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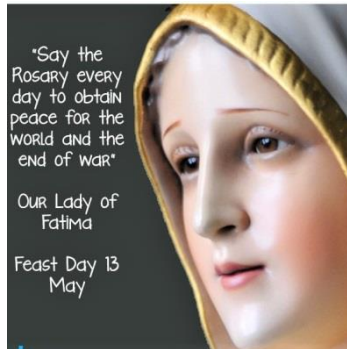
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Peace and War

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We are in Eastertide having celebrated Easter with our 'Alleluias' and we continue to do so with gratitude. The Lord has Risen, and death is conquered. But we live in troubled times and instead of peace and harmony we have war and aggression and discord. Sometimes it is hard to reconcile all these things and stay at peace in our hearts and minds. Wars have broken out through the centuries and each has left a mark, a change, in the way we see things, and made enemies out of former friends and fear, instead of love of neighbour dominates. One of the first things that Jesus said when He rose from death was *'Peace be with you.'* a striking reminder of how important peace is and how we are to cultivate peace on all levels. Interior peace is achieved through prayer and belief in God and an ardent desire to remain close to God, and our neighbour. This is the call of every Christian. But we do not live in perfect times and the challenges of maintaining peace can be very difficult.



It is also the month of May dedicated to Our Mother and Queen of Peace and she continually remind her children, always, to pursue this as a primary aim of our lives. Peace also does not mean disinterest or a kind of naivety, as we will find things that challenge us, and ways of achieving peace will also be a source of conflict and disagreement... sadly wars too abound between Christians...

We cannot be indifferent to the conflicts that surround us at his time. War in Europe was something that a 'post war generation' hoped would never be seen again... and yet we stand on the edge of the possibility of further violence and escalation. It would be easier just not to think about it, and hide in the shadows of the everyday... yes, we can all pray and offer aid, encouragement, support to those caught up in the conflict, and indeed there has been

great blessings on this account both to the suffering and to the aid giver, a sign of the True Kingdom... but, and there is a but, we must be clear on the moral positions that we adopt when we are called to make judgement about war and peace. Moral issues do matter and our response has to echo principles of both love and justice...

'As early as the fifth century, St. Augustine of Hippo was considering the moral consequences of war. He was one of the first people to articulate a philosophical statement on war and justice, known as the Just War doctrine. St. Augustine laid the groundwork for the 'just war' idea, but he also did so with caution. Writing in 418 A.D., St. Augustine said: "Peace should be the object of your desire; war should be waged only as a necessity...in order that peace may be obtained. Therefore, *even in waging a war, cherish the spirit of a peacemaker*, that, by conquering those whom you attack, you may lead them back to the advantages of peace...As violence is used toward him who rebels and resists, so mercy is due to the vanquished or captive." Since that time, the Church has used his teachings as a basis for determining when just force is necessary to protect the innocent' (Catholic League for Justice).

It is very easy when we see great injustice and violence, needless killing, to be justifiably angry and develop hatred for oppressors. It can also be very painful when peace-making seems to fail or there seems to be little left than to defend oneself. It is then important to understand that peace is the purpose of both defence and fighting...We have a moral obligation to both defend the helpless but also to protect ourselves and our families and our homes... This form of self-defence is clearly understood, and few would doubt that this is necessary. It is also true that heroic souls have

Even in waging war, cherish the spirit of peace-maker; that, by conquering those whom you attack, you may lead them back to the advantages of peace. St. Augustine

refused to take up arms even when threatened. The greater issue in our time is to fly to the defenceless and decide how to deal with aggressors who maim and kill for their own advantage? Further, when their actions to do so are against all the principles of military and social/moral action this raises other issues.

Genocide is a grave/mortal sin and cannot be included in the any war scenario and is referred to as *a War Crime*...forbidden too is the extermination of religious and ethnic minorities, women, children and other populations.

But there are other issues. Is it justified to go to war in order to prevent any aggressor who may be thinking of attacking you but it is not certain that they will?? This is a huge dilemma and needs prayer. Put simply... if you see a neighbour brandishing a knife which he may use... do you instantly kill him or do you attempt to disarm him to prevent loss of life including his. ?

We now have weapons that not only kill and maim but also leave lasting damage. Nuclear weapons have far more consequences on people and land than anything in the past. This makes our decisions even harder to make and pose many questions as to how to solve issues peacefully. But we must never lose sight of the fact that to defend the defenceless is an obligation and regardless of the consequences for us. This requires much prayer and wisdom which comes for The Holy Spirit.



There are internationally agreed principles of engagement in war and while not perfect they are a guide. We have also to speak out if we feel that grave injustice is being done to Gods beloved people especially the defenceless and innocent. We must not lose sight of the primary commandments of 'Do Not Kill' which underpins the other judgements. So let us

pray that the coming weeks will find a way forward in peace and justice for all. Let us also understand what is at stake and work for justice and peace.

Blessings of Peace!

Halina Holman

Pope Francis

"We emerged from two years of pandemic, which took a heavy toll. It was time to come out of the tunnel together, hand in hand, pooling our strengths and resources... Instead, we are showing that we still have within us the spirit of Cain, who saw Abel not as a brother, but as a rival, and thought about how to eliminate him. We need the crucified and risen Lord so that we can believe in the victory of love and hope for reconciliation. Today, more than ever, we need Him to stand in our midst and repeat to us: 'Peace be with you!'"

Easter, Rome, 2022

Church Guidance of Engagement in War

The Church's teachings are clear when innocent lives are at stake. According to the **Catechism**, "Legitimate defence can be not only a right but a grave duty for one who is responsible for the lives of others. The defence of the common good requires that an unjust aggressor be rendered unable to cause harm. For this reason, those who legitimately hold authority also have the right to use arms to repel aggressors against the civil community entrusted to their responsibility."

Lord Jesus, restore Peace and Harmony in our broken world and protect Your people from all harm!



Feast Days in May

1st Third Sunday of Easter

2nd St. Athanasius

3rd Ss. Philip & James, Apostles

4th The English Martyrs

8th Fourth Sunday of Easter

13th Our Lady of Fatima

14th St. Matthias, Apostle

15th Fifth Sunday of Easter

21st St. Godric of Finchale

22nd Sixth Sunday of Easter

24th Our Lady, Help of Christians

25th St. Bede

26th Ascension of the Lord, Holy Day of Oblg.

St. Augustine of Canterbury

29th Seventh Sunday of Easter

31st The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

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