

Fighting Fear & Building Confidence

A Catholic response to war & terrorism
that is positive, peaceful, and powerful

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"Don't Tell Me What to Do;
a Catholic Understanding of Modern Moral Issues"
and "Can We send Our Son to Iraq"

Family activities that fight fear and build confidence

The September 11th attack was the work of *terrorists*. We can expect them to attack again, especially during this present crisis. Their very name means they act to produce fear, so they need us to be afraid. We *cooperate* by allowing ourselves to become paralyzed with terror. We make their job easier by succumbing to fear. However, we can find another response, right from our own God-given nature that is *positive, peaceful, and powerful*.

God designed us to react with fear when faced with something dangerous or unknown. That helps because fear provides the adrenaline we need to act swiftly with either a “flight or fight” reaction. We face danger or avoid it. That’s perfectly normal, but remember that both are still *actions*. Both involve some kind of movement, activity, or behavior. Either run or fight but don’t stand still!

God also designed us to react with anger at injustice, especially when done to innocent victims. Anger is useful because it can provide the courage we need to act fast either to rescue victims or challenge evildoers. Both fear and anger are strong and important emotions that provide the energy we need to work for justice.

However, strong emotions may be dangerous if not channeled correctly. A runaway heart can overwhelm us; but God gave us a head to use as well. Our intelligence can help put danger in *perspective*, e.g. what exactly *is* the threat? What are my resources to fight it? Clear thinking can provide the ideas we need to act smartly, cleverly, and successfully. We then freely choose the best among many options. We don’t *lose* emotions; we *use* them. With our heart and head together, we can act effectively and with great energy. We are especially powerful when joined with others: reflected beautifully in the popular poster, *United we stand*. While these ideas seem simple, they deeply define our nature as persons. Compassion, community, and free will are the very qualities that make us human. Compassion for innocent victims fires our courage for decisive action while wisdom guides our behavior to join with others for victory. In families; the birth of an innocent and helpless child fires our resolve to care. In our faith; looking at Jesus on the cross fires our resolve to love.

We build confidence and channel the energy of fear and anger by joining others in carefully thought out activities. A traditional way to remember what to do in a crisis is to (a) know, (b) judge, and (c) act. *First*, we get as much accurate knowledge and information as possible about what we are facing. *Second*, we make a decision about what we will do. *Third*, we do it!

God designed us to “take care of business.” by addressing the realities we face. There is no good alternative. There is no escaping this responsibility. If we do nothing, procrastinate, or even deny the threat, we will continue to experience worry, anxiety, and frustration throughout the day. Our mind will keep the issue before us, especially at night before we sleep, until we honestly begin the process of getting knowledge, making judgments,

and acting. We must face the truth of things because the truth will set us free, (and help us sleep better too!)

Decisive action sends a strong message to our psyche that we are doing something to safeguard our families or ourselves and is psychologically and spiritually very reassuring and empowering. We begin to feel strong and confident to face whatever happens *together*. Our life can go forward. Jesus spoke this kind of message as he sent his followers into a dangerous world; “Go into the whole world, ...and know that I am *with you always!*” (Matt. 28:19-20)

We want to understand a Catholic response to terrorism that is positive, peaceful, and powerful. In the next section of this packet we see how emotional wounds start a cycle of revenge that always escalates. We see how some communities scapegoat others for their own problems, but that Jesus revealed that no one is outside our family. We see what compassion, courage, and decisive action mean, what “turning the other cheek” really means, and how we can win against evil morally and successfully using the principles of a “Just War.” We also have decided to face fear with action and list some of those actions for families to do. All of these fulfill God’s plan that we have *life to the fullest* (Jn. 10:10) and *joy that is complete* (Jn. 15:11)

We only grow when challenged. A child kept indoors for fear of infection will grow up with no immunity, which ironically comes from getting sick. No one wants to get sick, nor do we look for danger, but it is a part of our world. Our role as adults is to prepare our families with *courage* and *intelligence* to face whatever happens *together*. Crises are both dangers and important opportunities to grow in courage, strength, intelligence, and conviction. Crises help us remember what and who is important in our life. This national crisis can help every family reaffirm love, togetherness, and faith in God. Our Catholic response helps us find that “life to the fullest and joy that is complete.”

All of these following suggestions are meant to jump start your own thinking about yourself and your family. You are the ones who are most familiar with the unique individuals who make up your family. You will know what is best to do. Whether these are familiar ideas or new, we hope they are helpful to you. We hope these actions will build confidence and fight fear. They will help all our parish families do our part to win the battle against terror and evil. They will inspire hope for the future. That is an important task whether the present crisis is over or not. We hope you will find them positive, peaceful, and powerful.

Can we send our son to Iraq with a good conscience?

I was asked this question by friends of mine. I had performed the marriage of their son who was now a fighter pilot newly assigned to the gulf region. Their question is a serious one and so is the morality of war. Here is the chain of ideas that led to my answer. I know there are good people on both sides of this issue.

All war is a failure. It is a failure of people to work out their differences peacefully. War is ultimate violence for it unleashes the full fury of technology with the full force of national resources for destruction and death. Each person who dies in war was made and loved by God. Who wants to answer to God for the death of any of His creations? Step forward now. Yet what about aggression aimed at us or one of our loved ones? Can we stand aside with our families in danger? What can we do in good conscience? What would Jesus do?

Because we are created and loved by God we cannot allow anyone to harm us. We must respect our self and resist evil. Because we believe evildoers are also created and loved by God we must treat them with respect too. Everything we do must be motivated by (of all things) love for our enemy (*Matt. 5:44*). We recognize their behavior is bad for them as well as us. Our desire to stop them, even if it must include force, can be a genuine loving act.

No one wants to hurt Iraqis or Koreans, but no one wants to be Neville Chamberlain either; the British leader who in 1938 tragically delayed confronting Hitler. *We can not do nothing in the face of evil*. But we cannot act rashly either. This is a time for clear thinking and carefully weighing the facts and issues. When lives are at stake *we cannot operate emotionally or on a whim*. This is where wisdom is so important. The Just War Theory was slowly developed over centuries by wise people in many cultures to *control* the rush to war or *contain* the violence of war if it happens. No war is really ever “justified” but some actions are more just than others, to the extent they are motivated by love for our enemy.

An “American” style of war has also slowly developed. In our history it has been very hard to get Americans to fight. Precisely because we are a nation ruled by consent of the people and not the whim of kings given to emotional impulse, we were slow to wage war. We would fight if (a) attacked as innocent victims, as at Pearl Harbor, or (b) to rescue other innocent victims, like South Korea, and even Vietnam at the beginning, but never for conquest, revenge, or power. We also need strong citizen support, unlike in Vietnam at the end. We stop evildoers and spare innocent civilians. We also reconnect with our enemies after hostilities; e.g. Japan, Germany, and even the Soviet Union. None of these countries had deep democratic traditions but changed quickly with our help. Our own history is not without shame, but the general trend, from WWI, to WWII, to Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, and Iraq, has been about fighting to protect innocence, sparing the innocent, and finishing when aggression stops. Certainly our technology has made that even more possible. In the recent Afghan war, when American planes appeared over Afghan cities, civilians actually left their homes to assemble in the open near Al Qaeda tar-

ged buildings to watch the destruction, so confident were they in our bombing accuracy and so confident in their understanding of our motives to target only terrorists. When has that ever happened before?

This natural “American style” resembles the classic Just War Theory. These are the principles;

- **JUST CAUSE:** War must confront "a real, certain, and immediate danger," i.e., to protect innocent life, to preserve decent human existence, and dignity, or to secure basic human rights. *Danger must be grave, immediate, and certain. War must be for the purpose of restoring peace or stopping a deadly threat, not conquest, punishment, or revenge*
- **COMPETENT AUTHORITY:** War must be declared carefully and slowly by those with responsibility for public order, not by private groups or individuals. *More governments working together are better than fewer. Consensus of the people is important.*
- **LAST RESORT:** All practical and peaceful alternatives must have been exhausted, e.g. diplomacy, negotiations, time. (this also depends on the immediacy of the threat). *The best battle is the one won without fighting.*
- **PROBABILITY OF SUCCESS:** There must be a strong chance of success where the end conditions are better than the start. *We can't make things worse. We cannot leave destruction without helping to rebuild.*
- **PROPORTIONALITY:** The damage inflicted and the costs incurred must be proportionate to the good expected. *We must limit aggression to stop or contain aggressors and spare innocent civilians. War ends when the aggressor ends.*

These principles serve to control the rush to war (*ad Bello*) and the violence in war (*in Bello*).

Split Decision

My answer to these parents involved a split decision. “We citizens do not know a moral cause for war *yet*, but if we fight it will likely be waged in a just manner.” (I hope)

The United States has worked *since 1991* with many governments in the region, as well as the United Nations in several resolutions, to disarm Iraq. No one can say there is a “rush” to war here. It is uncertain, however, about the *immediacy of the threat*. Two “discoveries” could change that. If Iraq is found to be allied with Al Qaeda, which *is* at war with us, or if it has *hidden* weapons of mass destruction (WMD); these could be considered immediate and deadly threats. After all, NATO has WMD but they are not hidden, and its motives are peaceful. Iraq’s hiding of WMD, coupled with their clear history of aggression, might be considered an immediate threat. Our own leaders have indicated

they know this is still an outstanding claim to make, and admit that Americans will not support war without our knowing for certain of an immediate threat. Pre-emptive strikes demand even stronger proof.

However, if the United States *does* go to war, there is a very strong chance, based on our recent history in Afghanistan, that our use of armed force will be used carefully, intelligently, and for the purpose of bringing war to a swift end. Past history also indicates a very careful sparing of innocent civilians. There is even a chance that the simple gathering of massive forces (including sending your son) may be enough to induce Hussein to exile, or the Iraqi army, fearful of losing all their equipment, of handing over Hussein themselves. Sending soldiers may itself stop war. Past history indicates we will make the situation better afterwards, by helping to build police forces, democratic institutions, and civilian infrastructure.

What about non-violence? Did not Gandhi change the British Empire with non-violence? We can voluntarily take violence onto ourselves *only* if we believe there is a good chance that our innocent suffering will inspire compassion in the other and so stop their aggression. However, we cannot volunteer *someone else to do it!* Presidents are responsible for all of us. They cannot nominate their citizens to play Gandhi. What about turning the other cheek? (Matt. 5:39) To hit someone on the right cheek you must use the back of your hand, which is an insult to our dignity, not a physical attack. Jesus is saying that since our dignity comes from God, *no person* can take away our dignity, so the slap is not a wound at all.

Compassion is the strongest force in human history. It is what compels people to rush into burning buildings or dive into rushing rivers to rescue an innocent victim. It is what compels us to restrain evildoers intent on doing massive harm. Compassion for the world demands we do the right thing even when it is dangerous. Can you think of a more dangerous place to come than planet earth? Yet Our Lord arrives with compassion for all and to reveal that *every* person is our brother and sister. We must stop terrorists and these who use WMD precisely because we love them, and know that their use of these weapons is also not good for them. If we go to war, it cannot be for punishment, revenge, or conquest. It must be as an absolute last resort and in order to stop people we love from causing even greater harm. Let our prayers for peace continue.

Violence and Revenge

Excerpt from “Don’t tell Me What to Do: A Catholic Understanding of Modern Moral Issues, by Fr. Dave Heney

Violence is the use of physical or emotional force against another person and against their will. Violence is serious business and has a long and tragic history in human affairs. It causes immense damage to both victims and perpetrators and the consequences can last for years. Ironically, the very fear of violence can drive our desire for learning moral behavior precisely because it is so dangerous and catastrophic to human life. We need to understand and control this problem. One day perhaps, with our prayers and hard work, it will disappear.

Violence offends against every Garden virtue. It violates the freedom, goodness, helpmate-ness, and equality of a person who is our brother or sister in the Lord. For example, violent people see others not as persons but as things, objects, or obstacles, and use force to subdue, remove, or eliminate them. Violence may be impulsive, as in a bar-room brawl, or planned, as in pre-meditated crime. It may be personal, as in spousal abuse, or institutional, as in armed combat and warfare. In all cases, violent people aggressively impose their will over others.

One source of violence is revenge. Violent people may actually justify their actions by recalling a past hurt done to them by the victim and revenge is their retaliation or reprisal for that perceived hurt. It is a powerful motive and strong enough to counter our very nature as helpmates to one another. It began early in our history.

The very next story in the Bible after Adam and Eve is the story of revenge and violence. Two brothers, Cain and Abel, present gifts to God, but Cain is angry that his gift is rejected. He mistakenly feels his relationship with God is threatened. He knows that relationship is the source of his human dignity and self-esteem so he is devastated by this perceived loss of status.

Cain blames Abel. He is jealous of Abel’s approval by God and is jealous of Abel’s good fortune. He sees Abel as a competitor for a perceived finite amount of God’s favor. Wanting what another person has or competing for what is perceived as scarce goods are common pre-conditions to attacking another. When Abel receives what Cain wants, Cain feels threatened, belittled, and dismissed. He wants revenge.

Any attack on our personal dignity strikes some of the deepest parts of our personality and may cause powerful emotions. In human evolution, as well as in each child’s development, the part of our brain that feels emotions develops first, before higher cognitive areas are formed. The most primitive and basic threats to our existence, like a threat against dignity or physical safety, are emotionally registered there first and are not easily modulated later by higher reasoning, logic, or even common sense. These emotional reactions are primordial and may seem exaggerated or overblown. That’s because they are triggered by events that are emotionally perceived as life threatening and so may include such intense feelings.

These emotional wounds are difficult to heal. For example, if I steal a dollar from your wallet, it is easy to repair that “monetary” wound. I simply replace the dollar back in your wallet. However, if I injure your feelings, I cannot simply replace them like a dollar bill. It will take time for you to heal. Hurt feelings are emotional wounds and require much more than simply returning money. Our personal sense of self comprises a complex

constellation of psychic events that includes a lot of emotions. That is why feelings are so closely connected to our sense of our selves as persons, to our dignity and self-respect, and to our sense of self-esteem. Injure your dignity and you may arouse an emotional firestorm. In the Genesis story Cain is hurt and angry and that leads to an unfortunate but predictable chain of events.

For example, perhaps you can remember when another person hurt you. That wound can cause a strong response that from the beginning of human history has been a cause of so much human misery. It is the impulse for revenge and it is a common cause of violence. Revenge seeks reprisal. It wants the other person to feel the same experience that we felt when we were wounded. We want to “get back” at them. We want to “get even,” or “to balance the books,” and so we strike back in an attempt to do so. However, we must remember that emotions are driving our behavior so our actions may be a little wild. What usually happens is some form of inaccuracy in our “aim.” Our attack is either too weak or too strong. If too weak, we attack again and again, still looking for satisfaction, but usually going too far, now causing our opponent to feel unjustly hurt. He or she then feels the impulse for retaliation and attacks back, and continues to attack, until the attack goes too far, causing another impulse for revenge by you. This cycle of revenge continues back and forth, but, and this is the crucial point, it always escalates. It is just impossible to, “get even.” The cycle of revenge will escalate to murderous violence until something stops it. In the Genesis story, Cain killed Abel.

Sometimes revenge is stopped by social convention or even death. For example, if you are angry with your boss at work, you may be unable to get revenge because you will be fired, or maybe your “enemy” is now a deceased relative. In either case, the vengeful impulse remains within you in an arrested state called “resentment,” or “frozen revenge.” The attitude and desire for violence remain although not expressed outwardly. It stays as ruminations or evil thoughts or expressed as passive-aggressive behavior, in which attacks are made in a way that hides the source.

Hiding, denial, and regression, are common excuses used to explain away violence “I don’t know what came over me.” “I was caught up in the crowd that did this!” “You made me do this!” Because violence is so opposite of our nature, is so destructive of all that we value in human life, and runs counter to common sense, people may actually hide, deny, or repress its presence, its causes, or its consequences. Ironically, violent people often hide or deny their behavior because they think it offensive to see themselves as violent!

Blaming, and deflection are also common excuses. Adam tries hiding in the Garden after the Fall. Cain at first denies and then deflects God’s inquiry by asking God a question, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” The people ready to stone the woman caught in adultery in John 8:3 are hiding within a mob. When a mob finds a target, people regress to child-like behavior and give over their will to the group and the group leader to mask their own responsibility for violent action. Jesus confronts the mob and returns individuals to responsibility by inviting each one to think of their own past actions. “Let the one without sin cast the first stone.” Ironically, sin unites the crowd with the woman. They cannot ‘demonize’ one who is the same as themselves. They cannot stone one of their own. In addition, the first stone tossed would have given an excuse for the rest to “go along with the crowd,” and stone her to death. Jesus stops the first stone by demanding that people take responsibility and not hide in the mob. Jesus knows how to deal with us!

Revenge is powerful enough to counter our God given nature to see other persons as free, equal, and good helpmates. The level of a victim's personal trauma and damage is strongly affected by three factors, (1) how frequently he or she was hurt, (2) how intense was the violence, and (3) how long it lasted. Frequency, intensity, and duration are factors that indicate the severity of the wound and the strength of revenge impulse. At all levels, violence and revenge are corrosive. They eat away at the virtues present in all of us. Yet what is to be done? How does a person handle the myriad hurts and offenses that come during the day? How are we to "turn the other cheek?" What kind of person can turn the other cheek? Are we meant to be doormats? What is the Lord asking of us?

Two brief stories reveal something of the Lord's wisdom. Several people worked together at a job where there was suddenly great anxiety. There was a new owner arriving soon and there would be some layoffs. Everyone took out his or her frustration on the youngest and most recently hired person. The employees gossiped, lied, insulted, tricked, and hurt the person in many ways. Yet throughout it all the person was calm and peaceful. He never sought revenge. When asked if he was upset at such harassment, he replied, "Not really, you see, I'm the son of the new owner!" Well, when you have a special relationship with the boss, it doesn't matter what the others do to you; your job is secure. When we have a strong relationship with God, it doesn't matter what others do to us. We know we are loved and treasured by the God of the universe. Only God can tell us who we are and He thinks we are wonderful!

In another example, an elementary school teacher with an abusive spouse hears offensive insults all day long at home, yet doesn't take personally the insults of a young student at school because the child is clearly an immature and ignorant child. Well, so is anyone who insults us. If the child really knew the value of the teacher he or she wouldn't do it. Nor would any adult either. While dying Jesus looked at His executioners and said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they are doing (...they are all ignorant children)." With this idea we can turn the other cheek only because the first slap was not experienced as a wound. No need to seek revenge. That brings a wonderful side benefit. Avoiding the revenge cycle frees us to calmly discern in the criticism of others any kernel of truth that might be embedded in their attack and from which we can learn and change for the better. We are free to experience calmly and judge objectively the hurtful actions of others to ourselves. We stay the master of our reactions to the world around us. We remain at peace.

Forgiveness and Healing

Of course, if you are deeply hurt, there is the danger of the escalating cycle of revenge. You might feel that need to "get back and get even," or if revenge is not possible you feel that resentment, or "frozen revenge." However, we know it is impossible to "get even," and so you might consider forgiveness even in the midst of pain. Forgiveness is a decision to not seek revenge. It is more a decision than a feeling. You may still feel terrible and you are not forgetting what happened or ignoring the event. You may even have to avoid this other dangerous person completely. You may still feel the need for some explanation of why someone hurt you, still a need for his or her repentance, your healing and mutual reconciliation. Forgiveness, however, is very different from healing, which involves our feelings and takes more time. It may come slowly as we receive an explana-

tion of what happened or some reason why this hurt occurred. Healing continues when we see the other person express sorrow, repent for the action, and change for the better. Of course, that doesn't always happen. Healing can still continue as we begin to make some sense of the meaning of the event in our whole life history. We see the larger picture and get a sense of perspective and wisdom from this suffering. The passage of some time also helps because we slowly regain our self-esteem as we continue living our life and working at our job and accomplishing things. With time, we slowly realize the message of lack of worth that violence brings is, well, just plain wrong. We realize we are a capable person with dignity after all.

Violence and the Media

There is much concern today about the impact of graphic violent imagery in movies, television, video and video games. It is difficult to know if these images cause violent behavior, are correlational, or have no effect at all. Many studies offer conflicting conclusions. Media forms vary in their approach to violence. For example, violence in movies occurs as part of a story while in violent video games it *is* the story. It is important to look at the context. How does this particular media story treat the consequences of violence? Are people rewarded? Is violence glorified or portrayed as admirable? Are violent people vilified, or presented in an admiring way? Sometimes a story that presents justice against villains in the final minute of a film will have already glorified them for the first hour. Those images can be a lasting memory for young viewers.

There is a wide variation in media experience and impact as well. For example, interactive media is more compelling because it requires more physical and mental involvement than passive video watching. However, all media require a user to voluntarily access them by buying movie tickets, renting a video, or turning on a television. There are great variations in the kind of people who access them, as well. Mature, well-adjusted viewers can probably put it all in perspective while immature and less well-adjusted persons might be more easily influenced. Since there is little regulation for access to these images and the potential for the wrong people watching the wrong material is very high. If there is a causal connection, between media violence and social behavior, then there is a very serious moral liability on the media to accept responsibility for violent consequences. How horrible to actually teach or lead others to violence! It would also be irresponsible for a media producer to offer potentially dangerous material without offering some ideas on the regulation about who will access it.

At the least we can probably acknowledge that over a period of time violent imagery can desensitize any person to the horror of violence. Perhaps we can use the same trauma discernment criteria of frequency, intensity, and duration in understanding its impact. If a person watches highly intense violence frequently and for a long period of time then we might safely infer that there is a higher probability for desensitization. Yet, it is precisely that God-given sense we have of the value and dignity of other people that is our safeguard against violence. If that is dulled we are all in trouble. Violence in the media is an issue that is deserving of continuing, thorough, and rigorous research.

Martyrdom, Heroism, and Self-defense

Martyrs and heroes face violence courageously but with important conditions. After all, we must take care of the person we are and act safely. Our life belongs to God and so we must care for it. We cannot accept violence onto ourselves lightly. We have no right to assume a “victim” role or to passively allow another to misuse their dignity as a person by doing violent acts to us. We must uphold our dignity and theirs by stopping violence whenever we can.

We can accept violence onto ourselves for heroic reasons but only if done with accurate and realistic self-knowledge of our strengths and weaknesses and a reasonable expectation of success. For example, if we think our acceptance of violence onto ourselves will change the violent person for the better, or inspire others to achieve some noble goal, then we are practicing heroic faith. Gandhi did this in India, as did Jesus in Jerusalem. However, we are not required to be heroes or martyrs. We are certainly required to know ourselves and so if we know we do not have the strength to accept violence, then we must not.

Violence against others or ourselves must always be stopped. We cannot tolerate that horrible injustice to the dignity of persons. No person is an object to be used by another. However, violence must be stopped in non-violent ways if at all possible. Of course, in self-defense, we may use force as a last resort but only for the purpose of successfully stopping the attack, not for the purpose of injuring the other. We cannot treat our attacker as an object either. We cannot fight evil with evil. What then, are we to make of war?

War and Terrorism

Warfare is institutional violence. It brings the resources of an entire society or nation against an enemy in a massive display of force and terror. Warfare often brings to violence the latest technology for causing physical and emotional destruction. It offers the unique ferocity that only nations can provide. War is the most extreme form of violence. War is hell.

Warfare is also an engine of history. It has changed and continues to change the social landscape of how and with whom we live and work. It has changed the course of nations and empires. But at its root, it is about death and destruction. Yet, no other human enterprise in all of human history has ever marshaled the efforts of so many people in single efforts and on such a grand scales. Twice in the last century, nations from all over the globe were engaged in world war. Warfare must be tapping into something very primordial in the human spirit. Yet it still violates all the garden virtues.

How do loving people with families and jobs and even deep faith get caught up in large-scale institutional violence against people they might have never even met? Why do good people join a group intent on causing harm to strangers? Why do they follow orders that might place them in the front lines of a battle facing murderous weapons, grotesque wounds, or a horrible death? How can any military leader exercise that much power over individuals?

The dynamics of warfare are psychologically powerful and create a very strong unifying force among a nation’s people. They tap into our nature as helpmates and our desire to join with others in a common great crusade. However, it is paradoxically against

our fellow human beings, our very neighbors on this planet. Among these dynamics are two aberrant forces that serve to tightly bind individuals to a group even in an action against our fellow man. They are regression and scape-goating.

Individuals acting within large crowds, like a mob, sometimes may regress to psychologically child-like behavior. They surrender their human dignity as freethinking and responsible persons to the group and group leader (or parent figure). They will regress to infantile aggression and rage, throwing what literally resembles a tantrum. It is behavior fueled often by childish emotions such as jealousy, fear, and envy. The actions of the crowd help to hide or mask these emotions under the guise of some larger political cause. When a national leader offers the crowd primordial needs like power, wealth, or the means for revenge for some slight at the hands of another country, the people are likely to respond with loyalty. The tighter the group loyalty is the more it acts as a cohesive unit, which continues to help individuals hide their responsibility for even wanting these needs.

Scape-goating also provides extremely strong group unity. When two people begin the cycle of escalating revenge, the result can be deadly. They can change the cycle by turning together to attack an innocent third party, the scape-goat. Excuses are quickly found to attack this innocent scape-goat. The two former enemies find peace because a new common enemy unites them against the outsider. They draw a circle around themselves that excludes the enemy as “other” and unites all insiders together in a uniquely powerful way. They demonize the other nation with vile propaganda as justification and excuse for scape-goating.

Ironically, people will heroically express their garden virtues within their own group but be easily willing to kill the non-group member. They will heroically die for the group but never the scape-goat. The history of war recounts tales of amazing courage, initiative, innovation, and the very best of human ingenuity; but at the expense of some demonized other group. The story of warfare describes the use of our best virtues to kill, destroy, damage, and devastate all that is good about human civilization.

Jesus confronts these group dynamics by calling us to responsibility for our actions and to love our enemies. He removes the veil that covers the crowd so they can never “hide” in a mob again. He offers no excuse for “the group excuse.” Instead, Jesus calls us to form a church or an assembly, which is the opposite of a mob. In a mob, people lose themselves. In an assembly, people act together but remain individually responsible for behavior. Moreover, on the cross, Jesus became the ultimate scape-goat. By *identifying* with the scape-goat, He revealed that there is no such person as an “outsider.” There is no such thing as an “enemy.” Everyone is a member of the human family and therefore our brother and sister. We cannot exclude anyone from our concern, care, and attention. Of course, we may have to discipline wrongdoers, fight injustice, stand up to dictators, defend ourselves against violence, and urge repentance on many people. But they are all our brothers and sisters in the Garden.

Just War Theory of St. Augustine

What can a nation justly do when attacked? St. Augustine attempted in the 4th century after Christ to outline some basic guidelines to control a response to unjust aggression. Briefly put, a nation may respond with organized warfare directed at the at-

tacker if (1) done in self-defense, (2) if the cause is just, (3) if the force used is in proportion to the offense, (4) if innocent people are spared, and (5) if there is a reasonable expectation of success. It takes a great deal of honest self-reflection on the part of all citizens in union with legitimate and responsible leaders to discern their application in any given case. The point of just war actions is to resist violence to the point where it stops. It is not to take territory, take property, or even punish the perpetrators. It is to stop war as fast as possible.

Some of these conditions are actually hard to find these days. Because of modern communications, it is almost impossible to be surprised by a sneak attack by any military force. There should almost always be ample opportunities for negotiation or political settlements before hostilities begin. Because of the indiscriminate and blanket-like devastation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons there is almost no occasion when these may be used. After all, it would be impossible to discriminate the guilty from the innocent. Because it is relatively easy for any nation or even small group to receive significant lethal weaponry in the international arms trade, it is also difficult even for a large nation to ensure success in war. A rogue state could go easily nuclear when faced with defeat. The conditions for a just war are just vary hard to find.

We must remember that the Just War Theory is still a theory. It is a human attempt guided by Christian tradition to control and regulate the violence of war. It is an attempt to use rational thought to calm the impulse for revenge. We still believe that war is not inevitable or intrinsic to human nature. We believe in the garden virtues and the message and example of Jesus to unite us as one. "Once I am lifted up, I will draw all people to myself." (John. 12:32)

Deterrence

What may a nation do to deter an attack? One idea of deterrence is the threat of mutual assured destruction (MAD). If the reprisal wipes out your nation you may think again about attacking. The Cold War successfully used massive mutual assured destruction to ensure the absence of nuclear war for fifty years. Its main weapon was massive fear. This was seen as better than the alternative which was nuclear war. Ironically, if an attack were ever made such massive retaliation would not actually be used as it would destroy both sides. It was a fiction that worked.

Another similar idea in conventional warfare is the threat of massive overriding force. One nation threatens to use so much force that it overwhelms and paralyzes the opponent into submission early in the fight or prevents one altogether. If battle begins, massive force attempts to close the fight swiftly before too many people are hurt. It is an adaptation of the idea of using force for the purpose of stopping the fight and not to simply inflict punishment.

Both ideas involve the collection of massive amounts of very expensive arms. Such a dependence on weaponry can lead to a culture of fear, threat, and anxiety. With guns everywhere it becomes an easy temptation to use them rather than the more laborious path of negotiations. Therefore these weapons depend on highly moral, responsible, and legitimate leadership to keep them under control. Their expense is also an economic burden on any country but especially the Third World. During the Cold War, President Eisenhower called money spent on weapons a "theft from the poor."

Deterrence is still a noble goal of political action but the best deterrent to war remains trust. After all, no Americans feared the massive nuclear arsenal of Great Britain or France during the Cold War. We trusted them and it worked. Weaponry accumulation reveals a breakdown in trust. The Garden virtues impel us to build trust among nations by honest communication, respect for peoples and the rule of law, and the fair and just use of the world's resources.

Terrorism

An official state of war is rarely declared anymore and nations rarely initiate violence against other nations. Violence on a global scale most often comes from smaller groups within nations like rebel forces, paramilitary units, and terrorists.

International Terrorism is a new form of old warfare. It is the preferred form of violence by these small political groups that cannot afford huge armies or the expense of complex weaponry. It makes special use of violence and fear. A terrorist group tries to frighten many people into compliance by the violent actions of a few. It uses the power of sudden and horrific atrocities to injure or kill a few people that will then frighten many into submission. It has the same effect as a lever, where a small movement with little effort can lift a great weight.

Nations tend to look upon these groups in the same way as armed and dangerous criminal organizations that have broken the law with deadly force, much like we would view the Klu Klux Klan and other white supremacist groups. Their terrorist actions are crimes and so nations feel justified in using deadly force against these "criminals." However, the victim nation must respond lawfully and justly. The response must be the same as any police action; find and bring to justice the perpetrators. Terrorism as a response to terrorism is wrong.

Action ideas that fight fear and build confidence in families:

1. **Talk about fears, hopes, and comments** you experience from your children and about what they are seeing, hearing, or thinking. Share your knowledge about events as issues come up. Expressing ideas or fears to someone else makes them clear to us rather than remaining vague and unfocused. Children can be reassured by knowing the real story of what is going on from you; that they are not alone, and that many people share the same feelings. However, don't *assume* that children are afraid because some are naturally resilient. Don't tell them how they *should* feel. Feelings come and go so patient listening is best. Younger children might want to express their feelings in play or pictures rather than words. Younger children often confuse reality with fantasy so gently reassure with the facts, as you know them. Try to convey the *meaning* of events to older children or fellow adults, or how they relate to the larger picture of life. Sharing meaning unites people together.
2. **Be careful about making promises you cannot keep.** Reassure children that our nation's leaders, our teachers, and our families are working *as hard as they can* to keep us safe *as much as possible*. What we can promise is that we will face everything *together* and with *courage* as a family. We cannot guarantee safety, (despite terrorism, children may still fall down, get hurt or sick, or just feel bad) but we can say that if something bad happens; help will come as fast as possible.
3. **Reassure younger children physically.** Behavior "speaks" louder with younger children. A few more hugs, holding, favorite foods, favorite activities can be helpful.
4. **Try to maintain regular family routines.** Even though our response to terrorism adds a few activities, like prayer services, special purchases of food, or service projects to help others, sticking to the familiar family routine is good.
5. **Write letters to key persons;** e.g. President Bush, firemen, police, rescue, terrorists. Express your hopes and wishes for each. The act of writing is empowering. It combines expression, physical activity, and the need to be intelligible. Expressing ideas to someone else makes them clear to us. Try to convey the meaning of events to you or how they relate to the larger picture of your life.
6. **Learn together.** Knowledge is power so get it together with your child. Read the newspaper, watch TV, use the Internet, use a globe and atlas, or go to a bookstore with your child to get informed about issues in the news, such as the true nature of these diseases, the war in Afghanistan, or Islam. *Doing it together allows you to put new information in the proper perspective for your child, to re-*

spond simply and honestly to questions, and to monitor their understanding if the information is upsetting.

7. **Draw or paint pictures** of feelings, impressions, or ideas. Younger children might like this. Ask them to describe what they have drawn and share about it if they want. Like writing, drawing is a physical expression of what is inside a person.
8. **Get involved in group activities that help others.** Helping others gets us off ourselves and ironically empowers us at the same time. Find articles from the newspaper or bulletins that give involvement opportunities and read them with the kids, e.g. sending President Bush \$ for Afghan or Iraqi kids or helping with Project Response). Pick some projects you can participate in with your family. Show your children how to make our community better by helping others, which will make them feel stronger. Don't forget simplicity; "Kindness at a supermarket checkout or parking lot also fights terrorism."
9. **Make things for firemen and policemen.** Go to the fire or police station to present them. Bake items for firemen and victims of disaster. Send money from a lemonade stand or trick or treat gifts to the Red Cross.
10. **Prepare your home for an emergency;** include water, food and a plan of action. Make a list of where family members work and include phone numbers. Practice the plan for staying connected with each other in a crisis. Rehearsal is very important. It is easier to remember what we have *done* rather than what we heard.
11. **Get involved spiritually with others.** Pray for those who died and those affected by the attacks and their families. Pray with your children for terrorists that they might have a change of heart. Remember all the key persons at grace before a meal. Go to church together. Read the scriptures together. Use symbols, like the crucifix or saints pictures, to teach about the life of Jesus.
12. **Emphasize ideas from our Faith** to children; e.g. *God did not want this to happen*, God is crying too, death is not the end of life because we will be with Jesus in heaven, God sends us courage to correct the wrongs in our world, every person is part of our human family under God, we love the terrorists but hate what they do. Each of these is central to our faith.
13. **Talk about courage in a positive way.** Doing the right thing when it is a difficult thing brings a strong feeling of self-esteem and accomplishment. Courage is empowering. God does not change the world. He helps us change it.

14. **Post prayers and photos in common area** (e.g. refrigerator) for family to see.
15. **Monitor family's physical health**; e.g. nutrition, sleep, rest, and especially exercise.
16. **Reflect on positive effects of crisis**, such as outpouring of compassion, patriotism, families communicating, support of US policies by other countries, humility learned through experience.
17. **Teach acceptance, tolerance, and inclusivity** of other cultures from an early age. Know the difference between judging and pre-judging others. We are meant to make judgments but should not pre-judge others. We are meant to judge what is right and wrong behavior but never wish harm on another. Sometimes love means applying stern measures to protect innocent people or prevent further harm.

Action ideas for Adults:

1. **Address issues of faith and fear in yourself.** What is your fear exactly? What are your automatic responses to the news and why? What is your religious understanding of crises? How do you feel about your own mortality? What are your prejudices about people? What do you bring from your own childhood to these events today? Where are you with God? With the Church?
2. **Share what you know, think, and feel.** Express your opinion. Find a larger meaning in the news, especially how the news relates to the direction of your life. Relating an event to a larger context gives it meaning and that brings people together. Talking with your family, friends, neighbors, and others helps clarify for yourself where you are with all of these issues. Dialogue helps learning and understanding.
3. **Write a letter** to the editor, politicians, rescue workers, soldiers, even the terrorists. Express your feelings, ideas, hopes, and wishes.
4. **Anticipate changes** in your mood, especially around holiday or family celebrations. Be pro-active. Make some creative changes. Who could be included this year that is not usually at your table?
5. **Knowledge is power. Become informed**, especially about what is upsetting you. Watch the news, documentaries; use the Internet, bookstores, and newspapers.

6. **Get involved spiritually with others.** Go to church. Pray with others. Join a bible study.
7. **Learn more about Jesus.** Read scripture. Learn the church's "Just War Theory." Read the catechism. Go to a bookstore and select a title about religion that intrigues you.
8. **Pray for the terrorists** that they would soften their hearts and turn back to a God of love. Praying for them keeps things in perspective. Praying for them helps us to avoid hate, revenge, and bitterness. Prayer for them restores hope.
9. **Get involved with others to help others.** Find local charities in which you can directly help. Participate or initiate in food drives. Show compassion and generosity in giving to relief funds.
10. **Increase your awareness of all those who work to make our lives safe;** e.g. firemen, emergency workers, etc. Visit a fire station.
11. **Keep up your regular routines.** A national attack hurts each citizen personally and emotionally. Accomplishing our regular tasks helps to restore self-esteem and confidence as we demonstrate capability and competence. We get things done.
12. **Reflect on positive effects of crisis,** such as outpouring of compassion, patriotism, families communicating, support of US policies by other countries, humility learned through experience.
13. **Take a trip.** Get away from home for a while. Enjoy a place you know will refresh yourself.
18. **Remember to monitor physical health;** e.g. nutrition, sleep, rest, and especially exercise