

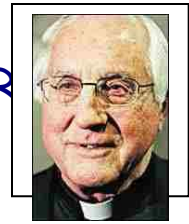


THE BISHOPS' PEACE PASTORAL LETTER

25TH Anniversary

Servant Church of St. Alexander
Farmington Hills, MI

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THE PEACE PASTORAL

BISHOP TOM GUMBLETON

I'm very pleased at all the people that are here tonight. It's great to see so many to celebrate this document, "The Challenge of Peace: God's Call and Our Response."

It's very special that we're doing this tonight because, maybe some of you are aware, today is a new feast day in the Church. It's the feast of Blessed Franz Jagerstatter. He was declared Blessed, by Pope Benedict just this past October 26, 2007. His feast day is today, the day of his Baptism in 1913, which was the day after he was born – they did it really quick, back then in Austria. Those who know of him remember him as one who said "absolutely no" to Hitler's war. He refused to serve in Hitler's army. That was considered treason according to the Nazi ideology and the policy of the Germany government at the time. He was executed, beheaded, on August 9, 1943. Now, Benedict has declared him among the Blessed. I think that's especially significant because Franz said "No" to Hitler's army and Joseph Ratzinger said "Yes." He served in Hitler's youth and also in Hitler's army. So now the Pope is saying Franz was right, I was wrong. I think that's very courageous on the part of Pope Benedict, but it's also a very important lesson for all of us. Sometimes we have to say "No" to the public policy of our country; he did, and suffered terrible consequences because of it.

I thought tonight, in speaking about this Pastoral Letter twenty-five years later, first it might be helpful to share a little bit of the history about how this letter came about, the process, some highlights on the letter, points that are especially important, and then talk about the fact that, I think we've failed the challenge that was given to us. It's called, "The Challenge of Peace," and as the Church in the United States, we really have failed to meet that challenge. I hope I can inspire us to be here tonight determined to do better at meeting the challenge in the near future.

History of the Pastoral Letter

First of all, a little bit about the history. This Pastoral Letter would not even be able to be written today by the Conference of Catholic Bishops because of the changes that have taken place in our church in the United States and the Catholic Bishops Conference. This document evolved out of what we call in the jargon of the bishops, a *barium*, that was presented at the meeting of the bishops in November of 1980. A *barium* means a deviation, or going apart from the norm. For the bishops' agenda, which is set by the administrative board, it was always possible for any bishop who wasn't on the administrative board and did not participate in setting the agenda, to bring into a meeting a *barium*. It would be discussed during the meeting and either accepted for the agenda, or, at least, if it wasn't accepted immediately, then it would be handed over to a committee to be dealt with by the committee.

Bishop Frank Murphy, who was the auxiliary bishop in Baltimore, had developed a *barium* for the meeting of 1980 about the terrible threat of nuclear war – and I think everybody in this room probably was a young adult in 1980. So you remember that was the time when the arms race was escalating tremendously. It was the time when we developed the movement for a nuclear freeze that became a very popular movement. It spread across our country very rapidly. It was a time of great concern about these weapons. So Frank brought this in, and there were about six of us that signed it. This is what is different about the bishops' conference now. We don't allow *bariums* to come into our meetings any longer. You can't do anything spontaneous. We can't do anything that would relate to the concerns that are going on in the world around us when we're meeting there in Washington; and we're supposed to be the moral leaders of the Catholic Church. But he and Archbishop John Roach, who was the president of the Conference at the time allowed for a discussion. The discussion went on for a couple of hours, actually, which when you think about it, that is quite unusual, because there was a full agenda for the meeting.

But this seemed to be so important, and the situation was something that was so immediate, that John Roach said we have to talk about it right now. The discussion went on for two or three hours. I hope

this isn't a violation of modesty about myself, but at one point in that discussion, I was one of the six signers, I got up to speak about the barium and the need for the bishops to deal with this issue. Now this would never happen, after I spoke, a few people started to clap, and the applause went on across the room. Because at that point in the Bishops' Conference, I had come to be known, sort of, as a *peace bishop*. At this point, not only could I not get a barium onto the meeting, I would not be applauded if I showed up to speak. But be that as it may, there was a time when bishops dealt with the immediate issues, and they were willing to discuss some of the hard questions that needed to be discussed. What Archbishop Roach did with the barium, after we discussed it and there was very clearly a consensus, this was an issue we had to deal with, he agreed that we would deal with the issue by trying to give pastoral guidance. Write a pastoral letter that would be promulgated through the Church in the United States, and help people to form their consciences in the light of Catholic teaching. Then he set up a committee of five bishops. Archbishop Bernadine was the chair of the committee, John O'Connor, who was the bishop of the *Military Ordinaria*, which means the diocese for all U. S. military personnel throughout the world, I was put on the committee, and two other bishops: George Fulcher from Columbus, Ohio and Dan Reilly. There were five of us. We were authorized to begin to work on developing this pastoral letter.

A second thing that would not be repeated today was the process that we used. I think it was a very good process, because we did not simply assign bishops to go apart somewhere and develop a pastoral letter giving guidance to the Church in the United States. We set up a number of meetings where we met, and we had two or three staff people that would help do the actual taking of notes of the discussion and formulating a draft of a document. We developed a long process. We took the time to begin to meet with officials of our government.

In 1980, you may remember, Ronald Reagan was elected as President of the United States; and the Reagan administration came into office in January 1981. We began to meet with the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the head of the Arms Control Agency, people in every part of the government who had had any participation in formulating military policy concerning the use of nuclear weapons or concerning war in general. This took us a lot of time, but I must say, we never did meet with President Reagan; but we had written to him, and he said, "Anyone in my administration will be available to you," and they were. We met with people regularly throughout the next ten or twelve months or so, and the meetings were generally very helpful. Our purpose, of course, was to make sure that we truly understood what our policy was. We were going to be making moral judgment about that policy and we were going to promulgate as a teaching for the Church in the United States. So we did take the time to meet with the heads of the various agencies and government offices, and so on.

Another part of the process that doesn't happen any longer when we do pastoral letters, we formulated a draft of that letter. The draft then was circulated throughout the United States. Pax Christi was very active in doing this. We had Pax Christi chapters all across the whole country. We made sure in Pax Christi that people got the copy of the draft. We invited people in the Church to respond, to give us their thoughts, and we took it very seriously. We got hundreds and hundreds of people who did write. I remember going to one meeting where we were trying to redo the draft. I had a stack of papers about that high that I had to try to read through. We took it seriously. I read those letters, and the other bishops on the committee did too, and so we got feedback from people. Then we formulated a second draft of the letter, and that draft again circulated throughout the whole country. By the time we finished, I'm sure there were thousands of people who had looked at the drafts and who had responded and given us their ideas. This helped to prepare a climate too for the acceptance of the letter; because the more people who are involved in it, the more people who are going to take it seriously when it's promulgated. The same thing was true of all the bishops. This was a letter that was discussed after each draft by the whole conference of bishops. All of them participated in it and took some ownership for it. And again, this made for a much better document than we would have had otherwise.

Finally, there was a third draft, that draft was the final one, and was the one that was discussed at a general meeting of the bishops, a special meeting called just for this purpose. It was on May 3, 1983. It took us two and one half years to do the document. On May 3, 1983, we met in Chicago at a meeting that was planned for two days just to deal with this letter. It was the only thing on the agenda and by that time it had attracted an enormous amount of attention. The ballroom, where we met, in a hotel in Chicago was packed with media people. They were here from all over the world: many, many different countries from Europe, Japan, Asia. The media came to listen in on the discussion. Everything was done out in the open and during that meeting the draft could be amended. We weren't going to write a fourth draft, but bishops could turn in amendments. Those amendments then were discussed, one by one, until we got through all

of them, and either accepted them or rejected them. Those that were accepted, the writing committee had to sit down and try to rework the letter to put in. It was only after all of that kind of process that we published the letter and promulgated it for the Church in the United States.

There was one other intervention into the letter that surprised us at first, but we had to accept it. After our second draft, we heard from the Congregation for the Defense of the Faith in Rome. They wanted to see what we were writing. There was some concern on the part of Roman Curial officials. It was said no conference of bishops should try to teach something that would affect beyond their nation, affect the world. Certainly issues like this, there were other countries that had nuclear weapons, and they didn't want us writing a letter that would be in contradiction to what maybe the bishops of England would write, or the bishops of France would write, and that makes some sense. We had to send it to Rome, and they made just a couple of slight modifications. The main modification was in the part of the document on nuclear deterrence. I'll explain that when I get into talking about the letter itself. That was one change that came back from Rome, and we discussed it, and had to somehow work it into our letter, which we did.

After the final re-write with the amendments worked into it, the letter began to be sent out. It was in a booklet like this, about 85 or 90 pages. It was received with great acclaim, actually because many people were looking for guidance on what to do about the nuclear threat. It was used in colleges and universities as the teaching material. It was used in high schools. One of the things we suggested in the letter was that it would be used in Catholic education programs at every level. And so it began to be used, and government officials looked at it, and began to take it seriously. In that sense the letter did what it was intended to do. It became a teaching document to give guidance to people within the Church.

As we say in the document, we're not trying to impose our conclusions on anyone. We made some distinctions. There are some basic Catholic teachings that are included in the letter. They are traditional teachings that the Catholic Church accepts. But, if we made moral judgments about how you apply that teaching to the particular situation of using nuclear weapons, or regard war itself, then we indicated that what we're saying is our most serious judgment. This is what we've come to determine after long discussion, looking at Scripture, looking at the Catholic teaching, looking at the situation and making a judgment. We hoped that people throughout our country would do the same thing. Obviously, we hoped they would accept our judgments and follow them. For the most part, it was very well received, a very positive response. It's sad, I think, that subsequent to this letter, we have only tried twice to develop another pastoral letter that would be done with such widespread consultation.

Other Pastoral Letters

In 1986, we did another pastoral letter on the U. S. economy, you may remember. It too was done with the same kind of process. People from around the country were asked to comment on the various drafts that the committee proposed. Then we tried a third time and that was the Women's Pastoral and this has a very sad history. You know the bishops tried. Joe Imesch, who was from Detroit at the time, was actually the chair of the committee. By that time he was the bishop of Joliet in Illinois. He was the chair of the committee and they developed a document based on consultations that they had had throughout the country. They asked groups of women to come together to express their experiences of the Church, express their hopes for the Church as far as the role of women is concerned. They took that material and put it together into a document. It was well received by women, that first draft, but not well received by the bishops. So, they did the second draft. This draft was not well received by women, because we went back to the old ways of patriarchy in the Church, and so on. They were going to try a third draft; but it never happened. They just couldn't get a document together that the bishops would accept. We voted on the second draft, and it was so bad that it went down. And so we never did develop a pastoral on women.

Since that time there has been no effort to develop teaching documents that came from listening and then speaking. In fact, this past year, which I think is a disaster, the bishops published an update on a document that we had published in 1994, the document, "Always our Children;". There were a number of bishops who were not happy. This is the document that deals with the question of one's homosexuality. A number of bishops were not happy with that document, and over a period of time, demanded we do something different. Well, they did. They wrote a new document this year. And, if you can believe it, the chair of the committee got up to talk about what they were presenting for the bishops consideration and said, "You don't have to worry about this document, it is the teaching of the Church. We did not consult with one person. This is written by the bishops, and that's the teaching." Now, I think, that's a real setback for our Church. Sad that bishops would now think you could write a document on any subject without consulting the Church. Omitting what is called theologically, *sensus fidelium*, that is, what is the common

thinking, the consensus of thinking in the whole Church, not just the bishops. And so, that's why I say this document would never see the light of day if we were trying to do it at this point.

Explanation of the Peace Pastoral Letter

In the document, we do an introductory part in which we talk about Scripture and the whole teaching about peace in scripture. We then talk about the tradition of the Church. We develop a teaching concerning the theology of war. We indicate there are two theologies within the Roman Catholic Tradition: one is the theology of *just war* and the other is the theology of *non-violence*. In other words, total rejection of war or total rejection of violence.

There was a struggle within the committee to come together on this. Cardinal O'Connor was the head of the Military Ordinaria and wanted a real strong teaching about justifying war; and of course, I'm from Pax Christi, and we're promoting non-violence as ardently as we can. The two of us are at sort of opposite poles. In fact, at the May 3rd meeting in 1983, Cardinal Bernardine, everybody was aware that there was tension among us, said, "Well, almost every vote we had on the committee was unanimous. Except once in a while there'd be a four to one vote." There would be four on one side, and O'Connor on the other, or four on one side, and I would be on the other. But that only happened once or twice, most of the time we worked it through until we got consensus.

I think the part about just war is very well done. It makes it clear that just war is not just an easy excuse to just go to war. We point out that the whole theology, when it began in the fourth century under the teachings of St. Augustine, was actually a theology trying to prevent war. It was a period when the Roman Empire was in the middle of breaking up. There were large immigrations of people coming through Europe. It was a time of great violence and wars were breaking out constantly. So Augustine, a bishop in Hippo, North Africa, where a lot of the violence was happening, wrote teachings about wars. He was trying to prevent it from happening. If it did happen, it would be waged under only very rigid conditions. That's what was brought out in this document. If people were really following the teaching on just war, you would find, I would say, no war could be justified. If the teachings are really accepted rigidly in the modern era, no war would be justified.

For the first time, as far as I know, in a Catholic teaching document presented by the bishops for a whole nation, we had this spelled out in some detail. An elaboration of the theology of active love or non-violence, based on the reality that Jesus rejected violence for any reason whatsoever; and so, if we're going to be disciples of Jesus, we have to follow him. This is spelled out.

One of the things I like about the letter is that we point out that the just war teaching and the teaching about non-violence are distinct but interdependent methods of evaluating war. They might diverge on some specific conclusions, but they share a common presumption against the use of force as a means of settling disputes. That's a very important thing. Both of these theologies start with the presumption that **you may not go to war**. That's the presumption, and obviously, in just war theology, you find reasons why you can override the presumption, and then you're justified in going to war. The theology of non-violence, no, the presumption is against war and that holds. You can't override that presumption; Jesus rejected violence, so we have to follow Jesus. Then, in just war theology, if you override the presumption that you can go to war, that it is justified, you still have to try to wage that war within very strict conditions. I'll just mention a couple of the points about the theology, because I don't want to make the whole talk on just war.

The very first condition for overriding the presumption is; you must have a just cause which is described as defending yourself against an attack. There has to be an attack happening; that's the just cause. That's the very first condition, to even consider whether you can go to war. So obviously that rules out preemptive war. You can't go to war to prevent an attack from happening, as we did in Iraq. That's preemptive warfare. So just war theology requires conditions be met even to go to war.

Within the framework of war making, there are two very important conditions that must continue to be met; and they are:

- The principle of discrimination. That is, first you have to be able to discriminate between combatants and non-combatants. It's never justified to kill non-combatants in warfare.
- The other principle is proportionality. Whatever good you hope to achieve has to surpass the evil you know you are going to do, because war is evil. So, you know you're going to be killing people, destroying property. So, whatever good you hope to achieve by that has to be surpassed by the

good you hope to achieve. In fact, that's the basis upon which, in 1971, the first time it ever happened in the Church I think, a U. S. Conference of Bishops published a resolution about the Vietnam War. It was a very short resolution. Basically it said, "Whatever good we hope to achieve in our war in Vietnam has now been surpassed by the evil that we're doing." It made that war an unjust war. The bishops passed that resolution in 1971. It didn't stop the war, and not many people even paid any attention to it, but at least we were on the record opposing that war on the basis that it did not meet the condition of proportionality.

- Other conditions would be that you have to exhaust every other means to settle the dispute before you go to war. You have to have a reasonable hope of success that the war can be won. If these conditions aren't met then you can't do it. You always must be willing to negotiate rather than wage war. What we did in World War II, demanding unconditional surrender, was a violation of just war theology. We would not negotiate an end to that war. We demanded that it be unconditional surrender. That's a violation. It becomes clear when you start looking at these conditions, they're very hard to meet. Just war theology is not something that we should dismiss too readily. It certainly falls far short of following the example of Jesus; and that is why it is very important that we have the theology of non-violence in this document, and call people to try to live up to that challenge.

There are four moral judgments that we make in this document:

- The first one is it can never be justified, that is counter-population warfare. In the document, in paragraph 147, we say, "Under no circumstances may nuclear weapons or other instruments of mass slaughter be used for the purpose of destroying population centers or other predominately civilian targets." It's just ruled out as never being morally acceptable. It was stated very clearly in the Vatican Council document on the *Church in the Modern World*, which we quote here. Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or extensive areas, along with their population, is a crime against God and humankind itself. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation – so, any act of war aimed indiscriminately for the destruction of entire cities or extensive population areas. Obviously that makes Hiroshima and Nagasaki utterly immoral action. What Paul VI later in 1976 described as butchery of untold anguish: the deliberate destruction of whole cities, tens of thousands of people being killed at once. So, that is the first judgment we make; and that one is backed by the Vatican Council.
- The second judgment is that we do not perceive any situation in which the deliberate initiation of nuclear warfare on however restricted a scale can be morally justified. In other words, we're saying it would be wrong for our nation, back when we were preparing to wage nuclear war, we still are actually, to initiate a war with nuclear weapons. It could never be justified because they're weapons of indiscriminate mass destruction.
- We have a third judgment that deals with the question, "What if you've been attacked by a nation who has nuclear weapons and they use them against you? Would it be justified to respond with nuclear weapons?" Tactical nuclear weapons are what they're thinking of in this part of the document. Where they would be called tactical nuclear weapons. Where one army would fire such weapons against the other, back and forth. There were quite a few people who felt, "Well, if you're attacked, and they're using nuclear weapons, then you have a right to defend yourself with nuclear weapons." But we made the judgment that we will continue to be highly skeptical about the real meaning of limited. One of the criteria of just war tradition is a reasonable hope of success at bringing about justice and peace. We must ask whether such a reasonable hope can exist once nuclear weapons have been exchanged. We felt, and most people we consulted, military people and others, that you could not contain the limits once you began to use these weapons. They're so destructive that there would be immediate escalation. You would have an all out nuclear war in a very short order. Our cardinal statement on this is, "The burden of proof remains on those who assert that meaningful limitation is possible." So, if you couldn't be sure that you can limit it, then you may not do it. In effect we're saying "no" to second use. The first use is initiating war; second

use is response. We're saying no because if you can't be sure the conditions will be fulfilled, you cannot override the presumption against warfare. Again, that's the basic teaching of the just war theology.

- The fourth principle that we deal with, or I should say moral issue we deal with, is the whole question of deterrence. What this comes down to is a question of, "Is it morally acceptable to possess these huge arsenals of nuclear weapons? Is that morally acceptable to possess them?" Because what nuclear deterrence requires is you must have an arsenal of weapons that you are ready to use at any moment. This is where the most difficulty arose in trying to come to a unanimous statement about the nuclear weapons and the policy about using them. This is, in fact, where the Vatican intervened. Pope John Paul had gone to the United Nations in the fall of 1982, and he had spoken at the United Nations. He used words there talking about nuclear warfare and the dangers of it. He used words like, "It would be morally acceptable to maintain a strategy of deterrence as long as you are moving toward progressive disarmament." In other words, he was making the judgment, and we worked this into our letter, that you could not have these weapons as a long term strategy. The difficulty is this. Both sides, the Soviet Union, at the time, and the United States, had these huge arsenals of nuclear weapons. There was a danger. This is what people tried to impress upon us. If one side unilaterally disarmed, got rid of their weapons, that might tempt the other side to go ahead and attack. You would be in a huge war, and nuclear weapons would probably be used; and so we're at a point of very dangerous tension between the two sides. The only way to deal with that is to have both sides begin to disarm, carefully and progressively. Try to reach the point where nuclear weapons are abolished. And that's what we said was our moral teaching in regard to our strategy of deterrence.

Now, I still don't agree with that, because what happens in the strategy of deterrence is that you have the clear intent to use the weapon. When you intend to do something evil, you've already committed sin by being willing to do it. Of course, it adds a dimension of evil if you carry out your intention, but the intention to do something evil, where you have committed yourself to do it, then you've already acted against God and against God's love. That was a crucial part of our discussion. I've told this before, and some of you will probably remember, in the meeting that we had, our committee, with Casper Weinberger, who was the Secretary of Defense at that time, I raised that point. There were people that said deterrence simply means you're threatening to use these weapons; you really wouldn't do it, but they don't know that for sure, so they have to worry if you're going to use them. The threat of using the weapons is what deters them from attacking you.

In 1976 we had published the Pastoral Letter "To Live as Christ Jesus," in which we said even the threat of using such weapons would be wrong. It is wrong to threaten, to try to intimidate other people, a whole nation. But it's not as grave an evil as the actual intention to use them. So I raised that question with Mr. Weinberger, because I felt if anybody should know he ought to know the policy of the United States. "Is this simply a threat, or do we really intend to use them?" Well, I've described this before; but it's so vivid in my recollection. We were sitting in his office, a big office in the Pentagon, very comfortable, and he had been very gracious and very welcoming saying "Stay as long as you want. I got all afternoon if you want," and so on. He was very accommodating, and he was a very soft spoken person and seemed quite gentle in his demeanor. Yet, when I asked that question, without hesitation, he said, "Well of course, we don't want to use them, but when we have to, we will. Clearly we will use them."

Well, as far as I'm concerned, that should have settled it. We should have said the strategy of deterrence is not morally acceptable. But I could also hear the other argument of, "Well yes, but if you get rid of all your weapons, that just allows the Soviet Union to move forward and take over the rest of Europe; and nobody would stop them." Well maybe, but there might have been other ways to try to stop them. At any rate, we had to settle, because the Pope had said so. So we worked the Pope's words into the document, and so that is how it ended up. The Pope had said that a policy of deterrence is morally acceptable as long as it's a step toward progressive disarmament.

Reflections Since the Publication

Now that needs to be looked at, because it's twenty-five years since we made that judgment, and obviously, we have not moved toward progressive disarmament. There was the period of time when we had the SALT Treaties, the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty. We developed two of those. But that was only putting limits on nuclear weapons. The only weapons we got rid of through those treaties were weapons that were obsolete. We didn't want them anymore. We kept all the weapons that we wanted to use for warfare. We have had treaties where we actually pledged to rid ourselves of these weapons, but we haven't done it. We still are the most heavily armed nation in the world and our arsenal includes huge numbers of nuclear weapons, weapons of mass destruction. They are not only in our arsenal, but over 3,000 of them, even at this point, are on hair-trigger alert. Meaning they could be used in a matter of minutes, certainly in less even than a half an hour from the time the President gets word that we are under attack, and his giving the orders to use our weapons. It would take less than half an hour.

We are still armed with nuclear weapons. We still have the intention to use them whenever we decide it's necessary. When we have to, we will do it. What I believe, and we should have done through in this document, or certainly we should do it now, is to move beyond where we were in 1983. My conviction, and I hope I can persuade everyone of this, is that we have to now accept what Pope John XXIII said in an encyclical letter written in 1963, twenty years before we did our pastoral letter. He was writing out of the context of World War II. It had ended less than twenty years before. He was also writing out of the context of the Cuban missile crisis. It was a time when the whole world was under threat for thirteen days by the Soviet Union. The United States knew Soviet warships were coming to meet our blockade, and according to Robert McNamara, we came this close to all out war with nuclear weapons. The whole world was aware of how close we had come. John XXIII, in May of 1963, published an encyclical letter called *Peace on Earth*. In that letter there is one sentence that I think should be a guiding teaching for us in the age in which we live. He said, "In our atomic era, in this modern era, it is irrational any longer to think of war as an apt means to vindicate violated rights."

Now if you take that sentence apart, it clearly demolishes, to use that word, the just war theology. He is saying, even if you are under attack, in other words to vindicate violated rights, in this modern era it is irrational, which means it's immoral – if it goes against reason it's immoral – so it's against God, even to think of war as an apt means, an appropriate means, a justified means, to vindicate violated rights.

Now we haven't paid much attention to that teaching. It's a very clear teaching. Since 1963 there's been a constant moral teaching developed within the Church through encyclical letters, through peace day statements that have come to us over the past forty years or so. Building on that teaching of John XXIII, until you get to the point in 1991, Pope John Paul II, in an encyclical letter which he published in March of 1991, it's called *Centessimus Anno*, which means: *hundredth year*. It was a document recapitulating and celebrating and promulgating again the body of Catholic social teaching in the hundred year history of modern Catholic social teaching, going back to the encyclical on the rights of labor in 1891 by Leo XIII. We have a hundred years of this, and in this document, John Paul makes a very powerful statement. Encyclical letters are the most authoritative teaching documents we have in the Church. So this should be taken seriously. He says, "I myself" – now this is in March 1991, so it's probably after the first Persian Gulf War ended – he says, "I myself, on the occasion of the recent tragic war in the Persian Gulf, repeated the cry: "Never again war; no never again war." You can't have war; it's wrong. When he said he repeated the cry, he's talking about Pope Paul VI, who in 1965 had gone before the United Nations, and in a very emotional speech to the assembly in October of 1965, made that statement: "Never again war; no never again war." And again, Paul VI was speaking out of the context of the Vatican Council, and also out of the Cuban missile crisis, which had only been a few years before. Now John Paul says this in 1991.

There are compelling reasons why we need to say no to war. The way warfare has developed, it's no longer possible to wage what could be called a just war. The reason is we have entered a period of history in regards to warfare that it's given a different name now by war historians. The kind of warfare we wage now is *total war*. That is the terminology they use: *total war*. What they mean by that is it is no longer warfare between two armies on a battlefield or navy ships out in the middle of the ocean. Somewhere, where you have clear combatants fighting combatants, where it is clear that's how it's being waged.

World War I was actually the last war in which there was battlefield warfare. Beginning in World War II, we evolved into what is now total war. Here is how it happened, or a description of how World War II was waged. Winston Churchill launched Operation Gomorrah ordering high explosive and incendiary bombs to be dropped on the city of Hamburg on July 24, 1943. Five days later more than 50,000 civilians were dead. Two and a half years later the city of Dresden, crowded with refugees, and of no strategic

importance, was devastated by Allied bombers in February, just three months before the war's end, making it a symbol to the world of the ruthlessness of modern warfare. In March of that year, the United States fire bombed Tokyo and killed 80,000 civilians. After the raid, U. S. Army General Curtis Lamay declared, "There are no innocent civilians." As far as he was concerned, the way war is waged now, there are no innocent civilians. Anyone is a target. Everyone is a target. And so we wage this kind of warfare.

There was an article recently in the New York Times *Review of Books*, "Have We Learned Anything?" was the title of the article written by Tony Jute. Here are some statistics that he lines up about modern warfare. His point is that we in the United States really have never experienced war in the way other nations have experienced it. We're ready to jump into war much more quickly. We saw that when we were trying to get other nations to join us in the first Gulf war and the second one especially. France and Germany, who had been our allies, would not go along with us. Most nations wouldn't. The only one that would was Great Britain. But Jute said, "The U. S. has never suffered the full consequences of defeat." He points out that, with the exception of the generation of men who fought in World War II, the United States has no modern memory of combat or loss remotely comparable to that of the armed forces of other countries. It is civilian casualties that leave the most enduring mark on the national memory and here the contrast is a big one.

In World War II alone the British suffered 67,000 civilian dead. In continental Europe, France lost 270,000 civilians, more than their military. Yugoslavia recorded over a half a million civilian dead, Germany 1.8 million, Poland 5.5 million, and Soviet Union 11.4 million. These aggregate figures include some 5.8 million Jewish dead. But farther afield, in China, the death count exceeded 16 million. American civilian losses, excluding the Merchant Navy, in both world wars, amounted to less than 2,000 dead civilians. But in other parts of the world, the way we wage war, a large majority of those who are casualties in the war, who are killed or injured, are non-combatants. That's the way we wage war now. As Curtis Lamay said, "There are no innocent civilians." We wage total war. It's nation against nation, not armies on a battlefield. In this kind of a situation, it's impossible to maintain the principle of discrimination. It simply can't be done the way we wage war. That is the number one reason I believe we really must say no to war.

Again here is a second reason. It clearly relates to the first because what we are developing now is a policy of weapons totally opposite to what the moral conclusion to the pastoral letter was, that you must be working toward progressive disarmament. A few years ago, they published a document called Vision 2020. This document lays out public policy in the United States to develop weapons in space. The document says very clearly that we will do this. Their goal is to do it by 2020. We will have put our weapons into space and these would include nuclear weapons so that we can dominate the world from space. That's our goal. Well of course other nations are going to try to do the same thing. Obviously we will be in imminent danger of destroying the whole planet in a very short time if we begin to develop weapons in space and war making weapons, nuclear weapons.

Another development that perhaps is new to most of us is what we called the Strategic Air Command (SAC) located in Omaha, Nebraska; just outside of Omaha. It has evolved into what is called STRATCOM (Strategic Command) instead of Strategic Air Command because we've now developed or are developing in the base just outside Omaha, this Strategic Command. I'll give you a description of it. It started, according to this article, from the moment George Bush was rushed to the Strategic Air Command underground headquarters at Offutt Air Force Base on 9/11. The U. S. nuclear command began to undergo what General Kevin Shulte, who's the head of it now, described as not a sea storm change but a tsunami change in its role and mission. What our Strategic Air Command was was the ability to wage air warfare with nuclear weapons. Now it's evolved into this strategy command. The command, whose sole responsibility of maintaining American nuclear deterrence, that was up until 9/11, is now a command that includes missions for space, cyberspace, intelligence, reconnaissance, surveillance, missile defense, role spectrum, global strike, information operations, and combating weapons of mass destruction in the blink of an eye. Strategic Command has gone from something that "was never supposed to be used" to "being used for everything". It's gone from being putative defensive to overtly offensive. Becoming, in the words of Nebraska activists who are opposing this: "Dr. Strangelove on steroids."

Here's the description of this strategy command.

- It's charged first of all with actively waging the White House's war on terror. STRAT Command is authorized to attack any place on the planet in one hour using either conventional or nuclear weapons on the mere perception of a threat to the United States national interests. Now this is what's under the direction of STRAT Command. That's the first thing.

- Through its National Security Agency component, STRATCOM is regularly conducting now infamous wire tapes on unsuspecting U. S. citizens. That's where its surveillance is at. The proposed missile defense bases in Poland and the Czech Republic, that are reviving cold war tension with Russia, are STRATCOM installations under STRATCOM command. So these so-called defensive missiles that we are putting in the Poland and Czech Republic are under the command of the people in Offutt Air Force base in Omaha. They're covering everything. Having conducted what it counts as the first space war with its shock and awe bombing campaign in Iraq, the command is now actively executing the Bush-Cheney administration's express goal of the weaponization and domination of space. Now that part of our nuclear arsenal is coming under this command.

STRATCOM's recent shoot-down of a falling satellite using its missile defense system, just after the U. S. had repudiated a Russian proposal banning space weapons, demonstrated the anti-satellite capability of this allegedly defensive program. It's certain to jump-start an arms race in space. We call these defensive missiles, the ones that we are putting into Poland and the Czech Republic. They are part of our missile shield. If the Soviets, the Russians, were to fire on us, these missiles would be right there close to their borders where we could knock them down before they could proceed and attack us. However, the clear understanding is that these weapons, if the Soviets, or Russia I should say, if Russia were to launch her nuclear weapons in the numbers that they have, the defense system could never knock them all down. It's impossible and the military knows this. But what it could do would be to allow us to use not just first use of nuclear weapons, but what's called first-strike, where we would fire our nuclear arsenal first to attack the arsenal of Russia. We would be targeting all of their missile installations. Everywhere they have nuclear weapons we would be trying to hit those with our nuclear weapons. We wouldn't get them all, there would be a few left. Those few could then be knocked down with our so called missile defense system. So it's actually part of an offensive system, allowing us to have the capability that Russia would not have. We could use our weapons first, and not have to worry about being attacked in response. So those weapons, our missile defense system weapons, are being put in, and they are under STRATCOM command.

Now STRATCOM is also actively promoting the development of new generations of nuclear weapons, the so-called bunker-buster tactical nuclear reliable replacement warhead. STRATCOM is seeking to ensure America will wield offensive nuclear capability for the remainder of the 21st century. Under the White House's *Unified Command Plan*, STRATCOM commands access to hundreds of military bases around the globe and all four military branches while working hand-in-hand with the CIA, FBI, Homeland Security and the Department of Justice. This is the place where our whole military command system is directed from and all under this one Strategic Command organization.

STRATCOM is now poised to routinely violate international law with preemptive strike and to usurp Congress's constitutional authority to declare war. Under the War Powers Act, if the President felt we were under attack, within an hour we would be using these weapons. There would be no way to go to Congress for a declaration of war. We would simply do it. We have destroyed our own constitutional system. In the words of Commander Kevin Chilton, "Today," these are his words, "the most responsive combatant command in the U. S. arsenal, and the next war the White house gets us into either with Iran or geopolitical rival from China will be planned, launched and coordinated from STRATCOM." In fact, General Chilton recently told Congress he believes the name actually ought to be changed to global command to better reflect its new global nature.

This is what we're developing. It's all going on. It is going to get to the point of no return very quickly. We will have these things in place. We will be ready to wage space warfare with nuclear weapons. Obviously, we are in no way living up to the teachings of the pastoral letter, where the only way to justify the possession of nuclear weapons is if you're moving toward progressive disarmament. It's time we went back to the pastoral letter and actually abided by it. This is where I think the pastoral letter could be very important. If we would go to the fourth part of it, what we call the pastoral challenge and response. This is where the bishops, when we wrote this letter, tried to appeal to the Catholic community, and anyone else who would listen, to develop a spiritual response to the problem of war instead of simply a military response. We talked, as it says here, "In the following pages we would like to spell out some of the implications of being a community of the disciples of Jesus, at a time when our nation is so heavily armed with nuclear weapons, and is engaged in a continuing development of new weapons together with strategies for their use." We wrote that in 1983, and certainly it's even more timely now, because we've

already begun, reached way down the road in the development of new weapons and strategies for their use.

Conclusion

It's clear today, perhaps more than in any previous generations, that convinced Christians are a minority in nearly every country in the world, including nominally Christian and Catholic nations. In our own country, we are coming to a fuller awareness that a response to the call of Jesus is both personal and demanding. We have to try to be a company of witnesses engaged in the difficult mission. To be disciples of Jesus, it requires that we go beyond where we are. To obey the call of Jesus means separating ourselves from all attachments and affiliations that could prevent us from hearing, and following our authentic vocation. To set out on the road to discipleship is to dispose oneself for a share in the cross. To be a Christian according to the New Testament is not simply to believe with one's mind, but also to become a doer of the word and a witness to Jesus.

This means, of course, that we never expect complete success within history. We must regard as normal even the path of persecution, and the possibility of martyrdom. This is a call to a development of a spirituality that obviously is very challenging. But I'm convinced, unless we begin to really deepen our faith life and commit ourselves to be more fully disciples of Jesus, who rejected violence for any reason whatsoever; who taught us how to die, not how to kill, until we really are converted, we're not going to make any progress in ending the arms race. We'll continue to move in the direction that we're going now, until we hit the point where war will break out. It will not only be total war in the sense of destroying civilians far more than military, it'll be the war that will end our planet as we know it. The challenge of peace is a very real challenge, and a very difficult challenge. I hope that all of us, who are here tonight, will be willing to try to live up to that challenge by deepening our spirit life and becoming more authentically the disciples of Jesus, who refused to kill, and chose rather to be killed. The only way we are going to bring peace into our world is to reject war and actively live the peace of non-violence or active love. That's the challenge I offer to us tonight. I hope we can accept it and follow it. Thank you very much.

I have one very important final point. If we can bring about the conversion that the pastoral letter challenges us to do, it could lead to extraordinary changes in public policy. We would be led to bring pressure on our government to do what President John Kennedy did in 1961. It's amazing to me when I read, as I have recently read, the book *The Unspeakable Truth*, about John Kennedy and his assassination, to discover that President Kennedy was an extraordinary leader in trying to wage peace.

As early as September 25, 1961, he spoke before the United Nations. This was in the first year of his inauguration and his speech was extraordinary. He already had a much clearer awareness of what was at risk with the nuclear arms that were present in the world, held mostly by the Soviet Union and the United States. Speaking for the leaders of all the nations of the world, President Kennedy said, "Today, every inhabitant of this planet must contemplate the day when this planet may no longer be habitable. Every man, woman and child lives under the nuclear sword of Damocles, hanging by the slenderest of threads, capable of being cut at any moment by accident, or miscalculation, or madness. The weapons of war must be abolished before they abolish us." That's a very strong statement, but it's true. We have to say no to war. The weapons of war must be abolished before they abolish us. And so President Kennedy went on then, "It is therefore our intention to challenge the Soviet Union not to an arms race, but to a peace race. To advance the other step by step, stage by stage, until general and complete disarmament has been achieved." Clearly, President Kennedy meant that. Within his first year in office and until the day he was shot November 1963, he was working to engage in that peace race.

Among the things he did was resolve the Cuban missile crisis without a war by negotiating with the Soviet Union, in spite of the fact that military leaders in our country wanted us to simply bomb Cuba, to take it out totally. Instead, President Kennedy negotiated until we found a peaceful solution. We avoided the nuclear war that otherwise would have happened. President Kennedy, in June of 1963, made an extraordinary speech at American University in Washington. He announced a unilateral end to all testing of nuclear weapons in space. He then worked with extraordinary diligence in the next two months to convince the U. S. Senate to ratify a treaty, which he had by then worked out with the Soviet Union. The odds against having that treaty ratified were very high, but President Kennedy did not give up, and he managed to bring it about.

He was also engaged in trying to end the war in Vietnam. On two occasions, at least, he gave orders to the Pentagon to draw up plans for the removal of troops. They kept stalling, but he kept pressing and would have achieved it, I'm sure, if he had not been shot in 1963. His efforts to negotiate, to wage

peace, were extraordinary. If he had lived longer, perhaps we would have ended the Vietnam War. We would have stopped the embargo against Cuba, because he was also negotiating with Fidel Castro, and we would have begun a serious effort toward disarmament.

This is what I mean by saying that we have a chance, if only those of us who believe in the way of Jesus are committed to that way, then persuade our leaders to develop policies that are consistent with waging peace and not waging war. I urge everyone here tonight to begin to take up that task to make our country a country that leads in waging peace. It is the only way we will save our planet. I trust that it can be done. I have great hope that the people in the United States will make it happen

Transcribed by

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Elephants in the Living Room

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