The Peace of God is an exposition of the Catholic peace tradition. The 'just war theory' is clearly and concisely explained. Pacifism is shown to be not simply a 20th-century phenomenon, but one that can trace its roots to the New Testament and the writings of the Fathers of the Early Church.

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THE PEACE OF GOD

BY PAUL RULE

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FOREWORD

The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council has pleasure in presenting *The Peace of God* as No. 23 in its series of Occasional Papers.

Over the centuries and in our own time, the views of Christians on questions related to peace and war have not been unanimous. In searching for the truth on which proper judgements are to be founded, we should give due attention to traditional Church teaching, while respectfully acknowledging the legitimacy of viewpoints at variance with our own. Although some readers' perspectives on certain issues raised in the paper may differ from Dr Rule's, they will recognise that his reflections are based on solid and honest research, including a study of scriptural and patristic sources.

The popes and other Church leaders of the 20th century have given a strong lead in their denunciations of war and in their frequent calls for the peaceful resolution to conflicts between and within nations. In its section on 'Safeguarding Peace' (nos. 2302–2317, pp. 554–7), the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* recapitulates the Church's teaching in this area, on the one hand reaffirming the right to self-defence, and on the other defending the rights of conscientious objectors.

It is opportune for the ACSJC to publish this paper in 1995, a year that marks the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and of the creation of the United Nations. During this year we will pray for all those who lost their lives in that terrible war, and in a special way for the victims of the Holocaust and for other slaughtered non-combatants. While remembering with gratitude the sacrifices made by those who served in our armed forces, we will look in a spirit of reconciliation and friendship towards the nations that were once our country's enemies.

The observance of Hiroshima Day on 6 August will be an appropriate occasion to recall that it was a Church leader in our own country, Archbishop Daniel Mannix of Melbourne, who, foreshadowing the teaching of the Second Vatican Council (*Gaudium et Spes*, 80, par. 3), was one of the world's most outspoken critics of the aerial bombing of populated areas and in particular of the use of what he described as the 'indefensible and immoral' atomic bomb. May the present generation of Australians, giving due consideration to discussion papers such as this, be no less diligent in contributing to public discussion about the morality of warfare and the essential task of peacemaking.

+ K.M. Manning

Most Rev. Kevin Manning
Chairman, ACSJC
Bishop of Armidale
14 February 1995

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:7

INTRODUCTION

Everyone wants peace. We all want peace in our lives, in our homes, within and between nations. It is at the heart of the teachings of all religions, not the least of Christianity. There are, of course, different kinds and degrees of peace. There is the mere absence of war or violence. There is the peacefulness of happy homes and workplaces. And there is a still deeper spiritual peace: St Paul's 'peace of God which surpasses all understanding'. In this paper we will explore some of the varieties of peace, the riches of the Catholic tradition on peace, the prospects and problems for peace in the world today, and developing peacefulness in our lives.

It is now nearly ten years since the publication of *Work for a Just Peace*, prepared by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace and approved 'for discussion and reflection' by a more than two-thirds majority of the Australian Catholic bishops. The world situation since then has changed dramatically. The threat of global nuclear catastrophe has been greatly reduced, although far from removed. The nature, but unfortunately not the extent, of international conflict has changed. Issues of domestic violence, racial and social tensions, and environmental and economic threats to peace have emerged into public consciousness. After ten years, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States recently reassessed their influential peace challenge to American Catholics (*The Challenge of Peace*),[1] and the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II seems a good time for us to think again about the challenges to peace facing Australian Catholics in the mid-1990s.

Most of us remember the joy and astonishment with which we watched the dismantling of the Soviet Empire on our TV screens. It then seemed that we had not only witnessed the end of the Cold War, but the beginning of a new era of world peace. That brilliant dawn has given way to a very gloomy day. So-called minor conflicts have multiplied and grown in intensity. For every resolution of civil conflict—as in South Africa—several new ones have broken out. Assassinations, hijackings and bombings seem to have become the normal way of resolving clashes between ethnic or ideological opponents. And, as many of the world's most severe conflicts involve

religious differences, it appears religion is one of the major causes of division and violence in the world.

Does religion, then, have anything to contribute to resolving the crisis of peace facing us? More particularly for Australian Christians, does the Christian tradition and the present reality of Christian living and influence offer any hope? On a recent visit to Australia, Johann Galtung, the great inspirer of modern peace studies and conflict resolution commented that religion was both one of the major causes of violence and the only hope for securing a lasting peace. We have already noted how religious divisions—between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, Christians and Muslims in Bosnia, Sunni and Shiah Muslims in the Middle East, Buddhists and Hindus in Sri Lanka—have exacerbated, if not often been the fundamental cause of, conflict, and a common Catholicism failed to prevent mass murder on an unimaginable scale in Rwanda. But can there be a lasting peace, a change of heart, a new basis for unity, and perhaps most importantly, a continuing impulse to peacemaking, without religious motivation? The lifelong persistence required for making and keeping peace seems to demand a deep and ultimate world view, that is, a 'religion' in the broad sense.

'The Peace of God' was a term used in the Middle Ages for attempts by the Church to create and enforce truces, for a period of time or at certain times of the year, between warring armies. The weapons the Church then had at its disposal—excommunication, interdict, denial of legitimacy—are no longer powerful in our modern world. But the Church, in the form of pope, bishops and other pastors, can sometimes play a role in preventing or mitigating conflict.

More important, though, is the role that Christian peacemakers may play—both as individuals and in association with both Christians and non-Christians—in working for peace. They must begin with themselves. Peacefulness is not easily acquired. Inner stillness, the taming of the angry or violent response to the violence of others without loss of the thirst and passion for justice, requires constant effort. The home, itself often a battleground marked by physical and mental violence, can also be a training ground for peace. In Christian education, peace and justice or, better still, peace through justice and justice through peace, should be presented as central Christian preoccupations—not as optional extras. And activities aimed at establishing and prolonging domestic, national and international peace need to be seen as part of the Church's normal mission, as the gospel in everyday life.

THE CATHOLIC PEACE TRADITION[2]

In the New Testament and early Church

Even a superficial reading of the Gospels reveals that peace is a constant theme in the presentation of the message of Jesus, from the sermon on the mount to turning the other cheek. The greeting of the risen Lord to his disciples is 'Peace be with you' (John 20:21). But if we look to the New Testament for explicit instructions or models for Christian behaviour in regard to war and violence, we will look in vain. Jesus tells Peter to put away his sword 'for all who take the sword will perish by the sword' (Matthew 26:52), but he praises the centurion—not only a soldier, but an officer of the army of occupation—as a man of faith (Matthew 8:5–13). In this case, as in that of Cornelius, the centurion baptised by Peter (Acts 10), there is no mention of the soldiers being instructed to give up their profession.

Nor does the New Testament explicitly repudiate the Old Testament idea of a holy war against the enemies of God. The Letter to the Hebrews gloats over bloody victories over the enemies of God (11:32–4). The Book of Revelation is full of military metaphors and invokes powerful images of the final battle between good and evil (12:17; 20:7–9). Much of this, however, is clearly metaphorical. Paul, in particular, uses war as a model of the spiritual struggle, and in the most sustained passage on this theme (Ephesians 6:10–17) he insists that we must buckle on our spiritual armour in order 'to spread the gospel of peace'. Unfortunately, throughout later Christian history, some Christians have misinterpreted the message, and confused spiritual conflict with physical violence.

The early Christians, however, had no such confusion. They believed that the Good News brought by Jesus the Christ called them to a new life which had no place for the war and violence of the wider society to which they belonged. The question of their attitude to military service is less clear; for many it did not arise. Jewish Christians, as Jews, were not eligible, let alone required, to serve in the Roman army. The early Christians thought that the Second Coming of Christ was imminent and questions of worldly vocation were irrelevant. But as that prospect was spiritualised and projected into the indefinite future, the problem of whether Christians might serve in the army became a practical and serious one.

At the end of the first Christian century, the 'First Letter of Clement' saw the Church itself as a kind of army with officers and

ordinary soldiers bound together by discipline and common purpose.[3] But that was a Roman speaking, for whom the Empire and its all conquering army were facts of life. Half a century later the Palestinian Christian, Justin Martyr, sees the army and military service as part of the old order which Christ came to supplant:

> Twelve men, ignorant and unskilled in speaking as they were, went out from Jerusalem to the world, and with the help of God announced to every race of men that they had been sent by Christ to teach the word of God to everyone, and we who formerly killed one another not only refuse to make war on our enemies but in order to avoid lying to our interrogators or deceiving them, we freely go to our deaths confessing Christ.[4]

As Christianity spread, the issues of military service, and of serving in public offices which required sentencing people to death or imprisoning or perhaps torturing them, became urgent. In the early third century, Tertullian thought that no Christian could be associated with the shedding of blood:

> How will [a Christian] serve in the army even during peacetime without the sword that Jesus Christ has taken away? Even if soldiers came to John and got advice on how they ought to act, even if the centurion became a believer, the Lord, by taking away Peter's sword, disarmed every soldier thereafter. We are not allowed to wear any uniform that symbolises a sinful act.[5]

And if a man, already a soldier, should become a Christian, he must immediately leave the service. The reasons given by Tertullian in 'On the Crown'[6] are extended beyond Jesus' prohibition of bloodshed to the danger of idolatry for a Roman soldier who must sacrifice to the Roman gods, swear an oath incompatible with his baptismal oath, and wear pagan insignia. It is these and similar arguments that have fed the Christian peace tradition ever since. Armies not only kill but often embody values of unquestioning obedience and worship of the 'false gods' of nation and state.

An obvious problem for Christians who took this line was the charge of disloyalty to the state. Origen, in his reply to the philosopher Celsus who had made this charge amongst others, claimed that Christians served the Emperor by prayer. If the cause is just, God will aid the imperial armies.[7] But he is very clear that Christians might not fight even for a good cause. And he invokes Isaiah's famous image

(Isaiah 2:4) taken up by many modern Christian and Jewish peace activists:

> To those who ask about our origin and our founder we reply that we have come in response to Jesus' commands to beat into ploughshares the rational swords of conflict and arrogance and to change into pruning hooks those spears that we used to fight with. For we no longer take up the sword against any nation, nor do we learn the art of war any more. Instead of following the traditions that made us 'strangers to the covenant' (Ephesians 2:12), we have become sons of peace through Jesus our founder.[8]

When the Empire became formally Christian under Constantine in 313, the old objections to military service on the basis of its association with idolatry, lapsed. In the process, the basic grounds—the belief that Jesus prohibited the sword—were lost sight of. The army was now *our* army not *their* army. The very next year the Council of Arles excommunicated anyone who deserted from the army. But subsequent councils show traces of the older attitudes: clergy must never fight, and soldiers who left the army for religious reasons but were induced to return to the service, may not be admitted to full communion for ten years after their lapse.[9] Also, after the shedding of blood, a soldier 'should stay away from the mysteries at least until he has been purified through tears and lamentation'.[10]

Nevertheless, in the fourth century the Church moved to a position of permitting—if not yet positively approving—killing in war. Saint Basil writes that even a soldier could be a saint,[11] and St Athanasius sharply distinguishes killing in battle from murder,[12] a distinction with serious consequences for later Christian theology. The great St Ambrose, Bishop of Milan at the end of the fourth century, who himself had been a Roman magistrate, recommends that magistrates should exercise mercy so far as possible, but does not condemn physical punishment of wrongdoers.[13]

It was St Augustine (354–430), Ambrose's disciple, the greatest of the Latin Fathers and the major influence on all subsequent Catholic theology, who first formulated the most influential of all Christian theories on war and authorised violence: the so-called 'just war' doctrine. His age was not unlike our own: a time of continuous warfare, invasions, destruction of cities, a threat—which was fast becoming a reality—to the very existence of civilisation as it had developed for a thousand years.

Augustine regretted the necessity for violence, but it seemed to him necessary—as a last resort—for the survival of society. Human sinfulness being what it was, he reasoned, war and coercion were sometimes necessary evils. Peace must be what we aim for, but sometimes peace may be preserved only by violence:

> Surely it is not in vain that we have institutions as the power of the king, the death penalty of the judge, the hooks of the executioner, the weapons of the soldier, the stringency of the overlord and even the strictness of the good father. All these things have their own method, reason, motive and benefit. When they are feared, evil men are held in check, and the good enjoy greater peace among the wicked.[14]

Augustine saw the great danger that war might become an end in itself and that the Christian virtue of peace might be subverted by the hatred generated by war.[15] Writing to a general he insists:

> Peace should be your aim; war should be a matter of necessity so that God might free you from necessity and preserve you in peace. One does not pursue peace in order to wage war; he wages war to achieve peace. And so, even in the act of waging war be careful to maintain a peaceful disposition so that by defeating your foes you can bring them the benefits of peace.[16]

However he does not tell us how to preserve a peaceful disposition while waging war, and this seems to many a serious defect in the Augustinian theory. If we wish to be realistic about war and human nature, as well as acknowledging the prevalence of violence, we must also acknowledge the effects of violence on our humanity.

Augustine has little to say, too, on the conditions for a just war, although he seems to have accepted the views of the great Roman lawyer and statesman, Cicero, that for a war to be just it must have just goals, be fought with honour and for the safety of the state.[17] He certainly insists that 'it is the other side's wrongdoing that compels the wise man to wage just wars'[18] which would preclude wars of conquest rather than defence.

One very important point often forgotten about Augustine's 'just war' theory is that he does not abandon nonviolence as an absolute personal goal. Just war must be for the public good, in defence of the commonweal. If it is personal self-defence that is at stake, it is better to allow oneself to be killed than to kill.[19] Just war and pacifism coexisted in the thought of St Augustine as they have in Catholic thought to the present day.

In the Middle Ages

In medieval Christendom, 'just war' approaches to war and peace were developed by theologians alongside frequent reassertions of Christian pacifism. However a new, or rather a revival of an older, idea appeared: that of the 'holy war', the God-inspired war against God's enemies, with special spiritual rewards promised for the participants. The major form this took was the crusade.

The crusades grew out of an even earlier effort to defend Christian Europe against non-Christian barbarians and Muslims, both regarded as enemies of God. By the tenth century, in Eastern Europe this had become a justification for wars of aggression against non-Christians. At the Council of Clermont in 1095, Pope Urban II took a decisive step in proclaiming a holy war under the sign of the cross; a crusade to liberate the Holy Sepulchure of Jesus from Islam.

The history of the crusades is a sad and bloody one. Despite some initial successes they were a failure in their main aim of creating and maintaining a Christian kingdom in the Holy Land. There were some particularly unsavoury episodes, such as the Fourth Crusade, which was diverted by European commercial interests from Palestine to an attack on the Christian Eastern Empire. The crusades became an occasion for venting racial and religious hatred—against Muslims and Jews, and Slavs and Greeks. The end result was an increase in violence and tension in Europe itself, as well as the development of an aggressive attitude to the rest of the world which affected later European colonialism and imperial expansion. Indeed it may not be going too far to say that the European conquest of Aboriginal Australia was one long-term result of the crusades.

Perhaps most serious of all, the crusades lent a new respectability and Christian support to war and violence. Old Testament images were invoked, Jesus was depicted as a war leader and king, and priests and monks were enlisted as chaplains. There were even established religious orders whose sole purpose was to fight for Christ with sword and spear: the Templars, Knights Hospitaller, Teutonic Knights, and so on.

One unforeseen side effect of the crusades was an increase in intra-European wars as crusaders with no profession other than warmaking returned from the East. The Church attempted to place limits on war through 'the truce of God' and 'the peace of God': forbidding war at certain times and places; banning new weapons such as the crossbow; imposing strict and long penances for killing in war; and suspending

clerics from office for participating in battles. All such decrees were ignored by many, but at least what influence the Church had was now directed to peacemaking rather than warmaking.

Theologians began to develop further the 'just war' theory not, as is often claimed, to justify war, but to limit and possibly outlaw war by spelling out the conditions for justice both in going to and fighting wars. In his *Summa Theologica*, St Thomas Aquinas produced the most influential statement of these conditions, one that is still the basis of modern 'just war' theory:

> Three things are required for any war to be just. The first is the authority of the sovereign on whose command war is waged. Now a private person has no business declaring war; he can seek redress by appealing to the judgment of his superiors ... Since the care of the commonweal is committed to those in authority they are the one to watch over the public affairs of the city, kingdom or province in their jurisdiction. Secondly, a just cause is required, namely that those who are attacked are attacked because they deserve it on account of some wrong they have done ... Thirdly, the right intention of those waging war is required, that is, they must intend to promote the good and to avoid evil.[20]

It is clear that most medieval wars, in fact most wars anywhere and any time, would be unjust by these criteria. Elsewhere Aquinas and other theologians addressed the conditions governing how wars might be fought, and these further reduced the possibilities of a 'just' war. Indeed there were few wars where civilians and their property were not attacked, excessive or disproportionate violence was not used, and wars were not prolonged or extended beyond their original aims.

Furthermore, there was the apparently insuperable problem of who was to judge the justice of the cause. Kings and political leaders were hardly unbiased judges in this regard. The Church, or at least the popes and bishops, were often interested parties, even active participants. The problem of finding impartial arbitrators to determine fault, and international peacekeepers to impose sanctions on those unjustly waging war, remains to the present day a crucial one.

A final, and perhaps most serious, question remains. Was this whole line of thought, from Augustine on, based on a false premise: that war was under certain conditions justifiable, that a 'just war' was thinkable? Language is incredibly powerful in forming our attitudes. No one would think of speaking about a 'just rape' or, perhaps more apposite here, a 'just murder', yet we do speak of a 'just war'.

There were many then as now who, inspired by a literal reading of the Gospel or as the result of experience of crusades or feudal warfare, came to think that war was unthinkable and unspeakable for a committed Christian. Some such Christian pacifists simply opted out of the sinful warring world to join religious orders or form small communities of like-minded people. Others devoted themselves to preventing war or alleviating the effects of war. Some of these groups became sectarian, even heretical, and most appeared hopelessly utopian to their contemporaries. But they kept alive a major Christian ideal of peace and nonviolence in a violent age. They asked awkward questions, provoked consciences, and acted as prophets of peace.

So, by the end of the Middle Ages, Christendom had adopted three largely incompatible approaches to war: pacifism, 'just wars' under certain conditions, and 'holy wars' in the service of God. These remain to the present day.

In modern times

Since the sixteenth century, 'just war' thinking has dominated Catholic thinking about war, whether war between nations, civil war, or wars of conquest of non-European peoples. It led eventually to the notion of a law of nations overriding national laws, to international courts, and to international peacekeeping bodies and those such as the Red Cross concerned with alleviating the effects of war.

But other theological and intellectual developments since the Middle Ages have also contributed to the development of Catholic peace theory. The notions of the rights of conscience and of the principled and practical need for religious and cultural tolerance, direct experience of different societies, and the growth of a truly world Church, have led to a new appreciation of the positive value of difference within unity. The Christian humanists of the Renaissance and after depicted the horrors of war rather than its glories and a new appreciation of the value of the human person (so central to the writings of Pope John Paul II) was developed. The sixteenth century was also a time when religious divisions between Eastern and Western Christians, Christians and Muslims, and then Catholics and Protestants, lent a new ferocity to war. Governments learned how to use religion to divide: 'God with us' became the blasphemous battlecry of all sides.

Modern war developed into something very different in kind and in scale to previous wars. New weapons proved vastly more

destructive than their predecessors, and the escalation in killing, maiming and subsequent terror has not yet halted. International alliances led to a new phenomenon, the 'world war'. The old distinctions between civilians and soldiers, and non-combatants and combatants, tended to disappear both because all the resources of a nation were involved in the war effort, and because air warfare and then missiles enabled strikes to be made far beyond the battlelines. New ideological conflicts were added to the old causes of division and old tensions took on new forms such as terrorism and guerilla warfare.

The Catholic Church has played an important peacemaking role in both world wars and since. After being freed of its temporal power in 1870, the papacy in particular has been able to act as an impartial international umpire and has played a key role in, for example, the Cuban missile crisis and nuclear disarmament talks.

At the Second Vatican Council, a first step was taken towards a modern theology of peace, especially in *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World).[21] Peace is linked with justice and seen as ultimately 'the fruit of love'.[22] War, on the other hand, is the fruit of sin. Modern methods of making war are condemned as clearly exceeding the limits of justice, and 'far exceeding the bounds of legitimate defence'. The right of conscientious objection to war service is a natural right and must be respected.[23] There must be a 'change of heart', a 'conversion to peacemaking'.[24] The causes of conflict, unequal distribution of the world's resources and national rivalries must be tackled through cooperation between nations and religions, solidarity between peoples, and dialogue between neighbours.[25] *Gaudium et Spes* was a kind of program for further thought and action and the Church, especially the bulk of lay Catholics, has far from digested it or exhausted its possibilities.

On one issue above others the Church has spoken out: the issue of nuclear warfare. One of the earliest to speak out was Archbishop Mannix who, a few weeks after the bombing of Hiroshima, said:

> When all is said and done, there is nothing more ruthless, or nothing more indefensible than the Atomic Bomb directed against non-combatants, women and children.[26]

Pope Pius XII spoke of the 'homicidal and suicidal madness'[27] of the new ABC (Atomic, Biological, Chemical) weapons. In *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth, 1963) Pope John XXIII questioned the possibility of a just war in the nuclear age: 'it is contrary to reason to hold that war is now a suitable way to restore rights that have been violated'.[28] And he addressed an appeal to the world, as relevant today as it was then:

> Justice, right reason, and humanity urgently demand that the arms race should cease; that the stockpiles which exist in various countries should be reduced equally and simultaneously by the parties concerned; that nuclear weapons should be banned; and that a general agreement should eventually be reached about progressive disarmament and an effective method of control.[29]

In his memorable appeal to the United Nations in 1965, John's successor Pope Paul VI declared 'Never again one against the other, never, never again! ... Never again war, never again war!' In his World Day of Peace message two years later, he described the use of nuclear weapons against Hiroshima and Nagasaki as 'butchery of untold magnitude' which must never be repeated.

Another key theme in recent papal teaching has been the link between the arms race and justice. In *Populorum Progressio* (On the Development of Peoples, 1967), Paul VI linked the arms race with injustice in and to the Third World. 'Development is the new name for peace' was the theme of the encyclical. The arms race was a 'squandering of wealth' and 'an intolerable scandal'.[30] The extension of the arms race to the Third World which seems one consequence of the new international order is making things even worse.

In this wider context there has been a considerable rethinking of 'just war' theory. There are those who argue that a biblical theology of peace simply has no place for the sort of calculation that the 'just war' theory, based ultimately on Roman legalism and Greek morality, demands. Others insist that the conditions for justice in war elaborated in modern 'just war' theory are sufficient to outlaw certainly nuclear war, and probably almost any imaginable modern war. In 1983 the American bishops set out these conditions under seven headings:

1. Just cause and **2. Competent authority** Conditions that, as we saw, go back to Aquinas and, before him, to Augustine. Most civil wars and terrorist campaigns would seem to be ruled out where neither the ruling authorities nor some process of determining the people's will have authorised war.

3. Comparative justice Involves weighing any justice of the cause

against the evils of violence, destruction, suffering and death which will inevitably follow from war.

4. Right intention Demands no unreasonable conditions, like unconditional surrender, or cession of territory and means of livelihood being added to the original war aims.

5. Last resort Insists that all means of securing justice short of war should have been exhausted: negotiations, statements of intent, police actions short of open warfare.

6. Probability of success Does not necessarily rule out hopeless wars if the values involved are important enough, but again demands a careful assessment of means and ends.

7. Proportionality Insists that the good ends to be achieved must never be disproportionate to the means used. The American bishops point out that in our interdependent world military actions may have disastrous effects for innocent third parties as well as for the protagonists.

A further consideration is the means used to fight the war, the rules for the conduct of war. International agreements have banned many forms of modern warfare: the use of poison gas, the deliberate spread of infectious diseases, and intentional harm to innocent people and non-combatants. However recent experience, as in the Gulf War, has cast doubt on the ability of modern weapon systems to discriminate between civilians and soldiers, and even the most sophisticated systems are dependent on the information fed to them by fallible human agents.

When it comes to nuclear war these issues become all the more serious. Even so-called strategic or battlefield nuclear weapons have long-lasting radiation effects. Indeed the suffering still being experienced in Japan from the 1945 nuclear explosions shows how long such effects can last. A mass nuclear exchange might well cause a climatic disaster, the well named Nuclear Winter effect. At the request of the present pope, the Pontifical Academy of Sciences examined the consequences of nuclear war. In 1982, together with representatives of various national scientific academies, it issued a 'Declaration on the Prevention of Nuclear War' which concluded:

> Throughout its history humanity has been confronted with war, but since 1945 the nature of warfare has changed so profoundly that the future of the human race, of generations yet unborn, is imperilled ... For the first time it is possible to cause damage on such a catastrophic scale as to wipe out a large part of civilisation and to endanger its very survival. The large-scale use of such weapons could trigger major and irreversible ecological and genetic changes whose limits cannot be predicted.[31]

All neat distinctions between civilian and military targets go out the window in the light of such considerations.

The conclusion seems irresistible, then, that nuclear weapons could never be used in war. But could they be kept as a threat, a deterrent? Here another Catholic moral principle comes into play: intention. One may never *intend* to do evil, as well as never actually *do* evil. But is nuclear deterrence feasible without such an intention? Can you deter the enemy without appearing to be, and actually being, willing to use nuclear weapons? The argument about this issue ran through the various drafts of the US bishops' *The Challenge of Peace* and resulted in a compromise statement that deterrence could be tolerated in the very short term pending serious negotiations for nuclear disarmament. Many moralists, including some of the most conservative, felt this was inconsistent,[32] and the 1993 American bishops' statement, while upholding that position, admits that a strong difference of opinion still remains.[33]

The issues of proportionality and discrimination apply to modern conventional weapons as well as nuclear weapons. The Gulf War and many small-scale wars fuelled by the arms industries of the West, have shown in recent times just how destructive automatic rifles, field missiles, electronic sights and so on, can be. Air-delivered missiles are even more murderous and indiscriminate in their effects. Landmines continue to claim victims, especially women and children, long after the original conflict has ended. Can any such weapons meet 'just war' conditions?

Many doubt it.[34]

Another approach to the ethics of war and peace is that of Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago, one of the drafters of *The Challenge of Peace*. He proposes what he calls 'a consistent ethic of life' embracing not only nuclear war, but abortion, some forms of genetic selection, euthanasia, the availability of hospital treatment for the poor, and capital punishment. A consistent defence of life cannot allow exceptions; the dignity of the human person as God's creation applies to all human beings, even ideological enemies and allegedly diminished or deficient persons. For Bernardin the linkage of life issues provides a 'seamless garment' which is a basis for public policy as well as a comprehensive theory for judging the morality of specific actions.[35]

The Catholic pacifist tradition, too, has had many modern exponents. Outstanding among them are the Cistercian monk, Thomas Merton, and the Jesuit leader of the Ploughshares movement, Daniel Berrigan. Merton's contribution was to the spirituality of peacemaking as well as to the theory of nonviolence and discernment of the moral issues involved.[36] He linked the Catholic peace tradition to other traditions of nonviolence—especially that of Gandhi—in a way that has been taken up since his death by other thinkers and activists such as James W. Douglass.[37]

Berrigan has taken a much more public role, first in opposition to the Vietnam War, and more recently to nuclear war. His stance is prophetic, organising symbolic actions aimed not only at publicising his views on, for example, the manufacture of nuclear warheads, but at drawing attention to the basic moral and religious issues. He has the intensity of a prophet and, like the self-proclaimed prophets of old, the validity of his message and effectiveness of his actions can only be judged in the long-term. However his consistency cannot be questioned as he has criticised the US military and the Vietcong, the Israeli government and the PLO, and has worked with dying cancer patients and ex-prisoners. Above all, he is totally opposed to violence. In a famous 1976 open 'Letter to Ernesto Cardenal' subtitled 'Guns don't Work', he lamented the defection to the Sandinistas and violent revolution of this priest–poet, former novice of Thomas Merton, and founder of the pacifist Solentinama community.

> Blood and iron, nukes and rifles. The leftists kill the rightists, the rightists kill the leftists, both given time and occasion, kill the children, the aged, the ill, the suspects. Given time and occasion, both torture prisoners. Always, you understand, inadvertently, regretfully. Both sides, moreover, have excellent intentions, and call on God to witness them. And some god or other does witness them, if we take the word of whatever bewitched church.[38]

'I have never,' says Berrigan, 'seen anyone morally improved by killing, neither the one who aimed the bullet, nor the one who received it in his or her flesh.'[39] Berrigan challenges the 'realism' of the advocates of war and violence with the realism of the gospel.

On the other hand, there are many, like some pacifists faced with the challenge of Adolf Hitler, who have decided that nonviolence simply doesn't work; that the demands of justice can only be met by measured counter-violence. Liberation theology gives some support

to this while proclaiming peaceful and non violent methods as the normal way to true liberation. We are back with St Augustine's overriding principle that peace must be the aim, the desired result, of all our efforts.

The new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* presents the Catholic position on the right and duty of legitimate defence,[40] but severely qualifies it by reference to an overriding duty to preserve the peace.[41] In a recent statement, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace summed it up succinctly:

> In a world marked by evil and sin, the right of legitimate defense by armed means exists. This right can become a serious duty for those who are responsible for the lives of others, for the common good of the family or of the civil community. It is this right alone that can justify the possession or the tranfer of arms. It is not, however, an absolute right; it is coupled with the duty to do all possible to reduce to a minimum, and indeed eliminate, the causes of violence.[42]

The Catholic tradition relating to war and peace is rich and varied. In recent times there has been some convergence, with nuclear pacifism gaining strong support both from strict pacifists and 'just war' theorists, and a recognition that peacemaking is a central Christian as well as human preoccupation. But there will always be disagreement on specific issues. Ironically, these disagreements are often pursued, on both sides, with a far from peaceful disposition. Perhaps the greatest need is for the 'peace of God which surpasses all understanding' to reign in our own community. Indeed, in 1995, a year named by the United Nations as the International Year of Tolerance, we should reassert our commitment to tolerance as the positive and Christian notion it is: the admittedly often ignored fruit of reflection on the gospel.

PROSPECTS FOR PEACE

What is the outlook for peace in the world in the mid-1990s? The sense of crisis which gripped so many people in the 1980s has gone, but is this newfound optimism justified? The Soviet Union and the Soviet Empire have collapsed, and few regret their passing, but the delayed impact of the post-Second World War settlements which pasted over old ethnic and religious tensions is now being felt in many parts of Europe. Similarly the post-colonial divisions of peoples

artificially combined or artificially divided by arbitrary boundaries drawn by foreign conquerors, are becoming more tense. In Rwanda and elsewhere a common religion has not prevented social and ethnic divisions from producing literally unimaginable bloodshed. And the ever-increasing gap between rich and poor nations, and rich and poor within nations, feeds further conflict. The post-Cold War settlement has by no means brought about 'the end of history'. Even if the struggle of political and economic ideologies is over—and much evidence suggests the opposite—new struggles between religious fundamentalisms and competing elites emerge.

Violence is increasingly seen as the only solution to perceived injustice. But how often does it solve the problem or right the injustice? Often all that results is a spiral of terror and increasing violence, and again the main victims are ordinary people going about their ordinary business. Pope John Paul II, speaking to the Irish people in 1979, denounced violence as a solution:

> I proclaim, with the conviction of my faith in Christ and with an awareness of my mission, that violence is evil, that violence is unacceptable as a solution to problems, that violence is unworthy of man. Violence is a lie, for it goes against the truth of our faith, the truth of our humanity. Violence destroys what it claims to defend: the dignity, the life, the freedom of human beings.[43]

There is much talk today about low-level conflicts. The term, however, is misleading. Firstly, people are being killed in such conflicts, more often the innocent, the poor, the very young and the old than the soldiers of governments or insurgents, and they are being killed and maimed in cumulatively large numbers. Secondly, the intensity of such wars is constantly rising as more sophisticated weapons, gunships and helicopters, portable missile launchers and rapid fire guns, are employed by both sides fed by the arms merchants of advanced industrial nations.

The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace has recently issued an important paper called *The International Arms Trade: An Ethical Reflection*[44] which calls for ethical rather than economic considerations to govern arms transfers between nations. The needs of people must take precedence over national interests. Arms exporters must avoid supplying arms to authoritarian regimes. To supply arms to states in conflict often prolongs the conflict: 'There is, therefore, a moral presumption against supplying arms to belligerents; only very

serious reasons can justify the overriding of this presumption'.[45] What is needed, says the papal council, is not only better international control of the arms trade, but more serious efforts to guarantee the security and strengthen the confidence of small nations.

Even the outlook for nuclear peace is not as rosy as often depicted. While great power agreements may have lowered the risk of a nuclear exchange, more minor powers now possess nuclear weapons or nuclear capacity, and their number grows each year. Despite international controls, both the nuclear materials and the technology to manufacture nuclear weapons, have clearly spread. It seems impossible to control the spread of this plague which has been threatening humankind for the last fifty years. No war in this situation can be regarded as minor. Any boundary dispute, civil war, or even armed struggle for justice could become a nuclear tragedy.

One of the most difficult problems of our contemporary world is discerning between true and false national spirit. Communal pride in culture, language and tradition can be a fine and creative force in human life. But nationalism, even patriotism in the better sense of the word, can turn sour and become a force for outward aggression or 'ethnic cleansing'. Christ came to save all people. Saint Paul reminds us that 'there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:28). If nationalism undermines that unity it is un-Christian.

AUSTRALIA AND PEACE

Are we Australians immune from all these problems? Whether by luck, our peculiar history, or wise decisions in the past, the level of political, racial and religious violence is comparatively low in our country. But it is not as low as many would like to think. Leaving aside media scare campaigns, which themselves indicate sensitivities in our societies that can easily be appealed to, we have only to speak to our friends and acquaintances from within various minority groups—such as Aborigines, Jews, Muslims, Vietnamese—to hear stories or threats of violence. We cannot afford to be complacent. But the best precaution is to develop positively peaceful attitudes. Legislation may help, but counter violence, even state violence, is not the answer.

Moreover, in some areas, we in Australia are far from models for the world. Domestic violence is a scourge that is far too prevalent. There are good reasons to question some of the figures that appear in

the mass media, but I doubt there are many of us without some first-hand experience of such violence amongst our families, friends and fellow workers. Whatever the scale, it is of the same kind as more public forms of violence. It is equally diminishing of our humanity, equally contributory to other displays of violence.

We continue to live with and, to some extent, off a basic act of violence and injustice: the dispossession of indigenous peoples. Until this is redressed, and fortunately a beginning has been made, we all cannot be at peace. The answer is not to be found in useless guilt or in seeing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people merely as victims. We must work together as Australians. In violence, all are victims; all suffer. The perpetrator of violence suffers violence to his or her humanity. One of the most striking things about the effect of violence over generations is the way patterns of violence repeat themselves. The Lord assured Jeremiah (31:29–30) and Ezekiel (18: 2–4) that the children's teeth would not be set on edge by the sour grapes their parents ate, that the sins of the parents would not be visited on the children, but the effects of injustice, especially of violence, do linger on, especially if they are not openly acknowledged and confronted. Guilt may be a negative and stifling thing, but when accepted as a source of responsible and active involvement in solving the problems we and our ancestors have created, it may be a force for peace. Above all, it may lead to our sharing the burden with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, working with them to right the wrongs of two centuries.

In many ways Australia is also involved in wars and armed violence through military contingents; alliances, bases and services to allies; arms sales; and diplomacy and actions in international organisations. All of these should be subject to moral scrutiny and not left to be determined by political or economic considerations alone. Again it is a question of peace through justice, justice through peace, and of appropriate means when the ends are just.

There is no point in examining here the historical justice of specific Australian military interventions from the Boer War to the Vietnam War, and the more recent peacekeeping actions. However there is little evidence that our governments acted primarily out of a concern for justice, that they seriously considered alternatives to military involvement, or that they even regarded whether or not to go to war as a moral decision. Sometimes politicians and generals can be extraordinarily profligate with other peoples' lives. And perhaps the major reason is that they know such actions generally will be popular

if sold with the right mixture of patriotism and propaganda. There should be the strongest presumption against war as the solution to intractable international problems. Why, for the Christian, should it be the pacifist who has to justify him- or herself? This is not to deny a legitimate right to self-defence, but rather to insist that a decision to go to war, especially offensive war, is probably the most serious decision a nation's leaders can take.

In the past, alliances, bases and facilities have been a major cause of Australian entanglement in wars. There is no virtue in isolationism for its own sake but we cannot avoid moral responsibility for the results of such alliances. If, for example, communications bases are directly involved in a nuclear first-strike policy which the Church unanimously condemns as immoral, or in relaying commands or information for attacks on civilian populations contrary to 'just war' theory and international law, then they cannot be countenanced. Ignorance, or the plea of the Nazi war criminals of merely obeying orders, are no defence. We have a duty and right to know what is being done in our name, on our soil.

We are even more directly morally responsible for arms production and the transfer and sales of armaments since these are supported by our taxes and approved by our elected representatives. The arguments for and against the manufacture, deployment, and sale of specific weapons to specific markets is complicated.[46] But again, we have a moral responsibility to consider the issues. Will such arms be used against civilians for the purposes of unjust repression or of aggression against neighbours? Where military aid is provided, for example to Papua New Guinea, is it being employed purely for external defence? Are the purchases at the expense of basic human development needs? These are the questions that the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace insists that all arms exporting and donating nations—and Australia now aspires to be such—must ask.[47]

Australia may have a special role to play in peacemaking. It is sometimes an advantage to be a minor power, a small nation unthreatening to others. We should not, of course, assume that others see us this way. New Zealanders have complained of our aggressive arms salesmanship. Bougainvilleans and East Timorese have felt the effects of Australian arms and training. Our interventions in the Pacific Islands have sometimes been heavy-handed. Many of our weapons are technologically superior to those of our Asian neighbours, and our frigates, submarines and F111 and F/A18 aircraft are rightly seen as offensive as well as defensive in purpose.

Nevertheless, as far as the great powers are concerned, Australia may have a special role as intermediary in regional disputes. We are predominantly European in culture but Asian in geography and in economic ties: a 'link' culture. Despite problems and misgivings, we are seen by most of our neighbours as genuinely concerned for peace and mutual advancement. We have a history of commitment to the United Nations, to dispute mediation and settlement, to peacemaking and peacekeeping. Whatever the long-term outcome, our Foreign Minister, Senator Gareth Evans, played a decisive role in attempts to bring peace to Cambodia. There are similar opportunities, perhaps somewhat compromised now, in East Timor and Bougainville. We are also playing our part in the reintegration of Vietnam and Cuba into the international community, a role that seems politically impossible for the United States.

The United Nations has many critics but it is all that we have. Its ideals are fine, and the original vision of its charter of guaranteeing peace, development and human rights and justice for all people coincides in many ways with the Christian charter for justice, peace and development laid down in Catholic social teaching. However its implementation has suffered, especially in recent years, from structural and political weaknesses: great power rivalries on the Security Council, careerism, underfunding, failure to pay dues, and contradictions between peacekeeping and peacemaking roles. In October 1994, Australia strongly supported the reform of the United Nations and urged the development of two policies: 'comprehensive security', which would add considerations of economic development and human rights abuses to military security; and 'cooperative security', which would focus on consultation, prevention and interdependence.[48]

One initiative Australia has taken is the development of training programs in dispute resolution and conflict management and the proposal for a dispute resolution service within the UN secretariat. Australia should continue to develop its role in preventive diplomacy since many of the worst human disasters in recent times have been due to the failure to anticipate and prevent outbreaks of violence that were quite predictable. UN military intervention has often been too late as well as too little. There has never been a greater need for practical peacemakers than the present time, and regional and international organisations provide new scope for Christian charity.

Those of us fortunate enough to participate in the Ecumenical Monitoring Program in South Africa prior to the recent elections,

experienced the power of churchpeople as politically neutral but concerned peacemakers. At times we were able to go where UN observers could not go with safety, and were welcomed as fellow Christians by disputants. A shared Christianity did not prevent bloodshed in South Africa, even less in Rwanda, but it may provide common ground, a common language, a common set of values which facilitates non violent solutions. Increasingly the Australian Catholic Church is undertaking such a role in the Pacific region and many would like to see it accepted as a normal role for the Church. Perhaps a permanent ecumenical peacemaking organisation could be set up ready to move quickly to subdue potential crises, at least in those countries where Christianity is a moral force. Its activities need not be restricted to Third World nations; one could envisage a role for a national or international ecumenical peacemaking body in Northern Ireland, the Balkans, or even the United States or Australia. But such an institution could not succeed unless the churches, including our own, were prepared to commit resources to such work—not just material resources, but spiritual resources in the form of preparation and training.

WORKING FOR PEACE

Working for peace does not consist mainly of grand enterprises to solve world problems. Peace work begins within the home. If, as researchers tell us, domestic violence is one of the best predictors of problems in the next generation, then the development of peacefulness—of a spirituality for peace and habits of peaceful resolution of conflicts—is one of the best predictors of peace in future life.

Peace and peacefulness must be presented as positive values. Peace is not an easy option; it demands more discipline, courage and persistence than is required by abandoning ourselves to our violent instincts. It ranks highly in the cost of discipleship that Jesus preached to his followers. It is the taste of the salt that is so easily lost (Luke 14:34).

Prayer is, of course, essential in acquiring both peace of soul and peaceful behaviour. Especially related to interior and exterior peace are those forms of prayer such as meditation and contemplation that develop recollection, focus and a sense of the presence of God. Gandhi described his long and painful spiritual evolution towards nonviolence as an 'experiment with truth', and such an experiment is as much an interior journey as the development of practices and tactics. We are not all called to be peacemakers on the international

scene, but we are all called to be peacemakers in our homes, jobs and communities, and to perform our own experiments with truth, peace and love. Time out from the rush of the day and prayerful reflection—on the events of our lives, our reactions to them and their meaning; on the teachings and deeds of Jesus, the presence of God, and the indwelling of the Spirit—all greatly help the development of inner peace, and hence peaceful behaviour.

The Gospel story of Jesus in the wilderness provides a kind of model for the development of peacefulness. Jesus is tempted to violence, the 'violence' of coercive power over others, and he successively rejects its various forms: control of material wealth, spiritual power over others, and political power (see, for example, Matthew 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13). Jesus' kingdom is a kingdom of peace and free choice—not worldy dominance. But Jesus achieved his victory over violence and power painfully, through prayer and periodic withdrawal. The devils of violence are cast out by prayer in which we see the world clearly and whole.

We must win little victories over our unpeaceful selves before we can be a force of peace to others. Do we react to frustrations—the petty stupidities of modern living, the friction within our families—with unproductive and peace-disturbing anger? Or do we spread peace through a smile, a soft word, an offer to help? Peace should be part of the texture of everyday Christian living.

Forgiveness is a much neglected Christian virtue, perhaps because it is so contrary to the values of our society. It is also often misunderstood as weakness, double-thinking or stupidity. Forgiveness does not deny the reality or the seriousness of the offence. It places it in a deeper context. In Colossians 3:12–15, Paul establishes the ramifications of the 'peace of Christ':

> As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.

Forgiveness, then, is not some kind of twisted double-thinking, but a simple acknowledgement of who and what we are: brothers and sisters freed by the love of God.

One area that needs serious attention in the life of the Australian Catholic Church is the existence of peace-destroying verbal violence of one Catholic group against another. Are we disciples of Jesus by his own test?

> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. (John 13:35)

Jesus proclaimed this as his 'new commandment' (John 13:34), the distinctive sign of his followers.

> Those who say, 'I love God', and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The Commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also. (1 John 4:20–21)

When concern is expressed at the failure of the Christian churches to attract and hold the young, we often fail to ask whether we have been a sign of love and peace to the world. Instead, our explanations focus on precisely those things that divide us and lead to intemperate accusations of being un-Christian or un-Catholic. Peace is the fruit of love and the condition of justice, and without peace within the Church neither love nor justice can prevail; the mission of the Church is diminished.

Domestic violence is a serious problem in Australia as in many other countries. There are 'little' wars going on all around us and, as with the 'big' wars of our time, it is usually the women and children who suffer most. The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council is currently reviewing its policy on domestic violence, and all are invited to contribute to that process of expressing our feelings as a community about the causes and solutions to this major social evil. Some solutions lie in the area of legislation and community policing, but these deal more with the aftermath of domestic violence than with the root causes. Why is our society so fixated on power, on aggressive display, on short cuts to compliance? Nothing less than a total conversion, a change of heart, is demanded.

Domestic violence is not exclusively physical. Psychological violence may be just as damaging as physical assault, and is by no means exclusively a male problem. Verbal abuse, the put down remark, the raising of voices, sneers and slurs are familiar to all of us, not only in homes but in schools, workplaces, on sportsfields and in

areas of recreation and entertainment. Religious people seem especially prone to a form of psychological violence known as 'spiritual violence', in which false notions of sinfulness and suffering are used to justify intolerable and un-Christian pressure on members of a family or students in a classroom. All these attitudinal problems, expressed in words and behaviour, are symptoms of a failure to relate to other people as human beings, made in the image of God, endowed with intrinsic value. And the only solution is a deepening of our understanding of our spiritual natures.

It is, perhaps, not surprising that there is so much violence in our homes, since we admit into the home so many violent words and actions through the screens of our television sets. Research into the effects of TV violence, especially on the young, is not very conclusive. We do live in a violent world which the electronic media reflect as well as influence. But there is more than a little irony in the denial of those who control the media that TV violence influences violent behaviour, while their industry rests on a well-tested belief that TV advertising influences consumer behaviour.

Many other aspects of Australian life today are ridden with violence and provide opportunities for exercising and developing Christian peacefulness. There has been much attention in the mass media to street violence, especially by and against young people. It is questionable whether this has actually increased, but certainly there has been an increase in fearfulness and distrust—the antithesis of peace. Again the controversies over police killings, sieges, massacres and black deaths in custody, have drawn attention to the prevalence of violent death in our midst, not yet on the scale of, say, the US, but with an apparent trend towards deadly violence as a first resort in settling disputes or restoring order. There are not as many guns in private hands in Australia as in the US, but we have the same problem of a well-organised lobby trying to convince us that owning guns is a natural right and that gun controls will not help in lowering the rate of homicide.

Much less attention is given to aggressiveness and violence behind the steering wheel. Leaving aside the appalling accident toll and its financial and human cost, the psychological cost to all on the roads is enormous: the increase in tensions at work and at home resulting from drivers whose nerves are worn thin coping with needless aggression; the chain reaction of egotism and loss of respect for others.

Violence in sport is another manifestation of our double standards

regarding violence in society. There is no point in blaming the mass media for overemphasising it while we continue to watch it on TV, to support the advertisers who promote it, and to accept it as a normal part of modern sportsmanship.

Many parents are concerned about war-related toys and their effects on children. Perhaps more serious are computer games which encourage the idea that violent destruction is normal and a solution to problems.

Here, as in other areas referred to—domestic violence, racism, false patriotism—education must play an important part. There have been some excellent programs for peace education developed for Catholic schools.[49] But again, the emphasis should be not so much on specific programs educating for peace as on peace as a central Christian value, a point of reference for all religious and 'secular' education. Further, there are practices that can be encouraged in the classroom: courtesy which acknowledges the human value of others, 'cooling off' when exchanges get overheated, and meditation. If a spirituality for peace is not developed especially during the early school years, it is much more difficult later on.

In one respect, schools have played an important role in helping change our attitudes towards physical violence. In most if not all Catholic schools there has been a complete abandonment of that physical punishment which left so many of the older generations of Australian Catholics with such deep mental scars. Apart from its ineffectiveness and counter-productive side effects, well-meaning old-style punishment helped associate the Church with a culture of violence that severely undermined its message and the respect of those who endured the punishment. Severe physical punishment has no more place in the Christian home than in the school and for the same reasons.

Working for peace is hard work, but it is also deeply rewarding because it relates to so many of the causes of our hope. Peace is a sign of the kingdom of God which can never be fully realised on earth but which can give us glimpses of God's reality. The Church has always provided such glimpses: monastic communities (the Benedictine practice of placing *pax* [peace] above the doorways of its houses marks that place as a place of peace); the kiss of peace, now often other signs of peace, at the mass; peace communities in the midst of violence, such as the ecumenical communities of Northern Ireland. There are such signs in our midst for those with eyes to see.

CONCLUSION: THE PEACE OF GOD

When St Paul writes of 'the peace of God which surpasses all understanding' he is not referring to some external or superficial peace. The Christian community in Philippi was beset with persecution and strife and in a world not unlike our own in its violence, sensuality and political disturbances. He was certainly not promising a cessation of struggle, a short cut though the problems that beset his beloved Philippians, his first European converts.

The peace of God does not guarantee an easy life. On the contrary, Jesus promised strife and difficulties to his disciples, but peace in the midst of those difficulties:

> The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!' (John 16:32–3)

So 'the peace of God', 'the peace of Christ', is interior peace, hope in Christ who has shown us the way which is, however, the way of the cross.

In 'The Ballad of the White Horse', G. K. Chesterton pictures King Alfred faced with the invasion of the Northmen being promised by God's mother:

> I tell you naught for your comfort,
> Yea, naught for your desire
> Save that the sky grows darker yet
> And the sea grows higher.[50]

The peace we are promised is not necessarily to be achieved in this world.

Neither, however, is it entirely of the next world. Worldly peace is an ideal we aim for but can never hope to fully achieve. What we can have is inner peace achieved through the struggle for justice and peace in the world. This is one of the great Christian paradoxes: peace achieved through struggle, tranquillity through strife, inner peace through a perhaps unsuccessful attempt to pacify our outer environment.

Then we can say as Paul said to Timothy: 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith'. (2 Timothy 4:7)

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45 ibid., p. 26.
46 The best recent treatment of the issues is G. Cheeseman & S. Kettle (eds), *The New Australian Militarism: Undermining our Future Security*, Pluto Press, Sydney, 1990. It includes a defence of Australian government policy by the then Defence Minister, Kim Beazley.
47 *The International Arms Trade*, esp. ch. 2, 'Responsibilities of Exporting States'.
48 Senator Gareth Evans, Reintegrating the United Nations, address to the General Assembly of the United Nations, New York, 3 October 1994.
49 See, for example, *Educating for Peace: A Handbook for School Communities*, Catholic Education Office, Melbourne, 1988.
50 *The Collected Poems of G. K. Chesterton*, Dodd, Mead, New York, 1961, p. 217.