

## A Naked Emperor at the Rim of Chaos: The War on Terror and the Crisis of Language

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### Speaking Truth to Power: An Introduction

Thomas Merton understood his monastic life to be a 'no' to the absurdities of the modern world, but he needed his refusal to have relevance for that very world.<sup>1</sup> His was a vociferous and self-justifying solitude, a voice in the desert longing for a listener. In his essay, 'Letter to an Innocent Bystander' Merton articulated his prophetic purpose as a monk and an intellectual, and offered a vision for any other deliberately marginal person who might hear him. He wrote:

... our task is to dissociate ourselves from all who have theories which promise clear cut and infallible solutions, and to mistrust all such theories ... . For since man has decided to occupy the place of God he has shown himself to be by far the blindest, cruelest, and pettiest and most ridiculous of all the false gods.

... To illustrate what I mean I will remind you of an innocent and ancient story, of a king and his new clothes ... . Tailors deceived a king, telling him they would weave him a wonderful suit which would be invisible to any but good men. They went through all the motions of fitting him out in the invisible suit, and the king, as well as his courtiers claimed to 'see' and to admire the thing. In the end the naked king paraded out into the street where all the people were gathered to admire his suite of clothes, and all did admire it until a child dared to point out that the king was naked ... . Have you and I forgotten that our vocation ... is to do what the child did, and keep on saying the king is naked at the cost of being condemned criminals?<sup>2</sup>

In many of his later essays on peace and justice, and in his cold war letters, we can hear the child shouting 'but the Emperor is naked!'

In our current crisis Thomas Merton would find George W. Bush's easy equation of Christian mission with the ideal of democratic

capitalism and his justification of military campaigns with the use of religious imagery simply appalling. Unlike a secular liberal critic who might contend that President Bush's religious conversion and faith commitments lead to a dangerous sense of self-righteousness that interferes with his capacity to make good judgments, Merton would contend that the real problem lies in Bush's lack of religious conversion, in his failure to hear and live the fullness of the gospel.

If George W. Bush presents the United States as the New Jerusalem and tries to sell the war in Iraq as part of a war on terrorism, a war against evil, then through his writings Thomas Merton still stands like the prophet Nathan, exposing the hubris, greed, and nakedness of the king. Amidst all of Thomas Merton's prophetic works, his essays 'War and the Crisis of Language'<sup>3</sup> and 'Christian Action in World Crisis'<sup>4</sup> stand out in my mind as having a special piquancy for a post-9/11 world teetering on the brink of chaos. In these essays Merton helps us to see beyond the rhetorical smoke screen that is created by a political discourse prone to identifying narrow and national interests with divine providence; a discourse that is supported by an un-self-critical moral certainty. He speaks as a contemplative prophet in the Judeo-Christian tradition and points the way for us to reclaim a more authentic religious discourse that refuses the simplistic reductions of the language of hegemony.

### George W. Bush's Religious Language and the War on Terror

On the evening of September 11, 2001 George W. Bush addressed the world proclaiming, 'these acts of ... murder were intended to frighten our nation into chaos and retreat. But they have failed; our country is strong.' President Bush asserted that America had been attacked because 'we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world' and we had been attacked by evil, 'the very worst of human nature.' He asked for the support of allies, all those 'who want peace and security in the world to stand together to win the war against terrorism.' He then offered a prayer, Psalm 23, 'Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me.' He concluded by declaring America's resolve to 'defend freedom and all that is good and just in the world.'<sup>5</sup>

Nine days later President Bush delivered another speech intended to expand the answers to the pressing questions evoked by the events of September 11, namely, who did this and why, and to outline a

response to these acts that would assuage the fears of the shaken nation. The speech of September 20, 2001 was nearly politically perfect, and delivered with the confidence of a man who has acquired a new moral clarity and a sense of certainty regarding his providential purpose, his role in the unfolding drama of history. The speech was unambiguous, and for the more critically minded, woefully bereft of a substantive account of how and why these attacks occurred. Although President Bush was careful in his remarks to distinguish the vast majority of peace loving Muslims from radical terrorists who commit evil acts, his explicit naming of Al Qa'eda, Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, left many listeners to make an obvious inference that what constituted a terrorist was a religious commitment to Islam coupled with an incomprehensible but militant hatred of abstractions such as 'freedom' and 'the American way of life.'

In a dramatic framing of this new 'war on terrorism,' Bush declared that there would be no negotiations, and no stopping until the roots of terror had been eradicated, hinting at aggressive and offensive tactics. In a brandishing of his proverbial sword he warned all nations, 'either you are with us or you are with the terrorists.' Seeking the ultimate justification for measures taken in the war on terrorism, President Bush enlisted the endorsement of the almighty. He declared, '(t)he course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them.'<sup>6</sup>

On the first anniversary of the tragic events that fueled the war on terror, George W. Bush addressed the nation again and continued to paint the conflict in the simple and clear dichotomy of good vs. evil, us vs. them, by declaring that 'we value every life; our enemies value none.'<sup>7</sup> He concluded this speech declaring, 'Ours is the cause of human dignity; freedom guided by conscience and guarded by peace. This ideal of America is the hope of all mankind . . . that hope still lights our way. And the light shines in the darkness. And the darkness will not overcome it.'<sup>8</sup>

George W. Bush's rhetoric after the tragic events of 9/11 is locked tight, unambiguously holding up the United States as an innocent victim, the symbol of all that is good and just; God's favored warrior in the battle against evil, cruelty, and terror. In Bush's language, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 establish America as a modern embodiment of the suffering servant of Israel from the 42<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Isaiah; America is

the Messiah who shines in the darkness in John's gospel, and Revelation's Lamb of God who will return in glory with a triumphant sword to rid the world of evil. Since President Bush's 2002 state of the union address where he identified Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as an 'axis of evil' America has effectively reserved the right to judge what and who fulfills the necessary conditions to be labeled with this abstraction; who are the terrorists and what nations harbor them. President Bush makes these determinations under the influence of powerfully persuasive advisers.

### Tailors and Invisible Clothes

The Project for a New American Century (PNAC) is a think tank whose task is to offer advice for extending American power and influence and protecting American interest as far and long as possible. Included in the membership of this group are current Vice-President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, and former Chairman of the Defense Policy Board, Richard Perle. These men all advise George W. Bush on foreign policy and national defense; on how to realize what Bush sees as the American mission 'not to impose our will, but to defend ourselves and extend the blessings of freedom.'<sup>9</sup>

The PNAC is explicit about its mission to spread democratic capitalism, to shape the world stage in order to make it more hospitable to American principles and interests. As far back as 1998 the PNAC was focusing on Iraq and urging then President Clinton to 'implement a strategy to remove Saddam Hussein from power.'<sup>10</sup> The continued justification of the Iraq campaign confirms that President Bush, along with his advisors, believes that this extension of freedom can be achieved by military force. Consider a comment from Richard Perle that elucidates the PNAC's vision:

We are fighting a variety of enemies. There are lots of them out there. All this talk about first we are going to do Afghanistan, then we will do Iraq . . . this is entirely the wrong way to go about it. If we just let our vision of the world go forth, and we embrace it entirely and we don't try to piece together clever diplomacy, but just wage a total war . . . our children will sing great songs about us years from now.<sup>11</sup>

In this bracing declaration there is an almost missionary zeal to spread democracy. It suggests that violence can realize world peace.

But, as the noted anthropologist and Muslim scholar Akbar S. Ahmed has pointed out, and as the recent events in Iraq confirm, the Arab world is not ready to host an effective democracy. Ahmed writes:

While Muslim countries are generally if erratically moving towards acceptance of the notion of democracy, or some form of controlled democracy, the old structures—feudal or tribal or monarchic—continue to remain in place. True democracy cannot function with such structures constantly interfering or subverting it ... [To insert a democracy where the culture has not outgrown these structures] ... would mean a straight plunge into anarchy. . . . Powerful factions would not think twice before changing masks and creating fresh disturbances to further their own ends.<sup>12</sup>

The Bush administration's deliberate and misguided conflation of nationalism and religious faith, and their emergent agenda of spreading democracy by military force, even under the guise of 'self-defense' demands a prophetic response. The theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether writes that this imperialistic agenda:

must be questioned for its idolatrous moral absolutism, for its claims to represent ... God against the Devil, resisting any self-critique of its own power. Not only critics from the Muslim world and the third world, but also our European allies, are deeply offended by this direction of American power.<sup>13</sup>

The prophetic response must denounce the identification of the Christian gospel with the gospel of democratic capitalism and American individualism; it must denounce the use of religious discourse to implicitly or explicitly justify the use of military force to combat 'evil.' Finally, it should offer guidance for an authentic response to evil. In essays written nearly a half century ago, Merton still speaks to us with faithful clarity on these very issues.

### But the Emperor is Naked!

Thomas Merton's essay 'War and the Crisis of Language' is primarily a philosophical meditation on language and the worlds it creates but it reads in our current context more like an exposé, revealing the absurdities and selfishness that have led the world to so much destruction. This essay cuts through the deceptions produced by Bush's public addresses following 9-11-01 and his 'war on terrorism.'

Inspired by the writings of Jean Paul Sartre and Michel Foucault, Merton unmask in this essay the underlying deceptions in the public

languages of his day; of advertising and commerce, of power politics and war, and even in the religious discourses that are too often abstruse and irrelevant; a kind of glossolalia without hearers. In all of the syntax he analyzes in his essay, whether a tautological advertisement for a hairspray called 'Aprege' that celebrates having what 'no other hairspray has, Aprege;' or official reports during the Vietnam war that suggest we are doing our enemies a favor by killing them, he finds an invincible insularity in the language; a 'self-enclosed finality' born out of an 'unconscious aspiration to *definitive* utterance, to which there can be no rejoinder.'<sup>14</sup> Over and over again Merton identifies this 'illness' as a 'language of power' characterized by its insular structure that forbids inquiry, dialogue, and critical self-reflection.

Merton argues that a society infected with the 'Plague of Power' will generate a 'language of escalation' during political and international conflicts whereby the powerful nation will impose absolute conditions on the adversary that render dialogue, and thus language itself, meaningless. Declarations of war are regularly preceded by official resolutions that demand unqualified acceptance under a threat of violence. The resolutions themselves are part of the language of escalation that normally leads straight into the war that they seemingly attempt to evade. Disagreement with the imposed dictates and conditions of the powerful takes a violent form of non-verbal communication, the form of flying bullets and dirty bombs. Thus the language of power is a root cause in a perpetual cycle of violence. Declarations of ultimatums and 'non-negotiable' conditions uttered by the powerful become fodder for acts of terror and revolt. Merton put it prophetically:

Revolt against this (language of power) is taking the form of another, more elemental and anarchistic, kind of violence, together with a different semantic code ... . [T]his other language ... must be acknowledged as immensely popular and influential all over the world. It is the language of Che Guevara, of Regis Debray, of Frantz Fanon: the violent language and the apocalyptic myth of the guerrilla warrior, the isolated individual and the small group, enabled by revolutionary charisma to defy all the technological might of the biggest powers in the world.<sup>15</sup>

The defiance of UN resolutions by the rogue Saddam Hussein prior to his downfall is a form of this 'other language.' This 'other language' is uttered today in the desperate violence of the suicide bomber, in the

insurgency of Muqtada al-Sadr, in the vision of al Qa'eda and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad. However, this 'other language' suffers from the same illness and is another form of the 'language of power.' Merton notes that just as Foucault's *Madness and Civilization* reveals the way in which 'the 'reason' of the age of enlightenment unconsciously shared so much of the madness with which it was in dialogue'<sup>16</sup> so too the language of the terrorist and the guerrilla warrior takes on the same moral absolutism as the language of their opponent. Merton concludes then, that the insurgent's language of violence 'remains another language of power ... which rejects dialogue and negotiation on the axiomatic supposition that the adversary is the devil with whom no dialogue is possible.'<sup>17</sup>

Merton's essay profoundly challenges the presumptions of innocence and guilt as naively simplistic and falsely dichotomous in a complex world of radical interdependence. His assessment of the 'language of power' reveals the fact that the discourse we use largely determines the world we make. If that discourse is determined by fear, narrow self-interest, and the need for power and security, it will continue to create a world of violence and war. Such language continuously fails to make and heed important distinctions. The distinction between good and evil is necessary; but so is the distinction between what is genuinely good and worthwhile and what merely satisfies the demands of self-interest, self-preservation and self-advancement; or even comfort, convenience, and security. The latter distinction precludes us from simply equating national interest with the universal concept of a common good, might with right, licentiousness with freedom, revenge with just cause. Humility and an honest self-appraisal of one's motives depend upon this distinction; it is a distinction that needs to be made by both sides involved in a conflict.

### The Real War Against Evil and the Law of the Cross

The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were evil. Non-combatants were deliberately targeted and senselessly murdered. We ought to resist and fight against evil. In Thomas Merton's essay 'Christian Action in World Crisis' we find an understanding of a war against evil that is far more sophisticated, substantive, and demanding than the one carried out under the rubric of 'the war on terrorism.' We also find a directive as to how this war ought to be carried out. Finally, he shows us the way to appropriating an authentic religious discourse

that refuses simplistic and un-self-critical assessments of evil enemies 'out there' and ourselves as good and noble warriors.

In 'Christian Action in World Crisis' Thomas Merton addresses the issues of the cold war, the nuclear arms build up, the problem of supporting the use of nuclear weapons with the 'just war' theory; but the essay is more profoundly about the spiritual illness that war manifests, the failure of reason and the casuistic logic that justifies violence on a large scale. The essay has profound implications for our own 'world crisis' and for Catholics and other Christians who look for alternative models of response to this crisis since they are not represented by the religious language of George W. Bush, whom Jim Wallis describes as 'a self-help Methodist' who after 9/11 became 'a messianic Calvinist promoting America's mission to rid the world of evil'.<sup>18</sup>

From almost the outset of his essay, Merton argues that the enemy is never simply 'out there.' For Merton, the enemy is not even one side or the other, militant Islam or democratic capitalism, atheistic materialism or communism or imperialism. Rather, as Merton says, 'The enemy is both sides. The enemy is in all of us. The enemy is war itself and the root of war is hatred, fear, selfishness, lust.'<sup>19</sup> We need to arm ourselves against untruth, greed, pride and injustice. Merton contends that we must fight against these evils wherever we find them but '*above all in ourselves*'.<sup>20</sup> But this is hard and discomfiting, and especially difficult for a nation as a whole to carry out. Merton reminds us that the hunger for quick solutions and the desire to dispel our fear 'sometimes leads us into temptation.'

We oversimplify. We seek the cause of evil and find it here or there in a particular nation, class, race, ideology, system. And we discharge upon this scapegoat all the virulent force of our hatred, compounded with fear and anguish, trying to rid ourselves of our fear by destroying the object we have arbitrarily singled out as the embodiment of all evil. Far from curing us, this is only another paroxysm which aggravates our sickness.<sup>21</sup>

The sickness is both intellectual and moral. On the intellectual level, we fail to have the very insight that led Augustine of Hippo to denounce the Manichean view of good and evil as independent and opposing forces at war in favor of the Platonist's view of evil as a deprivation of the good, the contingent result of human moral failure, and to agree with Ambrose that the absolute is God alone.<sup>22</sup> On the moral level we

begin to commit atrocities with the false justification that we are permitted acts of punitive retribution because we are good and our adversary is evil. The Manichean view leads to all the easy oversimplification and objectification of evil outside ourselves; it leads to labeling another nation 'the Evil Empire' or seeing in the world 'an Axis of Evil.'

Merton emphasizes that the spiritual warfare requires 'a connaturality with the deepest values of nature and grace' and it is waged by unrelenting and non-violent love.<sup>23</sup> Merton contends that the authentic Christian response to violence and war must model Christ's own response to the violence committed against him. Merton urges believers to 'follow Christ perfectly' not only in private life but through political action in conformity with the gospel and be prepared to defend the truth of unconditional love 'with sacrifice, accepting misunderstanding ... even imprisonment or death.'<sup>24</sup> But this non-violent warfare, the *satyagraha* of Mahatma Gandhi, demands a courage and commitment that to the unconverted seem only suicidal. It also seems impossible to translate it into a political platform or a foreign policy, and remains for many what C. S. Lewis might call with a mischievous grin, 'so much idealistic gas.' It will indeed remain idealistic gas if we only admire it as an idea and do not realize it concretely with a radical and lived commitment.

Through his essays Thomas Merton is still exposing falsity. He shows us that the war on terrorism as it is being waged is only perpetuating the evil it attempts to destroy. Indeed, as the Jesuit philosopher Bernard Lonergan notes, evil prevails over love on the international scene 'through the language of *Realpolitik*; we have to defend the nation; everything would be fine if the other people did what they ought to do, but they don't, and so we can't.'<sup>25</sup> Isn't this the very logic that ensures the survival of the cycle of violence and the perpetuation of evil?

The commitment to love at all costs is ominously known in Christian parlance as *the law of the cross*. For Merton, this law is the only solution to the problem of evil, or what Lonergan calls the 'false fact' or 'the existence of what ought not be.' Lonergan speaks of *the law of the cross* as the solution to the problem of evil when he writes:

The solution that exists is put to us symbolically by the death and resurrection of Christ. . . . The false fact is to be eliminated. The false fact involves suffering. But suffering can result either in the perpetuation of the false fact by violent reaction, refusal, hatred . . .

or in the acceptance of suffering and, at the same time, the adherence to truth and to the Light. The acceptance of suffering and adherence to truth absorb the false fact. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. That is, one may say, a mystical idea, but it works. It is on that level that you understand the New Testament.<sup>26</sup>

This theology is a world apart from Bush's religious justification of a 'war on terrorism' only a part of which are the present campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. This theology does not support pre-emptive military strikes for the sake of regime change, in the 'name of all that is good and just.' But it is equally important to note that the martyrdom to which Lonergan alludes is a world apart from the martyrdom carried out in a bombing mission intended to destroy as many lives as possible. The martyrdom correlative with *the law of the cross* is the laying down of one's life for another as a testimony to the power of divine mercy and forgiveness.

### Conclusion

The crisis of language Merton elucidated nearly a half century ago is the very same crisis that faces us today. The crisis of language is integral with the crisis of conversion. History has shown and recent events validate the criticism that religious language is so elastic and polyvalent that it can be used by anyone to justify any cruelty or horror. If authentic Christian prophecy is to have a voice today, its power, its meaning, must be grounded in the very life of the one who is being transformed by the Holy Spirit. Christian prophecy must be born out of Christian conversion.<sup>27</sup> Far from a pious and lofty misdirection of the concern, religious conversion and personal authenticity are at the heart of the solution. Merton put it this way:

What is needed now is the Christian who manifests the truth of the Gospel in social action, with or without explanation. The more clearly his life manifests the teaching of Christ, the more salutary it will be. Clear and decisive Christian action explains itself, and teaches in a way that words never can.<sup>28</sup>

Our lives must manifest the teachings of Christ and this lived commitment establishes the meaning of the religious language. In other words, if we want to know what Christ meant by 'love,' we don't find the answer in a philosophical exposition but in the form of his life, obedience unto death, meeting physical violence with patient

endurance and offering forgiveness to those who abused and killed him, laying down his life as a sacrifice for others. The non-violent teachings of Christ are validated and exemplified in his life and these teachings make claims not only on individuals but on society as well; not only on Christian citizens but on so-called Christian nations. Merton recalls the Christmas message of Pope John XXIII from 1961 to make a point about the gospel values as they apply to the behaviors of nations:

Too often, in practice, we assume that the teaching of Christian forgiveness and meekness applies only to individuals but not to nations ... The state can go to war and exert every form of violent force while the individual expresses his Christian meekness by shouldering his gun and obeying the command to go out and kill. This is not Pope John's idea at all. He utters a warning to rulers of nations: 'With the authority we have received from Jesus Christ we say: *Shun all use of force; think of the tragedy of imitating a chain of acts, decisions, and resentments which could erupt into rash and irreparable deeds.*'<sup>29</sup>

The prophet speaks to those who stand within his own tradition, calling his siblings in faith to greater authenticity, greater fidelity, fuller conversion. The problem with George W. Bush's religious language is not that he uses it, but that he does so in order to justify the use of military force to conquer evil through a violent refusal, a tactic that runs counter to the example of Christ and that history shows over and over again to only perpetuate the evil the violence attempts to destroy. It is a time for prophets courageously to point us to Christ. Thomas Merton leaves a powerful example of Christian prophecy. The New Testament reveals the law of the cross; still, too often we prefer the darkness to its blinding light (John 3:19).

#### Notes and References

- <sup>1</sup> Thomas Merton, 'Honorable Reader', Robert Daggy (ed.). New York: Crossroad, 1989, pp.65-67
- <sup>2</sup> Thomas Merton, *Raids on the Unspeakable*. New York: New Directions, 1964, pp.61-62
- <sup>3</sup> 'War and the Crisis of Language' appears in Thomas Merton's *Passion for Peace: The Social Essays*, William Shannon (ed.). New York: Crossroad, 1996, pp.300-314. Merton wrote this essay in 1968 and it was not published until 1969, after his death. According to William Shannon's editorial notes in *Passion for Peace*, the essay first appeared in *The Critique of War: Contemporary Philosophical Explorations*, Robert Ginsberg (ed.). Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1969
- <sup>4</sup> 'Christian Action in World Crisis' also appears in *Passion for Peace: The Social*

- Essays*, William Shannon(ed.). New York: Crossroad, 1996, pp.80-91
- <sup>5</sup> U. S. President George W. Bush, *Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation*, September 11, 2001, 8:30 P.M. EDT
- <sup>6</sup> U.S. President George W. Bush, *Address to a joint session of Congress*, September 20, 2001
- <sup>7</sup> U.S. President George W. Bush, *Statement by the President in his Address to the Nation*, September 11, 2002. 9:01 P.M. EDT
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>10</sup> Duane Shank, 'The Project for a New American Empire,' *Sojourners Magazine*, September-October 2003, pp.27-30
- <sup>11</sup> attributed to Richard Perle by Bette Stockbauer in 'Rebuilding America's Defenses' — A Summary <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article3429.htm>
- <sup>12</sup> Akbar S. Ahmed, *Islam Today: A Short Introduction to the Muslim World*, New York: I. B. Tauris, 1999, pp.137-139
- <sup>13</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, 'American Empire and the War against Evil,' in *Spiritual Perspectives on America's Role as Superpower*, Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths, 2003, pp.168-176
- <sup>14</sup> Thomas Merton, 'War and the Crisis of Language', in *Passion for Peace*. New York: Crossroad, 1996, p.303
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* p.313-314
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* p.309
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* p.314
- <sup>18</sup> Jim Wallis, 'Dangerous Religion: George W. Bush's theology of empire,' *Sojourners Magazine*, September-October 2003, pp.21-26
- <sup>19</sup> Thomas Merton, 'Christian Action in World Crisis', in *Passion for Peace*, op. cit., p.81
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* p.82
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* p.83
- <sup>22</sup> St. Augustine, *The Confessions*, (trans. Maria Boulding, O.S.B.). New York: New City Press, 1997, Books VII and VIII
- <sup>23</sup> Thomas Merton, 'Christian Action in World Crisis,' op. cit., p.90
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* p.84
- <sup>25</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, Mark D. and Elizabeth A. Morelli (eds). Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990, pp.236-237
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* p.236
- <sup>27</sup> One might contend that George W. Bush's experience of personal conversion is the ground of his religious language and no doubt it is. However, a subtle understanding of 'conversion' distinguishes between moral and religious conversions. For Bernard Lonergan, a moral conversion moves one from basing decisions on individual satisfaction to basing them on a concern for genuine value. Giving up the drink and straightening up one's life may point to the beginnings of a moral conversion, risking one's life for love of country can also point to moral conversion. Religious conversion goes beyond moral conversion and even transforms our values. Lonergan calls religious conversion a 'falling in love without limits, restrictions, or conditions or qualifications' and this is necessary for a path of non-violence and adhering to the law of the cross. See Bernard Lonergan's *Method in Theology*. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, chapter 4
- <sup>28</sup> Thomas Merton, 'Christian Action in World Crisis,' p.84
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* p.85-86