

Blessed Are the Peacemakers Answer Key

1. Define *legitimate self-defense*.

- Legitimate self-defense is the teaching that limited violence is morally acceptable in defending ourselves or our nation from an attack. If a threat to our own life exists, legitimate self-defense states that it would be allowable for us to kill in self-defense should there be no alternative action.

2. What is the Church's teaching on legitimate self-defense?

- The Church's teaching on legitimate self-defense describes self-defense as a reflection of the balance between our love for others and our love for ourselves. We have a legitimate right to defend ourselves and others when threatened with bodily harm by an unjust aggressor. However, the Church teaches that harming the unjust aggressor must be a last resort.

3. Describe each of the six criteria for a just war.

- The six criteria for a just war are: just cause, comparative justice, legitimate authority, probability of success, proportionality, and last resort. Just cause requires that a war prevents or corrects a grave, public evil. Comparative justice requires that the good achieved through the war must far outweigh the negative effects that will occur. Legitimate authority requires that only recognized public authorities can authorize the use of deadly force or wage war. Probability of success states that war cannot be used in a futile cause or in a case that requires disproportionate measures to achieve success. Proportionality requires that the overall destruction expected from the war be outweighed by the good achieved. Last resort requires that force be used only after all peaceful alternatives have been tried seriously and exhausted. If any of these criteria are not met, the war cannot be considered a just war.

4. Respond to the following statement: A just war is not possible in modern times.

- *Answers will vary.*

5. Respond to the following statement: It is acceptable for some Christians to completely reject the use of violence, even in legitimate self-defense.

- *Answers will vary.*

6. Respond to the following statement: In light of the Gospel, "the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person"¹ (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, number 2267).

- *Answers will vary.*

(The quotation on this answer key is from the English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America, second edition, number 2267. Copyright © 1994 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops—Libreria Editrice Vaticana [LEV]. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modifications from the Editio Typica* copyright © 1997 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops—LEV.)

Endnote Cited in Quotation from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Second Edition

1. FRANCIS: *Address to Participants in the Meeting organized by the Pontifical Council of the Promotion the New Evangelization*, 11 October 2017: *L'Osservatore Romano*, 13 October 2017, 5.

