John XXIII and Just Cause for Modern War

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Although other ages have seen a multitude of wars, in the twentieth century, we have developed a chilling efficiency for armed conflict which seems to rise in intensity with each passing year. Historically, Catholic thought on the moral justification for war has tended to accept the possibility that, in strictly defined circumstances, a state has the right to engage in warfare. Yet, in recent years, papal statements have tended to severely limit even the few circumstances which have traditionally been permitted for the moral use of warfare by the state. In particular, John XXIII is often cited as an example of this trend.

This article will explore the thought of John XXIII on the particular issue of his interpretation of the criterion of just cause. This particular element of the set of criteria which govern the prospective use of lethal force by the state against another state, *jus ad bellum*, is significant for any discussion of modern just war theory. This criterion judges the moral end of the use of lethal force by the state. Traditionally, three reasons have been advanced as just causes: *ad vindicandas offensiones* (to gain justice over a completed offense), *ad repetendas res* (to retake property which has been stolen) and *ad repellandas injurias* (to resist an armed attack which is in progress). The trend of modern just war theories have been toward excluding the first two reasons and giving grudging acceptance to the third.

John XXIII unlike his predecessor, Pius XII, was not explicit concerning the moral permissibility of self-defense. Evidence for his view must be inferred from statements concerning other aspects of war, peace and military service. Some modern commentators believe that John XXIII took more of a pacifist stance than Pius XII, concluding that war itself is no longer capable of remaining moral in its execution.[1] This conclusion is unwarranted by the evidence.

This article argues that John XXIII never clearly ruled out the possibility that all war is now, by its very nature, immoral. Admittedly, he expressed grave reservations about the use of war because of the inherent destructiveness of modern weapons, but this same reticence was found in Pius XII's addresses. John XXIII upheld the traditional acceptance of self-defense as a just cause. However, he also pointed repeatedly to the difficulty

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of waging a moral war in the modern world, both because the nations who go to war tend to see it as a matter of national policy, rather than of international justice, and because of the disproportionate harm which is caused by the technological advances in weaponry. In other words, he did not reject war as intrinsically immoral, but he did consistently question the morality of the motives and the means of modern warfare.

Part of the difficulty of understanding Pope John XXIII's teaching on war is that there are many sections of his pronouncements which, if not read in the context of the entire *corpus* of his papal statements, may be misinterpreted.[2] In order to appreciate John XXIII's view of war, his thoughts will be examined in two categories. First, texts which examine John XXIII's interpretation of the relationship between his views and that of previous popes will be explored. In this way, we can see that John XXIII said what he did in light of recent papal tradition, which has affirmed the right of self-defense. The second category of texts, in which his view of the function of the military is stated, will provide a means of assessing his perception of the morality of participating in war, as such. If, as some writers believe, John XXIII believed that all war is intrinsically immoral, it would seem likely that he would not approve of Christians being soldiers, or even being associated with the military. Finally, we will turn to the encyclical, *Pacem in terris*, because historically it is his last statement on the issue, and because it serves as an interesting focal point for seeing the development of papal thought on war and peace, from Pius XII to John XXIII.

I Pope John XXIII and Earlier Twentieth Century Popes

One could concede that there were a number of differences between John XXIII and his predecessors, as in for example, his open style as pope. Yet, in his social theology he is quite consistent with earlier twentieth century popes.[3] In regard to the particular consideration of warfare in the modern world, he draws much of his thought from Pius XII. In his papal pronouncements, he took great efforts to identify his similarity to other popes.

Let us turn, then, to a text which will show the perception which John XXIII had of his place in the papal tradition. Like Pius XI and Pius XII, John XXIII took the occasion of his first public address as pope to speak on the need for peace. In *Hac trepida hora*, given the day after his election, John XXIII addresses the Vatican diplomatic corps, asking them to concentrate on settling their disputes, rather than building more weapons.[4] He invokes St. Augustine's idea of *tranquilitas ordinis*. "There can be no outward peace," he said, "unless it reflects and is ruled by that interior peace without which the affairs of men shake, totter and fall. And only God's holy religion can foster, strengthen and maintain such a peace."[5]

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This pronouncement is concerned with the same interpretation of peace and the causes of war that Pius XI and Pius XII so consistently proclaimed. In many places, they, too invoked Augustine's traditional sense of *tranquilitas ordinis*, or interior peace.[6]

One could argue that framing the issue of social peace in terms of an interior spiritual disposition reflects a long held Catholic tradition, and that it is not something which is particular to the popes. This is a valid point. Yet, John XXIII specifically relates his use of *tranquilitas ordinis* to previous papal statements. He cites other popes, particularly Pius XII, as supporting his vision of a just peace.

John XXIII affirms this link in his first Christmas address, in 1958. He continues the tradition begun by Pius XII by speaking on the subject of peace on Christmas Eve. In this address, he recalls the themes of the nineteen Christmas addresses of Pius XII. Each one, he said, was a "masterpiece of theological, juridical, ascetical, political and social learning."[7] He sums up their message as unity and peace.[8] John XXIII then takes the theme of unity as being his mission as pope, placing himself in the tradition of Pius XII, and the four previous popes.

> Recalling the words of Our predecessors — from Leo XIII to Pius XII — through St. Pius X, Benedict XV, and Pius XI who extended from the Apostolic Chair the invitation to unity — permit Us (by which We mean, will you permit Us?) to say that We intend to pursue humbly, but fervently, Our duty urged upon Us by the words and example of Jesus, the Divine Good Shepherd....[9]

Clearly, John XXIII saw himself as part of a papal tradition which has attempted to articulate for the modern world a cohesive, consistent understanding of peace in light of some of the most destructive wars in human history.

Later in this address, Pope John explained that the true Christian called to bring about the unity which he mentioned above. However,

> there is nothing martial or violent in the attitudes of men of faith. It is necessary, however, to be watchful in the night that gathers; to take account of the deceits and to number, first, the enemies of God, and then to number ourselves and to take part in every defense of Christian principles, which are now and always the breastwork of true justice.[10]

The faithful should not be violent, but watchful. In this context, he meant that we should be cautious, and should not seek to harm another person. Christ's admonition to be as "wise as serpents and as innocent as doves," seems to ring loudly in this text. Christians do not seek evil, but neither can they ignore its existence.

Implicit in his use of the terms "martial" and "violent" is an emphasis

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on *immoral* force. I do not think that it is reasonable to assume that all force is proscribed by John XXIII. As evidence for this, we may look to Pius XII's 1946 Christmas Message, *Vi Fu Mai*, which John XXIII had cited approvingly in this address. There, Pius XII condemns aggressive wars as immoral because of their intent.[12] Precisely because they do not arise from a *tranquilitas ordinis*, they are wrong. Pius XII characterizes these wars as "violent," or as an unjust use of force. In the same way that traditional moral reflection has differentiated between killing and murder, so too, there is an implied difference between the moral use of force and violence. Were this not Pope John XXIII's assumption, it is difficult to believe that he would use the addresses of Pope Pius XII to support his own vision of peace.

What, then, may we infer from this address? First, it seems clear that John XXIII considers himself to be within the papal tradition. His specific references not only to Pius XII, but also to the popes before him, affirm a fundamental unity between his pontificate and that of his predecessors. He takes great pains to illustrate the consistency of his words with that of other popes. Secondly, his remarks concerning the defense of Christian principles argue for the understanding of charity toward those who are our enemies. We are to cultivate that quality of interior peace, of *tranquilitas ordinis*, whose public expression is the moral and the positive law. This theme is found repeatedly in the earlier papal statements of the twentieth century.

II The Function of the Military

We have further evidence of John XXIII's understanding of war through his statements on the role of soldiers. Early in his life, during World War I, Pope John was himself in the Italian army. Called up by the reserves on May 24, 1915, he was assigned to the medical corps as an orderly.[13] Within a year, however, he was promoted from sergeant to lieutenant, and began to serve as a chaplain, along with all the other priests who were in the armed forces.[14] He was personally affected by his experiences, saying that "I thank God that I served as a sergeant and army chaplain in the First World War. How much I learned about the human heart during this time, how much experience I gained, what grace I received."[15]

In several addresses he speaks about the role of the military chaplain and the contributions of soldiers. In one of his first addresses as pope, for example, John XXIII spoke to the British Commonwealth Imperial War Graves Commission, who were responsible for caring for the graves of those British soldiers who died in World War I. There, he spoke about the sacrifices which were made by the soldiers, and the example which they set for society.

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> It [the military chaplaincy] is a ministry at once priestly, human and fraternal, where in the midst of the combatants, the priest epitomizes the high moral and religious values for which those brave men do not hesitate to give up their lives.
>
> By undertaking through the maintenance of their graves the glorious memory of the 450,000 Commonwealth soldiers who rest in Italian earth, you serve not only the dead, but you keep alive, among the living, the memory of sacrifices willingly made by these men and the resolution to remain faithful to their example.[16]

John XXIII is saying that soldiers give up their lives in the service of what is good, what is moral. This does not mean that he is glorifying war, but that he can see a noble purpose in the military. The soldiers represent a selflessness which lies at the heart of Christian morality. The context indicates that he thinks highly of these men and of the ends which they served.

In *Nous accueillons*, Pope John spoke to the World Federation of Veterans about peace, saying that it was first of all an internal, spiritual condition, which can never be achieved through the external imposition of force. "No decision of an earthly power can make peace reign in the world," he said.[17] Military power, he implied, is good only when it is motivated by charity, by spiritual goals. Force alone is not sufficient to bring about peace, nor to validate war.

Finally, we may examine his remarks to the retired members of the Italian Association of Military Chaplains as further evidence of his positive perception of the military. He again speaks from his experiences as a soldier in World War I. The military life is for, young men, a "period of spiritual enrichment, to which are added the constructive accomplishments of military discipline, which develops character, forms wills, and trains them in sacrifice, self-control and obedience."[18] Peace is a longing of all, but especially for the soldier, who "trusts that he is laying the groundwork for the personal sacrifice which may, in many cases, reach the point of the supreme sacrifice of his life."[19] He then goes on to say that this longing for peace is the lesson all wars teach. We all want to be united, to be one with each other, and we sacrifice ourselves for that peace. In other words, the standard by which all wars are judged is whether they truly seek this peace, this unity. Peace is related to love and a concern for the other person.

In his first encyclical, *Ad Petri Cathedram*, this theme of unity is explicitly developed. Speaking of the unity of nations, John XXIII writes that

> Only if we desire peace, instead of war, as we should, and only if we aspire sincerely to fraternal harmony among nations, shall it come to pass that public affairs and public questions are correctly understood and settled to the satisfaction of all. Then shall international conferences seek

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> and reach decisions conducive to the longed-for unity of the whole human family. In the enjoyment of that unity, individual nations will see that their right to liberty is not subject to another's whims, but is fully secure. Those who oppress others and strip them of their due liberty can contribute nothing to the attainment of this unity. The mind of Our predecessor, Leo XIII, squares perfectly with this view: "Nothing is better suited than Christian virtue, and especially justice, to check covetousness, and envy, which are the chief causes of war."[20]

Later in the same encyclical, Pope John further explains that everything will be well if only the social teaching of the Catholic Church is applied to the world's problems.[21] Again citing Leo XIII, he states that charity, or love, is the root of unity. This love is "always ready to spend itself in the interests of others."[22] These two texts speak directly from the tradition of the Church concerning the morality of war. They are *prima facie* assumptions of the just war tradition, that force is only to be used charitably.

A further indication of John XXIII's intention can be gleaned from his use of military imagery when he speaks in a later section of the same text about the pursuit of peace. There he says that since peace is imperfect, it must always be active, and cannot be untroubled or serene. He states, then, that "peace is ever at war. It wars with every sort of error..."[23] If he were to condemn all force as immoral, particularly war, he would have chosen less specifically military characterizations for his understanding of peace.

Taken together, both his recollection of earlier papal statements and his remarks on military chaplains and soldiers point to some fundamental elements in Pope John's thought. First, there is a strong sense of continuity between what he has written on war and peace, and the writings of the earlier twentieth century popes. He clearly sees his addresses as the development of a tradition which is most clearly articulated by Pius XII. Secondly, he positively commends the work of both military chaplains and soldiers, so long as the purpose of their work is centered upon love, which has as its ultimate end unity. It is this goal of a unified community which is founded upon justice that gives moral purpose to their work. If this end was not sought selflessly, then he would not have approved. Yet, from his own experiences as a orderly and a chaplain in World War I, and his later work as a papal diplomat in World War II, he saw firsthand the sacrifices of those who served.

It is precisely when the cause is not just that John XXIII condemns the combatants. For example, on June 3rd, 1962, in *Votre joyeuse présence*, the Pope spoke about the civil war which was then raging in Algeria.[24] In clear terms, he criticizes the two sides:

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> Our anxiety is great at the sight of blood drenching the earth, wherever it may happen, and whether it is contrary to or according to the rules of armed conflict. But what can be said when it is a question of human victims being sacrificed in contempt of agreements that are being worked out or sought after, victims who are sacrificed at random, as an erroneous affirmation of rights? The divine command rings out form and grave: *Non occides*. Thou shalt not kill. It is a definite command, given by the author of life; a command established for the protection and defense of a right which is the same for all, and the transgression of which brings fatal consequences and disastrous repercussions in the area of international relations.[25]

Again, this text is not saying that all war is immoral, but that it sadly has some tragic consequences. Even if the conflict were to be fought according to the rules of the just war tradition, it is still a regrettable action. However, when one party flagrantly disregards basic standards of justice, clearly it is to be condemned.

The particular circumstance of the Algerian civil war was that it was characterized by acts of terrorism in the midst of mutually agreed upon truces and negotiations. If there were a side which was more to blame, it was the OAS, a European group which was angered by the French government's grant of independence to Algeria.[26] It was comprised of former French military officers and some civilians. The OAS engaged in many acts of terrorism against the provisional Moslem government. During the week of May 23–30, 1962, for example, it was responsible for the death of approximately 170 civilians through bombings, and random executions.[27] Its members turned to terrorist acts in order to disrupt the formal grant of Algerian independence, and to gain influence in the final agreement between France and Algeria.

John XXIII's citation of the fifth commandment of the Decalogue, "Thou shalt not kill," is meant to condemn the actions of the OAS. They were engaged in unjust killing, which was only selfish, and, ultimately, divisive. The OAS was not concerned with the will of the Moslem majority, but instead with their own interests. The Pope's congratulations to the nation of Algeria on the occasion of its formal independence from France a month later gives further evidence of his view of the OAS.[28] There, he commends the nation on their new freedom, and urges them toward "domestic tranquillity and individual security."[29] It is clear from the context that Pope John was passing moral judgment on the acts of terrorism rather than on war itself

III *Pacem in terris* and the Morality of War

Having laid out Pope John XXIII's vision of the morality of different motives for engaging in war, it is now appropriate to examine his most systematic statement on the morality of war, or to be more precise, his

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vision of what constitutes a just peace, *Pacem in terris*. This encyclical was written to proclaim a vision of a world which seeks peace and justice; not one which merely looks to war as a permanent condition of modern society. As Bishop Thomas Gumbleton has written: "He could have chosen to condemn, step by step, the build up of hatreds and weaknesses that make for war and that contribute to the confused and dangerous state of the world."[30] Instead he focused on the positive, the goals of peace.

Pacem in terris is structured in five parts: Order Between Persons; Relations between Individuals and the Authorities of a State; Relations between States; Relations of Persons and of Political Communities with the World Community; and Pastoral Exhortations. Pope John moves from a consideration of the natural law which is written in each human heart to a discussion of the effects of that law on national and international life. In other words, he speaks first of the internal peace which is within each person as a way of speaking about the conditions for a just society. Force alone is not sufficient to bind people together into a good society. The moral foundation of the community is found in the social nature of the individual person.[31]

The first part, which explores the order between individuals, discusses the relationship between rights and duties. By virtue of intelligence and free will, each human being has certain rights and duties which flow from his very nature, which makes them universal, inviolable, and inalienable.[32] Among these rights are a right to life, to worship God, to establish a family, to work, and to assemble. Particularly in the political order, each person has the right to juridical protection and to participation in the common good.

This protection of rights in the political sphere is a natural expectation of all persons, which comes from their nature. Quoting Pius XII, Pope John XXIII writes,

> That perpetual privilege proper to man, by which every individual has a claim to the protection of his rights, and by which there is assigned to each a definite and particular sphere of rights, immune from all arbitrary attacks, is the logical consequence of the order of justice willed by God.[33]

In Pius XII's original address, this protection of rights was explicitly tied to a justification for self-defense, and of the just use of force to safeguard others' rights within a political order which recognizes the dominion of God. It is precisely that theologically normed society, which recognizes the rights of each human being that correspondingly protects those rights. That is the community which has an understanding of personal rights, i.e., that they carry corresponding obligations: "for every fundamental human right draws its indestructible force from the natural law, which in granting it imposes a corresponding obligation."[34] Those who

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do not understand this balance will, in the end, self-destruct, since they "... build with one hand and destroy with the other."[35]

Everyone must recognize and protect rights, and must also realize that force will not be a sufficient foundation for itself, and therefore cannot be self-validating. Only by pursuing what is good for the human person, because of his nature, can we truly be good. We must seek the good out of love and freedom, or charity and free will, which are the primary characteristics of every human nature.[36]

Here, as in other addresses, Pope John XXIII does not explicitly discuss the morality of modern war, yet the principle which he sets out does give some guidelines for the use of force and what could be accounted as a just cause. Essentially, any use of force must be weighed against the obligations to safeguard the dignity of every human person, and against the obligations of the society to safeguard the rights of each individual. An immoral cause is self-centered, and does not respect the rights of the person who is being coerced. It is not loving, nor does it respect the freedom of the one who is coerced.

The second part of *Pacem in terris* is an exploration of the nature and the limits of the authority of the state. Essentially, Pope John XXIII claims that all authority is a gift from God which, like rights and duties, has its foundation in the natural law. Since the topic of legitimate authority will be discussed extensively in the next chapter, we will delay a full explanation of this part of *Pacem in terris* until then.

The third part of the encyclical is concerned with relations between states. Just as individuals are subjects of both rights and duties, so too is the state. As Pope John XXIII states, "For the same natural law, which governs relations between individual human beings, must also regulate the relations of political communities with one another."[37]

In view of this sense of rights and duties, John XXIII continues by saying that disagreements, which will inevitably occur, ought to be settled through dialogue and negotiation.[38] Neither arms, deceit or trickery, he thinks, is worthy of humanity.

The arms race is therefore to be condemned because it is finally an illusion of security and peace. Since peace arises out of the natural law, out of what is good for us, no amount of arms is a sufficient foundation for a truly just international society. Although John XXIII recognizes the good intentions of those who develop weapons, namely that everyone wishes to be preserved from war, he criticizes the idea that peace may be gained through them. Instead, it will be found in the mutual trust between nations.[39] Just as on a personal level human beings must develop that trust and goodwill, so should nations. What is good for the individual is also good for the society, since social principles finally arise out of the natural

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law which resides in each human being.

This finally leads us to a very controversial passage in *Pacem in terris*. In §126, 127, and 128, John XXIII explains the significance of this cooperation between nations:

> 126. Men are becoming more and more convinced that disputes which arise between States should not be resolved by recourse to arms, but rather by negotiation.
>
> 127. It is true that on historical grounds this conviction is based chiefly on the terrible destructive force of modern arms; and it is nourished by the horror aroused in the mind by the very thought of the cruel destruction and immense suffering which the use of those armaments would bring to the human family. ***For this reason, it is hardly possible to imagine that in the atomic era war could be used as an instrument of justice.*** (My emphasis)
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> 128. Nevertheless, unfortunately, the law of fear still reigns among peoples, and it forces them to spend fabulous sums for armaments; not for aggression, they affirm—and there is no reason for not believing them—but to dissuade others from aggression.[40]

The oft discussed line concerning the possibility of war being an instrument of justice in §127 has been translated in two different English versions, with some variations. The official Latin text reads:

> Quare aetate hac nostra, quae vi atomica gloriatur, alienum est a ratione, bellum iam aptum esse ad violata iura sarcienda.[40]

The two principal translations are those of the authorized Vatican version above, which originally was the only one available,[42] and that published in the journal, *The Pope Speaks*:

> Thus, in this age which boasts of its atomic power, it no longer makes sense to maintain that war is a fit instrument with which to repair the violation of justice.[43]

These texts suggest widely divergent views on the meaning which Pope John XXIII intended, and therefore, deserve a close scrutiny. The most sustained analysis of the difference between these two translations has been written by Paul Ramsey, in his book, *The Just War: Force and Political Responsibility*."[44] Ramsey offers a cogent examination of the implications of the two versions and how they diverge. Ramsey's conclusion is that the translation from *The Pope Speaks* is better than the Vatican version. I concur both with his reasons and his conclusion.

He suggests that the authorized Vatican translation is simply a sweeping assertion which is not justified by the official Latin text, or by political reality. He attempts to show how it would be irrational for Pope

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John XXIII to call for a complete disavowal of war.

The primary question between the two translations is whether John XXIII judged that war in the modern age could ever be considered moral. While, for example, Pope Pius XII condemned all war, he left open the possibility that a war of legitimate defense was permissible. If we accept the authorized Vatican translation, it would seem that Pope John closed this loophole because he thought that war itself is so intrinsically disordered that it could *never* be used morally, even for defense. Ramsey suggests that that possibility is politically, and morally, an untenable position. Moreover, it is not justified by the official Latin text of the encyclical from *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, but is only an inference which can be made from a loose translation.

If we examine the Latin words themselves, I think that Ramsey's point will be clear. The Latin phrase, "*bellum iam aptum esse violata jura sarcienda*,"is better translated as "[that] war is a fit instrument with which to repair the violation of justice," in the *Pope Speaks* version, rather than "[that] war could be used as an instrument of justice" in the Vatican version. One reason for the first translation is that the verb, *sarcienda*, which is a form of the Latin verb, *sarcio*, is correctly rendered as "repair," rather than "used."[45] The nuance is that the meaning of repairing a violation of justice implies that category of just cause, war which is employed to achieve justice for oneself, rather than a more general, and vague, meaning of war being used for a just cause. Moreover, the Vatican version deletes the adjective, *aptum*, meaning "suitable, appropriate, or proper." This changes the meaning of the phrase from a sense that proportionality might render that one use of war immoral, to the judgement that all war is now intrinsically immoral.

Another difference between the two texts is in the rendering of the phrase "*alienum est a ratione*." The Vatican text gives this as "it is hardly possible to imagine," while the other is "it no longer makes sense." The latter translation correctly indicates the historical legacy of the use of proportionality as a means of testing the morality of warfare. While one could, and did, historically accept the possibility that war could have been used either for achieving justice for oneself, or in support of the defense of another state, the latter statement indicates that in Pope John's judgement, it is no longer the case. The first translation does not indicate this sense. Again, it is too vague in its meaning.

The initial phrasing of this sentence in the Latin version also implies that it is because of our glorification of the power of the atom (*quae vi atomica gloriatur*) that war could no longer be used as an instrument to obtain justice. In other words, Pope John XXIII is saying that partly because of the destructiveness of atomic weapons, and also because we

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place our hope for peace in those weapons, we can not use war as a means with which we may achieve justice for ourselves. Again, war may not be used morally to settle disputes. This condemnation of war is also reflected in §126, when Pope John introduces the statement in §127 by saying that people are slowly realizing that war is not a way in which we ought to settle problems.

Ramsey correctly indicates that the Vatican translation simply pushes the Latin text too far. If the Pope's intention had been to completely exclude the possibility of self-defense as a moral option, it seems probable that he would have elaborated on this statement, indicating why he reached a conclusion which is different from every other pope before him. It would have been a conclusion to an argument, rather than an assertion of fact.

On the other hand, if we accept the translation of *The Pope Speaks*, we may see *Pacem in terris* as consistent with the thought of Pius XII, and the other popes before him. As Ramsey wrote,

> ... if [John Courtney] Murray is correct in saying that the latter [John XXIII], in obviously excepting defensive wars, meant to proscribe two of the three traditional reasons for recourse to war — *ad vindicandas offensiones* (to gain vindication against an offence)and *ad repetendas res* (to retake the thing) — but meant to leave standing the third: *ad repellandas injurias* (to repel injury, to resist an armed aggression). On this interpretation (which seems to be sustained by the official Latin text) John XXIII left open the possibility for repelling an injustice that is being perpetrated but is not yet accomplished.[47]

Given John XXIII's previous statements on war and the context of this encyclical, it seems clear that this passage in *Pacem in terris* is that he is condemning offensive war.

This, however, does not mean that in limited circumstances that war may not be used to protect a nation from an unjust aggressor. Recognizing the limitations of war in creating a just community is not the same as saying that it may not be effective as a means of preserving a social order, which, although imperfect, does attain some semblance of ideal justice.

John XXIII's intention was not to condemn a war of self-defense so much as it was to condemn the idea that aggressive war is an adequate means to achieve justice. His vision in *Pacem in terris* was to proclaim a consistent vision of what society ought to be. One can agree with his purpose without perceiving all war as intrinsically immoral in the modern age. Thus, although it is true that John XXIII does not explicitly argue for the right of a nation to defend itself, it does not necessarily follow that we can presume that he takes an opposite stand. I agree with Fr. J. Bryan Hehir that it is highly unusual for a pope to not clearly affirm the morality of self-defense.[48] Yet the absence of a statement on self-defense is not strong

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evidence that John XXIII is proposing pacifism.

The fourth section of this encyclical offers some reflections on the relationship between human beings and of political communities with the world community. Pope John writes that there must be a clear relationship between public authority and the common good. The nation should be established through consent and not by force. Furthermore, the principle of subsidiarity should guide the actions of individual nations in relation to the universal world community.

The final section of *Pacem in terris* is concerned with some pastoral reflections on the implementation of the vision of peace in the modern world. Here, John XXIII focuses on the importance of science, and its service to humanity. Social action ought to be tied to faith, and Catholics are urged to work with all people to build a truly just and peaceful society. This community will not be constructed immediately, but will grow little by little, through individual actions. Peace is finally, he writes, internal. It is within each us when we are correctly ordered to God and to each other.

IV Conclusion

Overall, Pope John XXIII's message in *Pacem in terris* is that peace will eventually be realized when we understand correctly the true nature of being human. "Its doctrinal lines," he said, " ... are derived from the most profound demands of human nature ..."[49] Peace arises out of the right ordering of ourselves to God and then to each other. It is not something which can be imposed externally, but rather it begins within us, in our very nature as creatures of God. A truly good society is thus founded upon human beings who recognize their own nature and who seek that type of community which will respect their humanity.

In John XXIII's own reflection on *Pacem in terris*, which he gave two days after its publication, he explicitly says that "The internal order which is upheld by good will secures a tranquil external order; otherwise this order is unstable since it is dependent on human prudence."[50] To think of imposing some authority which does not accord with the natural law is, then, an exercise in frustration. It tries to establish what can never be a moral society.

In terms of the relationship of war to this vision, it is fair to say that John XXIII, like Pius XII before him, is deeply saddened by the horror of modern warfare. Technological advances have made war in this century grotesquely effective, and the Pope had first hand experience of the carnage of World War I. His statements in *Pacem in terris*, especially §127, point to this.

At the same time, John XXIII does not rule out the possibility that some warfare, while always regrettable, might be moral. The one area

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which might be left open in the traditional categories of just cause is that of self-defense. He, like Pius XII, believes that modern society does not have a strong enough sense of justice to allow aggressive war to be moral. To paraphrase Pope John, it *is* difficult to understand how war can be just today. We as a society are troubled by increased violence and we understand that force does not create justice. Yet I do not think that *Pacem in terris* argues that war cannot maintain some order in an already just society. This simply pushes the text too far.

I understand *Pacem in terris*, as Fr. J. Bryan Hehir and Paul Ramsey do, in the context of the papal tradition.[51] Both within the thought of John XXIII, and the larger tradition of the twentieth century popes, it does not seem that sufficient evidence is present for arguing that Pope John advocated pacifism.

Certainly, his emphasis is on the positive actions both societies and individuals might take to foster peace. In that sense, John XXIII changes the focus just slightly from analyzing war to stressing the proper foundation for a just peace. Clearly, Pius XII, and the earlier Popes like Pius XI and Benedict XV, also stressed this order. However, John XXIII did it much more systematically, eliminating a tendency to speak only about the outbreak of hostilities, rather than carefully pulling together a Catholic vision of peace.[52] Certainly, Pius XII and his vision of the nature of humanity serve as the foundation for this social view, as a reader may sense from the repeated references to Pius XII in this encyclical.

Pacem in terris is Pope John XXIII's most intricate statement on the development of a just society. His entire contribution to the papal just war tradition can be summarized as an emphasis on the understanding of what it means to be human in society. War is often, perhaps mostly, an immoral response in the modern world, according to John XXIII, because it fails to respect the dignity of the human person. It destroys rather than builds up. It divides and conquers, rather than unites.

With that in mind, however, it is still true that war may be the only moral means to preserve a society which is under attack from another nation. War is not sought for its own sake, or for gain, but for the preservation of what is good. Further, this task of safeguarding society is not only to be thought of in terms of maintaining what is good, but of also constructing what is better.

1 See for example, James Douglass, *The Nonviolent Cross: A Theology of Revolution and Peace*, (New York: Macmillan, 1966) 81-99, especially 86-87; Jenny Teichman, *Pacifism and the Just War*, (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackman, 1986) 15.

2 One of these is a statement in his last encyclical, *Pacem in terris*, questioning whether war is any longer an instrument of justice. The controversial passage

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is §127. The interpretation of this part of *Pacem in terris* will be discussed in detail later in this article.

3 Donal Dorr supports this interpretation of John XXIII. In his book, *Option for the Poor. A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983) 87, he writes that his social theology was"... by no means a radical one, nor did it represent any major departure from the direction set by earlier popes, especially Pius XII."

4 John XXIII, Radio Address, *Hac trepida hora*, 29 October 1958, English translation in *The Pope Speaks* 5 (1958–59) 135–38, originally published in *AAS* 50 (1958) 839–41.

5 Ibid., 137.

6 See for example, Pius XI, Encyclical, *Urbi Arcano Dei Consilio*, 23 December 1922, AAS 14 (1922) 673–700, especially § 8–15; Encyclical, *Quas Primas*, 11 December 1925, AAS 17 (1925) 593–610, especially § 20; Encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno*, 15 May 1931, AAS 23 (1931) 177–228, especially § 137–38; Pius XII, Homily, *Quoniam Paschalia Solemnia*, 9 April 1939, *AAS* 31 (1939) 145–51; Encyclical *Summi Pontificatus* 20 October 1939, AAS 31 (1939) 413–53, especially §81.

7 John XXIII, Address, *Signor Cardinale*, 23 December 1958, English translation in *The Catholic Mind* 57 (March/April 1959) 165, originally published in *AAS* 51 (1959) 5–12.

8 Ibid., 166–67.

9 Ibid., 168.

10 Ibid 170. The original Italian text of the first line reads, "Niente di militare o di violento nei nostro atteggiamenti si uomini si fede."

11 Matt. 10: 16.

12 Pius XII, Address, *Vi fu mai*, 24 December 1946, Official English translation, (Washington, D.C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1947), 6. Latin text published in *AAS* 39 (1947) 7–17. The text in question reads: "No doubt, such a disastrous war, unleashed by unlawful aggression and continued beyond lawful limits when it was clear that it was irreparably lost, could not be terminated simply in a peace which did not include guarantees that similar acts of violence would not be repeated."

13 Lawrence Elliott, *I Will Be Called John. A Biography of Pope John XXIII*, (New York: Berkley Medallion Books, 1974), 67–69.

14 Ibid., 70.

15 Ibid., 73.

16 John XXIII, Address, *La mission*, 26 November 1958, English translation in *The Pope Speaks* 5 (1959) 168, originally published in *Discorsi* (John XXIII) 1:48–49.

17 John XXIII, Address, *Nous accueillions*, 11 April 1959, English translation in The Pope Speaks 5 (1959) 430, originally published in *AAS* 51 (1959) 303–04.

18 John XXIII, Address, *Vi esprimiami anzitutto*, English translation in *The Pope Speaks* 6 (1960) 48, originally published in *AAS* 51 (1959) 470–73.

19 Ibid., 49.

20 John XXIII, Encyclical, *Ad Petri Cathedram*, English translation in *The Papal Encyclicals* 5:8, originally published in *AAS* 51 (1959) 497–531. The citation of Pope Leo XXIII is taken from his letter, *Praeclara gratulationas* in *Acta*

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Leonis 14 (1894) 210.

21 Ibid., 10.

22 Ibid., 10. The text of Leo XXIII which he cites is his Letter, *Inter graves* in *Acta Leonis* 11 (1891) 143–44.

23 Ibid., 13. The original Latin text reads: " ... pax est operata, non otiosa, non iners; ac praesertim pax militans est adversus omnes errores ... " [*AAS* 51 (1959) 517].

24 John XXIII, Address, *Votre joyeuse présence*, 3 June 1962, English translation in *The Pope Speaks* 8 (1961–62) 143–45, originally published in *AAS* 54 (1962) 447–48. Although the Pope does not explicitly mention Algeria by name, *Facts on File*, Vol. XXII, no. 1127 (May 31–June 6, 1962) 178 reported that Vatican officials said that the Pope's statement was directed at Algeria.

25 Ibid., 144.

26 The article from *Facts on File*, which I cited above in fn. 24, identifies the OAS as the "European Rightist Secret Army Organization."

27 *Facts on File*, Vol. XXII, no. 1127 (May 31–June 6, 1962) 178. This reference is different from that cited in fn. 24.

28 John XXIII, Radio Address, *Le Seigneur écoute*, 1 July 1962, English translation in *N.C.W C. News Service* (10 July 1962), originally published in *AAS* 54 (1962) 524–25 (Dated on July 5th there).

29 Ibid

30 Thomas Gumbleton, "The Role of the Peacemaker," in *War or Peace? The Search for New Answers*, edited by Thomas A. Shannon (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1982) 220.

31 John XXIII, Encyclical, *Pacem in terris*, 11 April 1963, English translation in *Seven Great Encyclicals*, edited by William J. Gibbons, S.J., (Glen Rock, NJ: Paulist Press, 1963) 287–326. On the relationship between the natural law and the community, see §4–7.

32 Ibid., 291; §9.

33 Ibid., 294; §27. He is citing Pius XII, Radio Address, *Con sempre nuova freschezza*, 24 December 1942, *AAS* 35 (1943) 9–24.

34 Ibid., 295; §30.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid., 296, 297; §34, 37, 38.

37 Ibid., 307; §80.

38 Ibid., 309; §93.

39 Ibid., 313; §113.

40 Ibid., 315; §126–128.

41 John XXIII, Encyclical, *Pacem in terris*, 11 April 1963, *AAS* 55 (1963) 291.

42 A variation of the Vatican translation is found in Joseph Gremillion, ed., *The Gospel of Peace and Justice: Catholic Social Teaching Since Pope John*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1976) 227. Gremillion notes on p. 201–02 that the translation is by Donald R. Campion, S.J., (New York: America Press, 1963). I assume he is speaking about a pamphlet of *Pacem in terris*, although it is unclear from the note. Gremillion cites Campion as saying that the text is "substantially that released by the Vatican Press Office on April 10, 1963." Campion's text reads: "And for this reason it is hardly possible to imagine that in the atomic era war could be used as an instrument of justice."

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43 John XXIII, Encyclical, *Pacem in terris*, 13 April 1963, English translation in *The Pope Speaks* 9 (1963–64) 13–48. This text is reproduced in Michael Walsh and Brian Davies, eds., *Proclaiming Justice & Peace: Documents from John XXIII – John Paul II*, (Mystic, CT: Twenty-third Publications, 1984) 67, although Walsh and Davies cite the source of their translation as *Our Sunday Visitor*. There are a number of other texts which follow the spirit of this translation, but which replace the phrase "it no longer makes sense" with "it is irrational." These include Walter M. Abbott, S.J., ed., *The Documents of Vatican II*, translated by Rev. Msgr. Joseph Gallagher, (New York: Guild Press and American Press, 1966) 293–94; Austin Flannery, OP., *Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents,* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988) 989; and David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, eds., *Renewing the Earth: Catholic Documents on Peace, Justice and Liberation*, (New York: Doubleday, 1977) 154. Gallagher's text reads: "Therefore in this age of ours which prides itself on its atomic power it is irrational to believe that war is still an apt means of vindicating violated rights." Flannery's text is: "Therefore, in this age of ours, which prides itself on its atomic power, it is irrational to think that war is a proper way to obtain justice for violated rights." The O'Brien/Shannon text reads: "Therefore, in an age such as ours which prides itself on its atomic energy it is contrary to reason to hold that war is now a suitable way to restore rights which have been violated."

44 Paul Ramsey, *The Just War: Force and Political Responsibility* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), especially 78–79; 180–210.

45 Traupman, *The New College Latin & English Dictionary* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1988) 278.

46 Ibid., 19.

47 Ramsey, *The Just War*, 204.

48 J. Bryan Hehir, "The Just-War Ethic and Catholic Theology: Dynamics of Change and Continuity," in *War or Peace? The Search for New Answers*, 15–39, edited by Thomas A. Shannon (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1982) 20. Hehir notes that the encyclical is alone in contemporary papal teaching in providing "no explicit endorsement of the right of self-defense."

49 John XXIII, Address, *La Lettera Enciclica*, 11 April 1963, English translation in *The Pope Speaks* 9 (1963–64) 73, originally published in *AAS* 55 (1963) 392–95.

50 John XXIII, Address, *Pax vobis pace*, 13 April 1963, English translation in *Catholic Messenger* 81(25 April 1963) 9, originally published in *AAS* 55 (1963) 379–404.

51 So also, I might add, did John XXIII. He stated in his address, *Pax vobis. pace*, 9, that "this new document (*Pacem in terris*), which is linked with *Mater et Magistra*, on the subject of peace epitomizes the teachings of our predecessors from Leo XXIII to Pius XII."

52 John XXIII's remarks on his acceptance of the Balzan Peace Prize are further evidence of this emphasis. See his address, *Le siamo prati*, 11 May 1963. English translation in *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 100 (October 1963) 266–67, originally published in AAS 55 (1963) 455–58.

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