**Just Peace Ethic**   
We envision a just peace as a way of political cooperation for the common good, respect for the dignity of all persons and the natural world, preventing violence, and the transformation of conflict by nonviolent strategies.

Just peace norms operate in three distinct spheres or categories that may overlap in time and space. Strategies and actions chosen must enhance or at least not obstruct these norms, as well as keep means and ends consistent.

1) Develop virtues and skills for constructively engaging conflict (*jus in conflictione*)[[1]](#endnote-1)

* sustaining spiritual disciplines[[2]](#endnote-2)
* virtuous habits[[3]](#endnote-3)
* education and training in key skills[[4]](#endnote-4)
* participatory processes[[5]](#endnote-5)
* form nonviolent peacemaking communities[[6]](#endnote-6)

2) Break cycles of destructive conflict and violence (*jus ex bello*)

* reflexivity[[7]](#endnote-7)
* re-humanization[[8]](#endnote-8)
* conflict transformation[[9]](#endnote-9)
* acknowledge responsibility for harm[[10]](#endnote-10)
* nonviolent direct action[[11]](#endnote-11)
* integral disarmament[[12]](#endnote-12)

3) Build sustainable peace (*jus ad pacem*)

* relationality and reconciliation[[13]](#endnote-13)
* robust civil society and just governance[[14]](#endnote-14)
* ecological justice and sustainability[[15]](#endnote-15)
* human dignity and human rights of all[[16]](#endnote-16)
* economic, gender, and racial justice[[17]](#endnote-17)

*Guiding questions*: What ongoing actions and policies could help build sustainable peace? What are the root causes of the conflict? What virtuous or vicious habits are at stake and skillsets needed to transform the conflict? What just peace practices and transforming initiatives could be scaled up to break cycles of violence?

**Advantages of a Just Peace Ethic**

Compared to traditional ethical approaches, a just peace ethic would better form us as peacemakers by enabling us to imagine, develop, and stay committed to nonviolent practices. It also better enables us to transform conflict, get to the root causes, and build sustainable peace by addressing the personal, relational, structural, and cultural dimensions. This approach is less likely to lead to the structural and cultural violence of being prepared for war(s) as well as a corresponding arms race, whereas both divert needed resources and often exacerbate mistrust. It also helps us better stay out of and break cycles of violence. The just peace ethic will also better enable us to move closer toward outlawing war. In turn, the just peace ethic is more likely to actually prevent, limit, and defuse an ongoing war.

**Nonviolence**

Nonviolence is the *positive* reverence for life and dignity; as well as the refusal to de-humanize, kill, or engage in other types of violence. It is also the contextual interjection of a creative, transformative force into circumstances of conflict and violence. It is

* the power of love in action,
* the path to fuller truth,
* a spirituality, way of life, and a distinct virtue,
* a strategic methodology and constructive force for social justice, transforming conflict, challenging all forms of violence (direct, structural, cultural), for protecting all people and our common home, and for building a sustainable peace

1. Latin terms coined by Gerald Schlabach, University of St. Thomas, U.S. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Such as contemplation, discernment, forgiveness, meditation. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Virtue of active nonviolence (or nonviolent peacemaking) realizes the goods of conciliatory love that draws enemies toward friendship, and the truth of our ultimate unity and equal dignity. Related virtues include mercy, compassion, empathy, humility, hospitality, solidarity, courage, and justice. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Such as nonviolent communication, civil resistance, social analysis of root causes, and gender, racial, intersectional, and needs-based analysis. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Participation refers here to decision-making and action chosen must be participatory and inclusive of as many key stakeholders as possible, especially women, young adult leaders, and marginalized groups. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Includes institutions and cultures. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Keeping the means consistent with the ends. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Through language, image creation, and narratives. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. To draw adversaries toward partnership and address root causes, such as dialogue, trauma-healing, meeting the human needs of all actors and independent initiatives to build trust. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Such as lament, restorative justice and “dangerous memory.” [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Such as civil resistance, unarmed civilian protection, nonviolent civilian-based defense and locally-based nonviolent strategies. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Integral disarmament refers to the need for a preceding or simultaneous reduction of “weapons” or disarming of the heart to enable a fuller reduction of concrete weapons. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Relationality and reconciliation refer to actions that invite, create, strengthen and heal relationships in ever-wider (horizontal) and deeper (vertical) directions across/within social groups; such as inter-religious dialogue and cooperation, or truth and reconciliation commissions. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Re-distribution of political power and the practice of advocacy. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. This would call us to action that contributes to the long-term well-being of people, non-human animals, and the environment, i.e. an integral ecology. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Human dignity calls for action that is consistent with and improves appreciation for the equal dignity of all people, including adversaries by ensuring human rights and cultivating empathy for all actors. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. With a focus on the marginalized and vulnerable. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)