

JUST WAR DOCTRINE

The idea of a war seems completely against what Christ came to teach. We often make the mistake of thinking there are two different Gods at work in the Bible: the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament. As if God had a Son and suddenly mellowed out from all of the "smiting" he did for the first 9,000 years of Biblical history.

There is one God. When it comes to the Old and New Testament, it is the same God. The same God whose love heals and brings peace is the same God whose love brings torment to the evil ones, whose justice is seen as cruelty.

We live in an imperfect world and as human beings we continually fall in our journey home to heaven. When you gather a large group of people together into a country or region, the mistakes can take global proportions. Often these imperfections, misunderstandings and even evil can result in war.

Under what grounds would it be moral for a Catholic to engage in war?

Over the last 2,000 years, the "Just War" theory has outlined the parameters for a Roman Catholic to engage in any war (CCC# 2309):

1. The war must involve a real, lasting, and grave or serious and certain damage that would be inflicted by the aggressor.
2. War must be the last resort, with all other options exhausted.
3. The rights and values at stake in the conflict justify killing to defend them.
4. There can be no needless destruction, cruelty to prisoners, or harsh measures such as torture.
5. Only the proper representatives of the people have a right to declare a war of defense.
6. A chance of success must exist to prevent a hopeless use of force.
7. War must never create worse evils than the evil being eliminated.

REFERENCES

Jn. 14:27, Lk. 19:42, Eph. 2:14, Gal. 5:22, Jn. 20:19-21, Lv. 26:6, Nm. Ch 13, Jgs. 3:10, Jgs. 5:8, Jgs. 10:17-18

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