Peacemaking in the Catholic Tradition: a Guide to Research

Introduction

The student of Catholic peace history will find that Catholicism has a long tradition of peacemaking. A tradition that continues to evolve as our understanding of the intimate relationship between peace and justice deepens. This tradition has included a range of thought and various positions on an appropriate Christian response to war and the bellicosity of nations. During War II, for example, it included support for the just-war doctrine, which holds that under certain circumstances and under certain limitations war is justifiable (see the Catholic Association for International Peace). Pacifism, on the other hand, which insists that war can never be morally justified, was brought into the sphere of American Catholic thought by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin (see the Catholic Worker movement). It challenged the just-war doctrine and has evolved into an active non-violence, which often uses civil disobedience as a means of protest.

In the 1960s Catholic peacemaking activities broadened. The war in Vietnam and military conscription of young Americans led to support for conscientious objectors (see American Pax Association) and organized efforts to counsel draft resisters and protest U.S. military involvement in Southeast Asia (see Catholic Peace Fellowship). Also beginning in the late 1960s, the U.S. Catholic Church’s hierarchy began to add their voices with a series of pastoral statements and letters on the Vietnam war, conscientious objection, nuclear weapons, and economic justice (see "Human Life in Our Day", "Declaration on Conscientious Objection and Selective Conscientious Objection","The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response", and "Economic Justice for All").

In an effort to channel the Church’s wisdom and resources into peacemaking activities, Pax Christi USA, a national Catholic peace organization was formed in 1972. Pax Christi played an essential role in the nuclear freeze movement during the cold war of the 1980s. The 1980’s also saw U.S. sponsored aggression in Central America fueling that regions civil wars. The Catholic peace movement responded with protest, active solidarity with Central American popular groups, and providing sanctuary to refugees fleeing their war torn countries. And in the 1990s, when war and tensions dominated U.S. relations with Iraq, Catholic peacemakers called for an end to economic sanctions and a non-violent resolution to our differences.

The research guide that follows hopes to be of assistance to those studying the Catholic peace tradition. It provides an annotated list of relevant print and electronic sources in the libraries of St. Peter’s College (sources from both the Jersey City and Englewood Cliffs...
An attempt was also made to alert the researcher to some of the Catholic individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to the pursuit of justice and the making of peace. The guide for the most part focuses on the twentieth-century and the American Catholic Church. In the course of your research, you will inevitably come across the names of other individuals and organizations that you may wish to study as well. It is hoped that use of the guide will aid in the study of how both the institutional Church and its grassroots organizations, have attempted to be instruments of peace during times of conflict and war.

**Encyclopedias**

Encyclopedias are often the best place to start a research project, particularly when you know little about your topic. They provide a general overview of the subject, and present it in a concise, orderly way. After familiarizing yourself with the topic, you can then decide what it is you want to focus on, and the other information sources you’ll need to look at.

*Encyclopedia of American Catholic History* (REF BX1406.2 .E53 1997)


*Modern Catholic Encyclopedia* (REF BX841 .M63 1994)

*New Catholic Encyclopedia* (REF BX841 .N44 1967)

**Dictionaries**

The subject specific dictionaries below can be helpful when in need of a brief definition of a term, a specific fact related to a person, or a concise summary of a particular event or social movement.


*New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought* (REF BX1753 .N497 1994)


**Bibliographies**

Bibliographies can be extremely useful when conducting in-depth research. They both aid you in locating material and alert you to what is available on a particular subject or author. The bibliographies listed below will assist you in discovering the wealth of material on two of American Catholicism’s most cherished peacemakers, Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton, as well as the Catholic peace movement in general.

While not a definitive bibliography, Dell’Isola’s work contains a great deal of Thomas Merton’s writings. The bibliography is divided by type of work and includes Merton’s books and pamphlets, poetry, translations into foreign languages of books, poems, and essays, books with contributions by Merton, his contributions to newspapers and periodicals, juvenilia, and miscellanea.


This bibliography is divided into two parts. The main part of the book includes articles, poems, letters, etc, printed in *The Catholic Worker* newspaper from its first issue in May 1933 through its 50th anniversary in May 1983. The second part is a bibliography of works by Dorothy Day, except for her articles printed in *The Catholic Worker*, which can be found listed separately in the first section. This book also includes an annotated list of works, representing a range of opinions, that discuss Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement.


Documents the history of the peace tradition in the Roman Catholic Church. Includes material ranging from the early church, through the era of the Crusades, up to twentieth century America. Topics include the various forms of Catholic peacemaking: pacifism, the role and rights of conscience, and theologies of peace, liberation, and social justice. Mystical and contemplative elements of the Catholic tradition which have contributed to the understanding and practice of peace are also included. The bibliography is arranged by both topic and period.

**Indexes**

Periodical indexes aid the researcher in finding specific articles in journals and magazines. Searching by subject, a personal name, or author, you can find citations (ex: title of article, journal name, date, page number, etc) to relevant articles on your research topic.

*Catholic Periodical & Literature Index* (REF AI3 C32)

**Electronic Databases**

Academic Index

America: History and Life (available only in Jersey City)
Catholic News Service

Origins (Periodical Section) (www.catholic.news.com/ohome.htm)

Published by the Catholic News Organization, a department of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Origins is a weekly documentary service that covers news from the Vatican, Pope, Bishops, and political and religious leaders from around the world. The Church’s work for peace is regularly covered.

Selected Works


American Catholic Pacifism is a collection of essays written by both scholars and Catholic Worker activists. It provides an in-depth analysis of the origins and nature of Catholic pacifism, especially the pivotal role played by Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement. The authors provide an analysis of the theological and spiritual roots of pacifism, look at the Catholic Worker movement in the context of the American peace movement in general, and explore Catholic pacifism during both World War II and the War in Vietnam.


McNeal provides a general study of the origins of the Catholic peace movement and looks at the influence exerted upon it by four of its most important leaders: Dorothy Day and her promotion of pacifism, Thomas Merton and his theological writings on peace, and the non-violent resistance of Father Dan Berrigan, S.J., and his brother, Philip.


McNeal, the author of The American Catholic Peace Movement, 1928-1972, updates her research to include significant events since the completion of her first work. In her more comprehensive study, Harder than War: Catholic Peacemaking in Twentieth-Century America, McNeal further documents the growth of pacifism, nonviolence, and nuclear pacifism within the American Catholicism, and analyzes their impact on the church and nation. She looks at the contribution to peace that the American Catholic hierarchy begins to make through the issuing of pastoral letters, especially The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response. She also examines how in addition to trying to stop or
prevent wars, those in the American Catholic peace movement are also trying to respond to Christ’s call to be peacemakers, and challenge the institutional church to respond to this call as well. And finally, McNeal reviews the Ronald Reagan presidency, and the election of Pope John Paul II to the papacy, to determine the affect their leadership had on the Catholic peace movement.


Musto provides a comprehensive review of Catholic thought and action related to the issues of war and peace. His survey includes official papal teachings as well as the contributions to peace which have arisen from the laity. Musto traces the Catholic peacemaking tradition from the early Christian Church to the late Twentieth Century, and discusses the individuals, groups, movements, and institutions which have contributed to this tradition. Separate chapters present peacemaking efforts in Europe, the United States, and in Third World countries such as Brazil and the Philippines.

**Organizations**

**Catholic Worker** - [http://www.catholicworker.org](http://www.catholicworker.org)

The above URL (web address) can be used as a gateway to substantial information about Dorothy Day, Peter Maurin, and the Catholic Worker movement. Three separate web sites are available from this URL. The Catholic Worker Roundtable provides essays about the Catholic Worker movement and current social justice issues, an annotated bibliography on the writings of Dorothy Day, and information regarding over 100 Catholic Worker communities throughout the country. The Dorothy Day Library on the Web provides an extensive collection of Dorothy Day’s writings which can be accessed by title or topic, and a forum for discussing her writings. And the Catholic Worker Home Page provides biographies and writings of Day and Peter Maurin, a bibliography on the Catholic Worker Movement, and links to major Catholic Worker archival material.

**Center of Concern** - [www.coc.org/coc](http://www.coc.org/coc)

The Center of Concern (COC) is a Washington based Catholic think-tank that studies and analyzes issues related to global development, justice, and peace. Using Catholic social teaching as a basis for their theological reflection and political analysis, the COC devises alternative strategies and projects that address global poverty, hunger, and injustice. Their web site explains their work and includes information regarding Catholic social teaching, human rights, and global economics.

**Maryknoll Justice & Peace Office** [www.maryknoll.org/society/jpeace/mkljpaa1.htm](http://www.maryknoll.org/society/jpeace/mkljpaa1.htm)
Maryknoll is a Catholic missionary society, which sends missionaries to dozens of countries in Latin America, Asia and the Pacific, Africa, and the Middle East. Their Justice & Peace Office’s web site explains their work, and includes their bimonthly newsletter, *NewsNotes*, which provides a concise overview and analysis of the social, political, and economic affairs of the countries they work in. These reports often list sources where the viewer can obtain more information. They also include what Maryknoll calls *Action Alerts* which inform supporters on how to respond to crises that may develop in countries with a Maryknoll presence.


These two closely related organizations support a number of programs concerning both life in the church and the social issues facing our world. The activities of the bishop’s Department of Social Development and World Peace can be found on their web site, which includes both national and international events related to peace and justice. The site also includes an annotated list of the bishop’s pastoral letters and statements on peacemaking.

**Network** - www.igc.apc.org/network

Network is a national Catholic organization that lobbies, educates, and organizes to steer our federal budget away from military spending and towards human needs. Network’s web site is an excellent source for information on legislation that will affect the lives of the poor - welfare and health care reform, affording housing, child care, and other social justice issues. The site includes a link to *Congressional Quarterly’s* web site where you can review the voting record of United States Senators and Representatives.

**Pax Christi USA** - www.nonviolence.org/pcusa

Pax Christi USA is a national Catholic peace organization committed to gospel nonviolence and peacemaking. Its home page provides information on the organization’s activities, and statements on numerous human rights, social justice, and peace related issues.

### Peacemakers

Examining the lives of men and women who have dedicated themselves to the pursuit of peace is another way of studying the Catholic peace movement. It can give you a better understanding of not only the faith and motivation behind their actions, but also the political context in which it was carried out. Listed below are a few books on some well known Catholic peacemakers. For other individuals, search the on-line catalog by their last name.

Oscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador, was assassinated while saying Mass in 1980. Although once a conservative prelate, Romero was touched by the Salvadoran poor, and became a prophetic voice for those who were silenced by the violent and oppressive tactics of the Salvadoran military. He lived among the poor of El Salvador, spoke out in defense of them, and eventually gave his life for their behalf. This book tells the story of Archbishop Romero’s life, and the story of the Salvadoran church as it attempted to accompany the poor during El Salvador’s civil war.


Writing from jail after being arrested in a disarmament action, John Dear, a Jesuit priest, shares his reflections on peacemaking, civil disobedience, and the consequences of putting Gospel teachings into practice.


A biographical account of Peter Maurin’s life and contribution to American Catholic social thought from his early years to his founding of the Catholic Worker movement with Dorothy Day. Ellis focuses on the Catholic Worker movement and newspaper, as well as the houses of hospitality and farming communes established throughout the country. Ellis examines Maurin’s philosophy of non-violence and voluntary poverty, and the important legacy he left the Catholic church.


Having been appointed the official biographer of Thomas Merton by the Thomas Merton Legacy Trust, Michael Mott had access to Merton’s private journals before they were made available to the public. Drawing from these journals, as well as from scores of interviews, Mott’s work is considered by many to be the definitive biography on Thomas Merton - Trappist monk, writer, poet, and social activist. It includes 16 pages of photographs and excerpts from works by Merton.


A biographical account of the Berrigan brothers, who have devoted their lives to the cause of peace and the nonviolent resistance to unjust social policies. Dan, a Jesuit priest, and Philip, a former Josephite priest, were leaders in protesting the Vietnam war and have spent a number of years in jail for their social activism. This book traces the lives of the Berrigans, from their working class Catholic upbringing through their many years of involvement in the Catholic peace movement. It will provide the reader with an excellent
history of the peace movement during the Vietnam War and the faith lives of the Berrigans that lead them to protest.

**Selected Papal Encyclicals/Statements**

An encyclical is a message written by a pope on an important contemporary matter (doctrinal or moral matters) addressed to the bishops, and with more frequency the laity as well. Below is a select list of statements and more recent encyclicals that address the issues of peace and justice.

**On the Progress of Peoples (Populorum Progressio)** - Pope Paul VI, 1967
(BX1700 Q) [http://listserv.american.edu/catholic/church/papal/paul.vi./p6popp.txt](http://listserv.american.edu/catholic/church/papal/paul.vi./p6popp.txt)Paul VI’s social encyclical reflects on the wide gap between wealthy and impoverished countries, and emphasizes the need for nations to build relationships regulated by the principle of social justice. A lasting peace can only be built by the development of poorer nations.

**On Social Concerns (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis)** - Pope John Paul II, 1987
[http://listserv.american.edu/catholic/church/papal/jp.ii/jp2solli.txt](http://listserv.american.edu/catholic/church/papal/jp.ii/jp2solli.txt)
John Paul further explores the relationship between peace and economic justice as put forth in Paul VI’s *Populorum Progressio*. John Paul analyzes the conditions of the international economy, and emphasizes the limits of the earth’s natural resources. Because the poor do not have equal access to the world’s good, social policies must be made that make their needs a priority.

**Peace on Earth (Pacem in Terris)** - Pope John XXIII, 1963
In *Pacem in Terris* John XXIII discusses an issue of critical importance to the establishment of peace - social rights and responsibilities that need to exist 1) between people, 2) between citizens and their political authorities, 3) between nations, and 4) between people and nations on a world wide level. Within this context, John Paul addresses moral and cultural values, economic rights, political rights, disarmament, refugees, and the call to solidarity.


A collection of statements by the Roman Pontiffs (Popes Pius XII, John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II) and the Holy See on some of the important social and political issues facing the international community. These are documents that the Holy See has addressed to the United Nations and its various organizations. The texts are published in their entirety, with the exception at times of opening greetings. Chapters included are: Disarmament, Human Rights, Development, and Social Matters. Includes a Topical Index for easy reference.

Gremillion, the first secretary of the Vatican’s Justice and Peace Commission, presents the social teachings of the Church as handed down by her popes and bishops. The book is divided into two parts. Part I presents the evolution of Catholic Social Teaching since Pope John, with a discussion of how this teaching was influenced by secular trends and world events. In Part II, the documents themselves are presented, and include the Papal Encyclicals "Peace on Earth and "On the Development of Peoples." Also included are documents from the Latin American Bishops from their historic Medellin Conference in 1968.

**United States Bishop’s Pastoral Letters/Statements**

Pastoral letters written by the United States Bishops are official documents dealing with any subject affecting the faith, practice, or worship of Catholics in the United States. They are expressions of the ordinary teaching authority of the Church. Listed below are both pastoral letters and commentary/critiques on them.


Berryman analyzes both *The Challenge of Peace* and *Economic Justice for All*, tracing the process in which the pastorals were written and the influence that critics had on various drafts of each document. Berryman places the pastorals in the historical context of the Vatican’s social teaching and the teachings of church leaders in North and Latin America. In addition, Berryman looks at the obstacles and challenges the church itself has in attempting to implement the ethical principals laid out in the pastorals.


Castelli provides a closeup of the forces, ideas, and individuals who played a role in the publication of the Pastoral Letter. The entire text of *The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response* is reprinted in the appendix of the book.


Issued in 1983, *The Challenge of Peace*, was the American Catholic Bishops response to the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their threat to human life and all of creation. As they articulate a theology and practice of peace, the bishops address the arms race, the just-war and pacifist traditions, conscientious objection, and the Christian’s call to Gospel peacemaking.
The teaching of the United States Catholic Bishops on economic activity in relationship to the Catholic faith. The bishops urge Catholics to reflect on economic activity through the teachings of their faith, and to use our resources in service to humanity.

A collection of statements by the Catholic bishops issued between 1966 and 1980. The book is arranged in three parts under the headings "Political Responsibility," "Foreign Policy," and "Domestic Policy". A review of the "Foreign Policy" section will allow the researcher to see how the bishops at first gave cautious support for U.S. intervention in Vietnam, only to eventually call for a complete withdrawal of our military forces. The statements "Peace and Vietnam," "Human Life in Our Day," "Declaration on Conscientious Objection and Selective Conscientious Objection," and "Resolution on Southeast Asia" can all be found here.

A collection of essays by leaders in various academic disciplines on the themes and issues raised in the bishop’s letter on the economy. The book is divided into three parts. The first part examines the letter in terms of its religious and moral perspective, as well as Catholic social teaching and thought. The second part looks at concrete economic problems such as unemployment, poverty, and trade policies, and using economic theory and practice, analyzes the way the bishops address these issues. The final section of the book is a series of reflections on the social and political ramifications of the letter from the perspective of social and political theorists, and American business and labor. A full copy of the letter, *Economic Justice for All: Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy* is included.

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This book is a collection of essays written by some of America’s leading theologians, historians, and social scientists, on the bishops’ pastoral letter, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and the threat of nuclear war. The essays examine the Church’s teaching on nuclear weapons, the way the Church forms moral judgments, the use of scripture as a guide in morality, pacifism and the just-war tradition, and the pastoral responsibility of church leaders with regards to issues of war and peace. The complete text of The Challenge of Peace: God’s promise and Our Response is included.

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