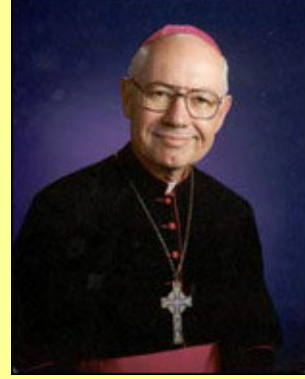


# Why Are We Presenting This Exhibit?

This exhibit is a reminder of the horrors of nuclear war and presents Catholic teachings on war and nuclear weapons, to encourage us to work towards a world free from the fear of nuclear war.

In August, 2005 Bishop William Skylstad, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, issued a statement with the text of a letter he sent to his counterpart in Japan. Here are some of Bishop Skylstad's words:



*The memories of World War II and the first and only use of nuclear weapons compel our Conference and the entire Church to continue working for nuclear non-proliferation and the elimination of nuclear weapons. As the Holy See has repeatedly insisted, the peace we seek cannot be attained through nuclear weapons. At this year's Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Holy See stated: "Nuclear weapons assault life on the planet, they assault the planet itself, and in so doing they assault the process of the continuing development of the planet."*

*We hope and pray that the Church can contribute to the cause of peace as we support genuine nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, not merely as ideals, but as moral imperatives and urgent policy goals. Our Conference will continue to urge the United States government to move away from its reliance on nuclear weapons for security and to commit itself to international non-proliferation and the successful control of nuclear materials in this age of terrorism. A true commitment to peace also requires us to promote respect for human life and dignity, human rights, and genuine development in a world plagued by injustice and poverty.*

*As we recall the end of World War II, we pray that the memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki will impel all of humanity to work with renewed vigor for lasting peace built on the foundation of justice for all. In solidarity with the Church in Japan, our Conference pledges ourselves to realizing Pope Paul VI's call: "No more war, war never again!"*

Sixty years after Hiroshima we still have nuclear weapons, and our country is constructing new nuclear weapons and considering a first-strike policy. Until these weapons are eliminated, we **DO** need to fear them. Seeing the impact on Hiroshima of that first primitive nuclear bomb reminds us this a technology we must fear, and work tirelessly to eliminate.

The exhibit does **NOT** make any judgments about why the bomb was dropped, nor does it go into the history of World War II. We know that the U.S. did not start the war and was not the aggressor, but there were many horrible acts committed by both sides. Whatever the reasons for dropping the bomb, the fact is it happened, and our goal - and the goal of the Catholic Church - is to be sure that nuclear weapons are never used again.

To this day there are differing opinions among historians and other authorities about why the United States dropped the bomb, and whether it was really necessary. Both sides have legitimate arguments. But that disagreement is exactly why we chose to **NOT** discuss why the bomb was dropped or the history the war. We want to focus on the impact of nuclear weapons and hope to avoid the strong, and justifiable, emotions many people have about World War II.

There is still much evil and violence in the world. Pearl Harbor, the Holocaust, Rwanda and 9/11 are, sadly, just a few examples. Our societies must learn to go beyond retribution and face evil and violence as Christ would - with love and nonviolence. That is the only way to achieve lasting peace in our world. The best way to honor all those killed by war and violence is to work towards a world that lives in peace, following the example of Jesus Christ. In the words of John Paul II, "To remember Hiroshima is to abhor nuclear war. To remember Hiroshima is to commit oneself to peace."

## A Message To Veterans And Members of the Military



We honor and respect those who defend our country. This exhibit is not meant to judge the actions of current or past members of the military, or to place blame. Our goal is to be sure that nuclear weapons are never used again. We must look history square in the eye to be sure that history does not repeat itself.

Any responsible member of the military will tell you their goal is to avoid war and pursue peace - a very noble goal we in Pax Christi share. The decision to bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki was more political than military. General Omar Bradley, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, got right to the point: "*We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount.*"

General Omar Bradley



## Excerpts from *The Challenge of Peace* by The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

An essential component of a spirituality for peacemaking is an ethic for dealing with conflict in a sinful world. The Christian tradition possesses two ways to address conflict: nonviolence and just war. They both share the common goal: to diminish violence in this world.

Our conference's approach, as outlined in *The Challenge of Peace*, can be summarized in this way:

- 1) In situations of conflict, our constant commitment ought to be, as far as possible, to strive for justice through nonviolent means.
- 2) But, when sustained attempts at nonviolent action fail to protect the innocent against fundamental injustice, then legitimate political authorities are permitted as a last resort to employ limited force to rescue the innocent and establish justice.

"Christian non-violence is not passive about injustice and the defense of the rights of others." It ought not be confused with popular notions of nonresisting pacifism. For it consists of a commitment to resist manifest injustice and public evil with means other than force.

The just-war tradition consists of a body of ethical reflection on the justifiable use of force. In the interest of overcoming injustice, reducing violence and preventing its expansion, the tradition aims at: a) clarifying when force may be used, b) limiting the resort to force and c) restraining damage done by military forces during war.

The just-war tradition begins with a strong presumption against the use of force and then establishes the conditions when this presumption may be overridden for the sake of preserving the kind of peace which protects human dignity and human rights.

First, whether lethal force may be used is governed by the following criteria:

- **Just Cause:** force may be used only to correct a grave, public evil, i.e., aggression or massive violation of the basic rights of whole populations;
- **Comparative Justice:** while there may be rights and wrongs on all sides of a conflict, to override the presumption against the use of force the injustice suffered by one party must significantly outweigh that suffered by the other;
- **Legitimate Authority:** only duly constituted public authorities may use deadly force or wage war;
- **Right Intention:** force may be used only in a truly just cause and solely for that purpose;
- **Probability of Success:** arms may not be used in a futile cause or in a case where disproportionate measures are required to achieve success;
- **Proportionality:** the overall destruction expected from the use of force must be outweighed by the good to be achieved;
- **Last Resort:** force may be used only after all peaceful alternatives have been seriously tried and exhausted.

These criteria (*jus ad bellum*), taken as a whole, must be satisfied in order to override the strong presumption against the use of force.

Second, the just-war tradition seeks also to curb the violence of war through restraint on armed combat between the contending parties by imposing the following moral standards (*jus in bello*) for the conduct of armed conflict:

- **Noncombatant Immunity:** civilians may not be the object of direct attack, and military personnel must take due care to avoid and minimize indirect harm to civilians;
- **Proportionality:** in the conduct of hostilities, efforts must be made to attain military objectives with no more force than is militarily necessary and to avoid disproportionate collateral damage to civilian life and property;
- **Right Intention:** even in the midst of conflict, the aim of political and military leaders must be peace with justice, so that acts of vengeance and indiscriminate violence, whether by individuals, military units or governments, are forbidden.

We... recognize that the application of these principles requires the exercise of the virtue of prudence; people of good will may differ on specific conclusions. The just-war tradition is not a weapon to be used to justify a political conclusion or a set of mechanical criteria that automatically yields a simple answer, but a way of moral reasoning to discern the ethical limits of action. Policy-makers, advocates and opponents of the use of force need to be careful not to apply the tradition selectively, simply to justify their own positions. Likewise, any application of just-war principles depends on the availability of accurate information not easily obtained in the pressured political context in which such choices must be made.