Reflection
Love of Enemies, Love of Country

“Patriotism is love for, or devotion to, one’s nation. Patriotism creates national unity, a reaffirmation of loyalty to basic national identity and values.”
Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary

“Patriotism means being true and loyal—not to the government, but to the principles which underlie democracy.”
Howard Zinn, author of A People’s History of the United States

“Nationalism is a sense of national consciousness exalting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations or supranational groups.”
Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary

“In this context, we need to clarify the essential difference between an unhealthy form of nationalism, which teaches contempt for other nations or cultures, and patriotism, which is a proper love of one’s country. True patriotism never seeks to advance the well-being of one’s own nation at the expense of others. For in the end this would harm one’s own nation as well: doing wrong damages both aggressor and victim. Nationalism, particularly in its most radical forms, is thus the antithesis of true patriotism . . . [There are] cases where religion itself is made the basis of nationalism, as unfortunately happens in certain manifestations of so-called ‘fundamentalism.’”
Pope John Paul II, Address to the Fiftieth General Assembly of the United Nations Organization, #11, October 5, 1995

“Citizens must cultivate a generous and loyal spirit of patriotism, but without being narrow-minded. This means that they will always direct their attention to the good of the whole human family, united by the different ties which bind together races, people and nations.”
Gaudium et Spes, #75

“You have heard that the law of Moses says, ‘Love your neighbor’ and hate your enemy. But I say, love your enemies. Pray for those who persecute you.”
Matthew 5: 43-44

Discussion Questions
What has contributed to your own sense of American values and ideals? How are patriotism and nationalism defined in the media and American culture?

Making reference to Pope John Paul II’s address to the United Nations in 1995, discuss why Jesus’ commandment to be peacemakers does not conflict with patriotism.

In a Pew Forum poll taken in 2001, 48% of Americans said they believed the United States had “special protection from God.” Why do you think they hold this view? Are you aware of any scripture passage or Church teaching that upholds this belief? How do you think Pope John Paul II would respond to this belief?

In recent speeches, President Bush has concluded by declaring, “May God continue to bless America.” His rhetoric implies that American patriotism and faith are natural allies; it implies that America’s faith in God helps assure the nation’s divine protection. What are some dangers of promoting these ideas? How might this sort of rhetoric lead to the demonization of enemies, a direct violation of Jesus’ command to love one’s enemies? How might it create a climate of intolerance against dissenting opinion?

What does “love your enemy” mean in a time of peace? What does it mean in a time of war? (Remember, love of enemy, as a personal or institutional expression, may take a variety of expressions, depending on circumstances: praying for the welfare and redemption of the enemy, praying for our own forgiveness, working for disarmament, showing financial or material generosity, working to change national foreign policy, initiating official conversations with hostile opponents, etc.)

Take a moment to reflect on the crucial role that nonviolent civil disobedience played in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement. This is just one example in U.S. history when faith and the policies of the government came into conflict. Does your faith shape your political values and loyalties, or do your political values and loyalties shape your faith? What are some examples in your own journey in which your faith and U.S. policy have come into conflict? Commit to taking some time to reflect on, and pray about, this issue, both individually and as a group.

Why do you think it is more socially acceptable to critically question domestic policy rather than foreign policy? Why do you think it is even less acceptable to critically question foreign policy relating to conflicts and wars?
Fact Sheet
The Catholic Church and War

JUST WAR THEORY AND PACIFISM

There are two strands in the Catholic social tradition related to war and peace. Both share the presumption against the use of force as a means for settling disputes. Within that presumption, one, the Just War Theory, has evolved two sets of criteria for engaging in war. One set lays out guidelines for determining when it is just to enter a war (Jus ad Bellum). The other articulates guidelines for just behavior in war (Jus in Bello). Another, equally valid strain of Catholic social tradition emphasizes the non-violence of Jesus and calls upon all Christ’s disciples to bear witness in their own lives to non-violent approaches to conflict resolution.

To learn about the Just War Theory and/or Pacifism, please see the Education for Justice Resource entitled “Just War Theory and Non-Violence: Two Strands in the Catholic Social Tradition Related to War and Peace.”

WHAT HAS THE CATHOLIC CHURCH SAID ABOUT WAR IN THE PAST 40 YEARS?

“When so many people are hungry, when so many families suffer from destitution, when so many remain steeped in ignorance, when so many schools, hospitals and homes worthy of the name remain to be built, all public or private squandering of wealth, all expenditure prompted by motives of national or personal ostentation, every exhausting armaments race, becomes an intolerable scandal.”
1967: Pope Paul VI, Populorum Progressio, #87

“Peace benefits from the growing favor of public opinion, which is convinced of the absurdity of war pursued for its own sake and believed to be the only and unavoidable means of settling controversies among men.”
1971: Pope Paul VI, World Day of Peace Message

“We would like to be able to dispel this threatening and terrible nightmare by proclaiming at the top of our voice the absurdity of modern war and the absolute necessity of Peace—Peace not founded on the power of arms that today are endowed with an infernal destructive capacity . . . nor founded on the structural violence of some political regimes, but founded on the patient, rational and loyal method of justice and freedom, such as the great international institutions of today are promoting and defending.”
1978: Pope Paul VI, World Day of Peace Message

“The moral theory of the ‘just-war’ or ‘limited-war’ doctrine begins with the presumption which binds all Christians: we should do no harm to our neighbors; how we treat our enemy is the key test of whether we love our neighbor; and the possibility of taking even one human life is a prospect we should consider in fear and trembling.”

“If development is the new name for peace, war and preparations for war are the major enemy of the healthy development of peoples.”
1987: Pope John Paul II, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, #10

“Ten years after The Challenge of Peace, given the neglect of peaceable virtues and the destructiveness of today’s weaponry, serious questions still remain about whether modern war in all its savagery can meet the hard tests set by the just-war tradition.”
Fact Sheet
The Catholic Church and War

WHAT HAS THE CATHOLIC CHURCH SAID ABOUT WAR IN THE PAST 40 YEARS? (continued)

“Wars, even when they ‘solve’ the problems which cause them, do so only by leaving a wake of victims and destruction which weighs heavily upon ensuing peace negotiations. Awareness of this should encourage peoples, nations and States once and for all to rise above the ‘culture of war,’ not only in its most detestable form, namely, the power to wage war used as an instrument of supremacy, but also in the less odious but no less destructive form of recourse to arms as an expeditious way to solve a problem.”


“War is never just another means that one can choose to employ for settling differences between nations.”

2003: Pope John Paul II, Address to the Diplomatic Corps

HOW DID THE CATHOLIC CHURCH RESPOND TO THE WAR IN IRAQ?

The Catholic Church undertook great diplomatic efforts to avoid the war in Iraq. Pope John Paul II urged world leaders to try to resolve disputes with Iraq though diplomatic means:

“War is never just another means that one can choose to employ for settling differences between nations . . . As the charter of the United Nations organization and international laws itself remind us, war cannot be decided upon, even when it is a matter of ensuring the common good, except as the very last option and in accordance with very strict conditions, without ignoring the consequences for the civilian population both during and after the military operations . . . [War] is always a defeat for humanity . . . International law, honest dialogue, solidarity between states, the noble exercise of diplomacy: these are methods worthy of individuals and nations in resolving their differences.”

Pope John Paul II, annual address to world ambassadors to the Vatican, January 13, 2003

The U.S. Catholic Bishops also voiced their opinion:

“Given the precedents and risks involved, we find it difficult to justify extending the war on terrorism to Iraq, absent clear and adequate evidence of Iraqi involvement in the attacks of September 11th or of an imminent attack of a grave nature.”

Letter of Bishop Wilton D. Gregory, President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to President Bush, September 13, 2002

“Our bishops’ conference continues to question the moral legitimacy of any preemptive, unilateral use of military force to overthrow the government of Iraq. To permit preemptive or preventive uses of military force to overthrow threatening or hostile regimes would create deeply troubling moral and legal precedents. Based on the facts that are known, it is difficult to justify resort to war against Iraq, lacking clear and adequate evidence of an imminent attack of a grave nature or Iraq’s involvement in the terrorist attacks of September 11. With the Holy See and many religious leaders throughout the world, we believe that resort to war would not meet the strict conditions in Catholic teaching for the use of military force.”


In mid-February, Pope John Paul II sent a personal peace envoy, Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, to Baghdad to urge President Saddam Hussein to cooperate fully with United Nations weapons inspectors:

“I came to encourage the Iraqi authorities to cooperate with the United Nations on the basis of peace and international law. War is not the last solution, it is the worst solution.”

Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, speech upon arrival in Iraq

The Vatican also made an address to the United Nations Security Council:

“The Holy See is convinced that in the efforts to draw strength from the wealth of peaceful tools provided by
Fact Sheet

The Catholic Church and the War in Iraq (continued)

**HOW DID THE CATHOLIC CHURCH RESPOND TO THE WAR IN IRAQ? (continued)**

international law, to resort to force would not be a just one.”

“For months the international community has been living in great apprehension because of the danger of a war that might disturb the whole of the Middle East region . . . The future of humanity will never be able to be assured by terrorism and the logic of war. Therefore I invite all Catholic to dedicate with special intensity next March 5, Ash Wednesday, to prayer and fasting for the cause of peace, especially in the Middle East.”
Pope John Paul II, Address to pilgrims gathered in St. Peter’s Square, February 23, 2003

During the month of February, Pope John Paul II met with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, and president of the UN Security Council and German Foreign Affairs Minister Joschka Fischer. Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran, Vatican secretary for relations with States, visited U.S. President Bush in Texas. He also met with French President Jacques Chirac.

**War broke out on March 19, 2003.**

Once again, the U.S. Catholic Bishops spoke out:

“Our nation’s leaders have made the momentous decision to go to war to address the failure of the Iraqi government to comply completely with its obligations. We deeply regret that war was not averted.”
Bishop Wilton D. Gregory, President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Statement on War with Iraq, March 19, 2003

As did Pope John Paul II:

“When war, as in these days in Iraq, threatens the fate of humanity, it is even more urgent to proclaim with a determined voice, that peace alone is the way to construct a more just and caring society . . . Violence and arms can never resolve the problems of [humanity].”
Pope John Paul II, March 22, 2003

**Discussion Questions**

Identify and discuss one quote from the fact sheet “The Catholic Church and War” that you find interesting and/or challenging.

Why does Catholic Social Teaching emphasize that every means of peaceful resolution be explored before considering war?

Discuss whether or not U.S. Catholics are educated adequately on the teaching of the Church on war.

Before reading “The Catholic Church and the War in Iraq,” were you aware of the various diplomatic efforts of the Church to avoid war in Iraq? Were these efforts widely reported in the U.S. media? Discuss.

What teachings and values of the Faith did the Pope and the Bishops draw on when they discussed the war in Iraq?
Reflection
The Path to Peace

“All States have responsibility for world peace and this peace cannot be ensured until a security based on arms is gradually replaced with a security based on the solidarity of the human family.”
Pope John Paul II, 1987 World Day of Peace Message, #8

“Injustice, excessive economic or social inequalities, envy, distrust, and pride raging among men and nations constantly threaten peace and cause wars. Everything done to overcome these disorders contributes to building up peace and avoiding war.”
Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2317

“To recognize the social solidarity of the human family brings with it the responsibility to build on what makes us one. This means promoting effectively and without exception the equal dignity of all as human beings endowed with certain fundamental and inalienable human rights. This touches all aspects of our individual life, as well as our life in the family, in the community in which we live, and in the world. Once we truly grasp that we are brothers and sisters in a common humanity, then we can shape our attitudes towards life in the light of the solidarity which makes us one. This is especially true in all that relates to the basic universal project: peace.”
Pope John Paul II, 1987 World Day of Peace Message, #2

“The arms race does not ensure peace. Far from eliminating the causes of war, it risks aggravating them. Spending enormous sums to produce ever new types of weapons impedes efforts to aid needy populations; it thwarts the development of peoples. Over-armament multiplies reasons for conflict and increases the danger of escalation.”
Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2315

“To wage war on misery and to struggle against injustice is to promote, along with improved conditions, the human and spiritual progress of all [people], and therefore the common good of humanity. Peace cannot be limited to a mere absence of war, the result of an ever precarious balance of forces. No, peace is something that is built up day after day, in the pursuit of an order intended by God, which implies a more perfect form of justice among men.”
Pope Paul VI, Populorum Progressio, #76

Discussion Questions
According to Catholic Social Teaching, what is peace? What is not peace?

How have the quotes on the left-hand side of the page challenged and/or expanded your understanding of peace?

According to CST, what are some effective ways of building peace in the world? What are some ineffective ways?

What role does the work of social justice play in creating a more peaceful world?

How does the arms race aggravate the causes of war?

The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, a document issued in September 2002, articulates the current Administration’s commitment to maintaining and using its unparalleled military, economic and political power to pursue its national interests and to preemptively attack any country that the Administration considers to be a threat to them. This dramatic shift in U.S. security strategy is justified by the claim that this “struggle against terrorism is different from any other war in our history.” What are your thoughts about this security strategy and its justification? Discuss what a different version of the U.S. security strategy would look like, based on human solidarity rather than military force and other forms of power. How would you address the excessive economic and social inequalities that exist in the world today?

What steps can you take as an individual and as a group to build up human solidarity, and thus promote a peaceful world?