

DO YOUR JOB PART 8

The author of the note below is a practicing Catholic and retired military officer with combat experience in two wars. He is a highly intelligent searcher for truth and has read voluminously on all sides of the issues of Catholic Just War Theory and Jesus' teaching of Nonviolent Love of friends and enemies. He, therefore, is well versed with the moral seriousness and nuances of what is theologically and practically involved here. He has concluded over time that the Jesus' of the Gospels teaches to those who believe in Him a Way of nonviolence and love of enemies in imitation of Him. He is perplexed as to how his bishop and his Church can continue to justify Catholics participating in war. For over a year he sought a meeting with his bishop to discuss this issue. The following is the note he wrote to me after he met with the bishop.

Charlie,

My bishop finally agreed to meet with me. What I learned is that for him the ends justifies the means and no amount of contradiction or obfuscation about the morality of war is too much to use when talking with a fellow Catholic when his beliefs are at stake. When he finally informed me that the meeting was over because I wouldn't listen and that my logic was poor I was quite sad. Not shocked, just sad.

I got the distinct impression that my "impudence" in questioning the validity of his logic and facts wasn't appreciated. I doubt that he would willingly debate me in public. The look on his face when I questioned his points let me know he understood his problems. We rarely stayed on a point for long, once it was lost because his facts or logic were flimsy. I asked him to explain how my points were illogical - his responses were like an authoritarian professor who is above explaining past his verdict.

Later, he described Gen Sherman's drive to the sea campaign as moral since it shortened the war!!! When I pointed out from my own detailed and scholarly knowledge of Sherman's March to the Sea that Sherman's armies targeted civilians for murder and rape, which in Catholic Just War Theory are morally grave and intrinsically evil acts, he looked at me as if I were naive. I've dealt with some pretty unsavory characters in my day as a military officer during two wars, but that is the lay of the land in war. I was not prepared to hear what came out of this bishop's mouth.

Fred

Is this bishop doing his job as a CEO and "protecting the brand" of the Roman Catholic Church, Inc.? Is he doing the job he was commissioned to do by Jesus (Mt 28: 19-20)?

The following is another note I received from a Catholic man working diligently to stop the murdering of third world people, mostly innocent children, women and men, by US Predator Drones directed from Hancock Air Force Base in Syracuse, NY.

Hi Charlie,

I would not attempt to have a piece published in the Diocese of Syracuse publication. However I noted on a Syracuse TV interview and in a letter to the editor that Bishop Cunningham met with some

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of us (before I went to Jamesville Penitentiary on a three month sentence for the crime of a nonviolent die-in calling on our government to stop the killing by drones). The Bishop said to us (four Catholics and a former Catholic): "You all need to know that our use of drones keeps boots off the ground....besides, a lot of Catholics work at Hancock."

Jack

Is this bishop doing his job as a CEO of the Roman Catholic Church, Inc. by protecting the cash flow from the government and the military into the coffers of the institutional Church and by protecting the flow of young Catholic boys and girls into the military? Is he doing the job he was commissioned to do by Jesus (Mt 28:19-20)?

However, over the decades I have received scores of correspondences from Catholic Peace and Justice folks who have met with a bishop(s), formally or informally, who raised the issue of Gospel Nonviolence with him and received another type of response. It amounts to approximately the same answer that Cardinal Dolan gave to a Catholic friend of mine committed to nonviolence who presented him with the incontrovertible evidence of the Gospels that Jesus is nonviolent and that His Way is nonviolent. The Cardinal-CEO of the second wealthiest diocese in the world said, *"I respect your choice and I will pray for you. But, I am a Just War Catholic."*

What is unsettling about this response and about all other similar responses given by a bishop(s) under similar circumstances, is that in most instances the Catholic NV peace and justice people and organizations found such a response acceptable and were often effusive that the bishop gave a certain amount of approbation or a tip-of-the-hat to Gospel Nonviolence! This is exactly the result that such bishops desire to evoke from individuals and groups committed to Gospel Nonviolence by this rhetorical strategy. It affords them the escape of not having to personally or publicly seriously dialogue about the truth and consequences of Jesus' teaching in the Gospels, nor about the truth and consequence of Catholic Just War Theory.

"You believe in the Nonviolence of the Gospel and I believe in Catholic Just War Theory, case closed. Have a nice day." Such bishops simply proclaim as the Gospel of Jesus Christ the logical and moral equivalent of the Gospel of Linus from the Peanuts comic strip, *"All right, so you believe in Santa Claus, and I believe in the 'Great Pumpkin.' The way I see it, it doesn't matter what you believe just so you're sincere."* Then all parties are at peace, nothing changes, a moral teaching and its contradiction continue to be interchangeable as God's will and Catholics continue, as they have for seventeen centuries, to go off by the tens of millions to train to kill or to kill untold numbers of people on the say-so of politicians, believing they are being true followers of Jesus.

"All right, so you believe in Santa Claus, and I believe in the 'Great Pumpkin.' The way I see it, it doesn't matter what you believe just so you're sincere," as a valid interpretation and application of Jesus' Great Commission to bishops, *"Teach them to obey all that I have commanded you,"* is as phony as interpreting Jesus' command, *"Love your enemies,"* as meaning a Christian can slaughter his or her enemies or as phony as interpreting Jesus' New Commandment, *"Love one another as I have loved you,"* as meaning that a Christian can kill people on behalf of the Mafia, one's ethnic group (Greek, Irish, Romanian, French, Turkish, etc.), one's political organization, one's business, one's economy, one's religion, one's ideology, etc. and be *"loving one another as Jesus has loved."*

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Are individual Catholics and Catholic groups who believe that the Jesus of the Gospels teaches a Way of Nonviolent Love of friends and enemies helping a bishop(s) do his job when they court his favor by silently acquiescing to the spiritual and moral validity of an episcopal teaching by word and deed that proclaims, “*You go ahead and believe in Jesus’ teaching in the Gospels of Nonviolent Love of friends and enemies, and I’ll believe and proclaim Catholic Just War Theory. We’ll agree to disagree and will thereby have unity and peace in the Church?*” Or, should they be vigorously, continuously and perseveringly pushing-back against it, denouncing it as grossly incompatible with the teaching of Jesus in the Gospels, as well as morally absurd. When nonviolent peace and justice Catholics and Catholic groups, implicitly or explicitly, communicated that bishops proclaiming that Catholic Just War Theory is an acceptable alternative to Gospel Nonviolence, they are aiding and abetting the most cunningly serpentine and destructive untruth that has ever burrowed itself into the institutional Church blighting Christian souls and lives *en masse* for centuries?

I have watched for decades various groups and associations inside and outside the institutional Church—Marian groups, Charismatic groups, military groups, political groups, peace and justice groups. Etc.—curry favor with Catholic CEO- bishops by fawning in various ways, including monetary largesse, over any bishop who would give the group the time of day. But such unctuous activity cannot and must not be part of the *modus operandi* of any person, group or association committed to proclaiming Jesus’ Way of Nonviolent Love of friends and enemies as the truth of the Gospels if the fawning includes the debasing of human integrity by violating the principle of non-contradiction and the “bad faith” Christian acceptance of Catholic Just War Theory as morally equivalent to or as morally a substitute for God’s saving will as revealed by Jesus in the Gospels.

It is imperative that those persons and groups committed to the truth of Jesus’ Way of Nonviolent Love of friends and enemies keep in the forefront of their minds that the person who is in the ministry of bishop is merely another human being subjected to the consequences of the Fall and therefore his eternal salvation must be of primary concern if we encounter him. The office neither sanctifies the man nor makes the man. Permitting someone to believe he is doing the right thing by equating or substituting Catholic Just War Theory for Jesus’s antithetical teaching in the Gospels of Nonviolent Love of friends and enemies is not an acceptable strategy for procuring a bishop(s) name on an organization’s letterhead or for acquiring or maintaining his approval, respect or praise. It is a failure of that love and truth, which the Nonviolent Logos of God Incarnate teaches by word and deed, is the saving power of God in this world.

Tolerance applies only to persons, never to verifiable untruth. Intolerance applies only to verifiable untruth, never to persons. If a person is telling people to jump from the 52nd floor of the Empire State Building because it will not harm them, it is both anti-human and anti-Gospel to try to ingratiate oneself to him by the lie of morally equating jumping out of the window on the 52nd floor with its logical opposite, i.e. not jumping out of the window on the 52nd floor, or by saying that jumping is a valid moral alternative to not jumping. Likewise it is anti-human and anti-Gospel for Christians and Christian groups committed to the truth of Jesus’ teaching of Nonviolent Love of friends and enemies to cultivate being in the cultural good graces of a bishop(s) by pandering to his holding that Catholic Just War Theory is logically compatible with or derivable from or a substitute for anything that Jesus ever said or did in the Gospels. To choose one way as the truth of the will of God for a Christian is to totally abdicate the other, logically and incarnationally—and Jesus gave no Apostle, no disciple, no follower the right or permission to substitute the way of violence and enmity for the Way of Nonviolent Love in imitation of Him.

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If those, who believe that Jesus is their Lord, God and Savior and that He teaches a Way of Nonviolent Love of friends and enemies for those on whom He has bestowed the gift of faith, do not help a bishop(s) do his job by explicitly informing him as long and as often as is necessary to stop explicitly and/or implicitly teaching Catholic Just War Theory as a way compatible with authentically following Jesus, who will? Any time a Catholic or a Catholic group or association committed to the Nonviolent Jesus of the Gospels gives a bishop a pass who says, *“I respect your choice and I will pray for you. But, I am a Just War Catholic. You go your way and I’ll go mine,”* he, she or they are not doing *their* job. Personal or institutional Church unity and/or peace purchased by explicitly or implicitly acquiescing to a falsification of the teaching of Jesus is the unity and peace brought into existence by handing a life or an institutional Church over to some spirit other than the Holy Spirit, who is the *“Spirit of Truth”* (Jn 16:13, 14:17; 1Jn 5:6).

(To be continued)

-Emmanuel Charles McCarthy