.S. government and the international community is necessary and must continue. This urgent engagement should respond respectfully to the legitimate claims of both parties and not acquiesce in unilateral actions which undermine prospects for a return to negotiations.

**Iraq.** The continuing massive suffering of the Iraqi people over the past decade is simply intolerable. As we have done in the past, we deplore the unconscionable policies which have led to the death, from disease and malnutrition, of hundreds of thousands of children. The leaders of the Iraqi regime bear a heavy responsibility for this suffering, not least because of their misuse of resources. They have a moral responsibility to comply with the reasonable international obligations, especially to end efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction. At the same time, the comprehensive economic sanctions, even as modified by the "oil-for-food" program, are causing horrendous suffering and must be brought to an end without delay. The goal is not to reward the Iraqi government, but to relieve a morally unacceptable situation where innocent civilians suffer for the actions of a regime over which they have no control.

**Sudan.** As the U.S. seeks Sudan's cooperation in the campaign on terrorism, our nation cannot ignore the systematic campaign of terror waged by the government in Khartoum against its own people, especially Christians and practitioners of African traditional religions. Stopping the war in Sudan and finding a peaceful settlement to this conflict is of urgent importance.

**The scandal of poverty.** Intolerable extremes of misery and a growing gulf between the "haves" and the "have-nots" characterize much of today's world, and breed hostility towards economic globalization. This hostility can be addressed, in part, by a comprehensive development agenda, including substantially increased foreign aid, more equitable trade, and continuing efforts to relieve the crushing burden of debt. We who have so much have a responsibility to the world's needy. We cannot remain last among donor countries in development aid. The United States contributes just one-tenth of one percent of its gross national product in official development assistance, as compared with the international development target of 0.7% of GNP, a target endorsed by our country many times.

Overcoming poverty in our own nation requires a continuing commitment as well. The needs of the jobless, hungry and homeless cannot be ignored or neglected. New spending in response to September 11 and a declining economy will place new pressures on international and domestic programs that serve poor and vulnerable families. The poor abroad and in our own country must not be asked to bear a disproportionate burden of the sacrifices that will have to be made.

**Human rights.** The necessity of maintaining an international coalition against terrorism must not lead our government to give less public attention to religious liberty and human rights violations around the world. As a nation committed to promoting human rights, we cannot compromise these priorities for temporary alliances that would overlook them.

**Weapons of mass destruction and the arms trade.** The world is apprehensive about the threat of terrorist attacks using weapons of mass destruction. It is a moral imperative that the U.S. government work to reverse the spread of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, pursue progressive nuclear disarmament, take concrete actions to reduce its own predominant role in the conventional arms trade, and work with other nations to do the same.

**Strengthening the UN and other international institutions.** Each of these problems will benefit from participation of the United Nations and other appropriate international institutions. The United States should play a constructive role in making the United Nations and other international institutions more effective, responsible and responsive. Our government's recent decision to pay its dues to the United Nations is a welcome step.

Having said all this, it is necessary to reiterate that no cause, no grievance can justify flying civilian aircrafts into office towers or infecting postal workers and public figures. Rectifying this injustice will demand prudent action to build a safer, more just and more peaceful world.

## Conclusion

It has been said many times that September 11 changed the world. That is true in many ways, but the essential tasks of our community of faith continue with a new urgency and focus. The weeks and months and years ahead will be:

**A time for prayer.** We pray for the victims and their families; for our president and national leaders; for police and fire fighters; postal, health care and relief workers; and for military men and women. We pray for an end to terror and violence. We also pray for the Afghan people and for our adversaries. We call on Catholics to join in a National Day of Prayer for Peace on January 1, 2002.

**A time for fasting.** As long as this struggle continues, we urge Catholics to fast one day a week. This fast is a sacrifice for justice, peace and for the protection of innocent human life.

**A time for teaching.** Many Catholics know the Church's teaching on war and peace. Many do not. This is a time to share our principles and values, to invite discussion and continuing dialogue within our Catholic community. Catholic universities and colleges, schools and parishes should seek opportunities to share the Sacred Scripture and Church teaching on human life, justice and peace more broadly and completely. In a special way we should seek to help our children feel secure and safe in these difficult days.

**A time for dialogue.** This is a time to engage in dialogue with Muslims, Jews, fellow Christians and other faith communities. We need to know more about and understand better other faiths, especially Islam. We also need to support our interfaith partners in

clearly repudiating terrorism and violence, whatever its source. (See [Joint Statement of Catholic Bishops and Muslim Leaders](#), September 14, 2001). As the Holy Father recently said, dialogue is essential for ensuring that "the name of the one God become increasingly what it is: a name for peace and a summons to peace." (Remarks to Pope John Paul II Cultural Center, November 6, 2001).

**A time for witness.** In our work and communities, we should live our values of mutual respect, human dignity and respect for life. We should seek security without embracing discrimination. We should use our voices to protect human life, to seek greater justice, and to pursue peace as participants in a powerful democracy.

**A time for service.** Catholic Charities throughout the United States is providing assistance to families, parishes, neighborhoods and communities directly affected by the attacks on September 11. Catholic hospitals in these cities are also in the forefront in caring for those injured in these attacks. Catholic Relief Services is providing critical aid to Afghan refugees and doing invaluable work throughout Central Asia and the Middle East. This is a time for generous and sacrificial giving.

American Catholic servicemen and women and their chaplains are likewise called conscientiously to fulfill their duty to defend the common good. To risk their own lives in this defense is a great service to our nation and an act of Christian virtue.

**A time for solidarity.** We are not the first to experience such horrors. We now understand better the daily lot of millions around the world who have long lived under the threat of violence and uncertainty and have refused to give in to fear or despair. As we stand in solidarity with the victims of the terrorist attacks and their families, we must also stand with those who are suffering in Afghanistan. We stand with all those whose lives are at risk and whose dignity is denied in this dangerous world.

**A time for hope.** Above all, we need to turn to God and to one another in hope. Hope assures us that, with God's grace, we will see our way through what now seems such a daunting challenge. For believers, hope is not a matter of optimism, but a source for strength and action in demanding times. For peacemakers, hope is the indispensable virtue. This hope, together with our response to the call to conversion, must be rooted in God's promise and nourished by prayer, penance, and acts of charity and solidarity.

Our nation and the Church are being tested in fundamental ways. Our nation has a right and duty to respond and must do so in right ways, seeking to defend the common good and build a more just and peaceful world. Our community of faith has the responsibility to live out in our time the challenges of Jesus in the Beatitudes – to comfort those who mourn, to seek justice, to become peacemakers. We face these tasks with faith and hope, asking God to protect and guide us as we seek to live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ in these days of trial.

## Appendix

The Church has a long tradition on moral reflection on war and peace. The following excerpts from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the U.S. Bishops' statement, *The Harvest of Justice Is Sown in Peace*, outline the elements of this teaching:

### Excerpts from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

#### III. Safeguarding Peace

##### *Peace*

2302

By recalling the commandment, "You shall not kill," 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. 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."

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."

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." Peace is the work of justice and the effect of charity.

2305

Earthly peace is the image and fruit of the peace of Christ, the messianic "Prince of Peace." By the blood of his Cross, "in his own person he killed the hostility," 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." He has declared: "Blessed are the peacemakers.

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.

#### *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.

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."

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.

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.

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."

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." 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.

### **Excerpts from The National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Harvest of Justice Is Sown in Peace (1993)***

2. *Just War: New Questions.* The just war tradition consists of a body of ethical reflection on the justifiable use of force. In the interest of overcoming injustice, reducing violence and preventing its expansion, the tradition aims at: (a) clarifying when force may be used; (b) limiting the resort to force; and c) restraining damage done by military forces during war. The just war tradition begins with a strong presumption against the use of force and then establishes the conditions when this presumption may be overridden for the sake of preserving the kind of peace which protects human dignity and human rights.

In a disordered world, where peaceful resolution of conflicts sometimes fails, the just war tradition provides an important moral framework for restraining and regulating the limited use of force by governments and international organizations. Since the just war tradition is often misunderstood or selectively applied, we summarize its major components, which are drawn from traditional Catholic teaching.

First, whether lethal force may be used is governed by the following criteria:

- o Just Cause: force may be used only to correct a grave, public evil, i.e., aggression or massive violation of the basic rights of whole populations;
- o Comparative Justice: while there may be rights and wrongs on all sides of a conflict, to override the presumption against the use of force the injustice suffered by one party must significantly outweigh that suffered by the other;
- o Legitimate Authority: only duly constituted public authorities may use deadly force or wage war;
- o Right Intention: force may be used only in a truly just cause and solely for that purpose;

- Probability of Success: arms may not be used in a futile cause or in a case where disproportionate measures are required to achieve success;
- Proportionality: the overall destruction expected from the use of force must be outweighed by the good to be achieved;
- Last Resort: force may be used only after all peaceful alternatives have been seriously tried and exhausted.

These criteria (*jus ad bellum*), taken as a whole, must be satisfied in order to override the strong presumption against the use of force.

Second, the just war tradition seeks also to curb the violence of war through restraint on armed combat between the contending parties by imposing the following moral standards (*jus in bello*) for the conduct of armed conflict:

- Noncombatant Immunity: civilians may not be the object of direct attack and military personnel must take due care to avoid and minimize indirect harm to civilians;
- Proportionality: in the conduct of hostilities, efforts must be made to attain military objectives with no more force than is militarily necessary and to avoid disproportionate collateral damage to civilian life and property;
- Right Intention: even in the midst of conflict, the aim of political and military leaders must be peace with justice, so that acts of vengeance and indiscriminate violence, whether by individuals, military units or governments, are forbidden.

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