

# LEARN: Week 4 Handout

## Embracing Peace: At Home and Abroad—Catholic Teaching on War & Violence

*As Catholics, we are called to reject the culture of violence in all its forms—on our streets, in our homes, and among nations. The Gospel of Life summons us to be peacemakers, healers, and builders of justice.*

### Core Themes:

1. **Violence in War:** All war brings grave evil. The use of force is only morally tolerable in rare cases of legitimate defense under strict conditions. “Every act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities... is a crime against God and man” (CCC 2314).
2. **Gun Violence:** The U.S. bishops support reasonable regulation of firearms to protect life—such as universal background checks, limits on assault weapons, and stronger community-based peacebuilding.
3. **Domestic Violence:** “Violence, inside or outside the home, is never justified” (*When I Call for Help*, USCCB). Abuse in any form—physical, sexual, psychological, or verbal—is sinful and often criminal. We can group various forms of abuse under a single umbrella: coercive control. Be sure to explore our [Coercive Control Advocacy Handbook](#) to learn more.

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*“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”*

*— Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no.496*

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4. **Nuclear and Modern Warfare:** The Church condemns weapons of mass destruction and the arms race as “acts of aggression against the poor” (*The Challenge of Peace*, 1983).
5. **Call to Nonviolence:** The bishops urge a cultural shift: “We must come to understand that violence is unacceptable... The best antidote to violence is hope” (*Confronting a Culture of Violence*, 1994).

## Other Important Teachings:

- **Blessed are the Peacemakers:** Christ calls us to peacemaking as a requirement of discipleship (cf. Mt 5:9).
- **Root Causes of Violence:** Poverty, racism, family breakdown, and injustice fuel cycles of violence and must be addressed.
- **Conscience and Responsibility:** Christians may serve honorably in military or civic roles but must also support nonviolent solutions and conscientious objection where moral conviction demands.

## What Can I Do?

- **Pray:** for peace in families, communities, and nations torn by abuse, violence, or war.
- **Learn:** read, study, and discuss pastoral letters like USCCB's *The Challenge of Peace* and *When I Call for Help*.
- **Serve:** Support survivors of domestic abuse and connect them with resources. Participate in parish peacebuilding or restorative justice ministries.
- **Advocate:** promote policies that reduce gun violence (background checks, limits on assault weapons, safe storage).

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### ***Take-Home Message:***

*Every Catholic is called to witness to the Gospel of Life. In our homes, parishes, workplaces, and public life, may we always be people who respect, protect, love, and serve every human life.*

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## Reflection Question:

In what concrete ways can our parish, school, or family be witnesses to peace and nonviolence in everyday life?

## Church Teachings to Consult (*if you want to learn more*):

- [\*Catechism of the Catholic Church\*](#) (nos. 2307–2330)
- [\*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church\*](#) (2004; nos. 496–512)
- [\*Gaudium et Spes\*](#) (1965; nos. 80–82)
- USCCB, [\*The Challenge of Peace\*](#) (1983)
- USCCB, [\*Confronting a Culture of Violence\*](#) (1994)
- USCCB, [\*When I Call for Help\*](#) (2002 update)
- USCCB, [\*A Mercy and Peacebuilding Approach to Gun Violence\*](#) (2020)
- Pope Francis, [\*Fratelli Tutti\*](#) (2020; nos. 256–262)