

CHRIST'S SANCTIFIED HOLY CHURCH
ON WAR AND VIOLENCE

Christ's Sanctified Holy Church hereby affirms our solemnly held belief and teaching, as expressed in the *Doctrines & Discipline of Christ's Sanctified Holy Church*, that serving as an armed combatant, or participating in personal violence, is incongruent with a sanctified life.

We believe that, through forgiveness of sins and sanctification by the Holy Spirit, we are reborn in the likeness and image of God and restored to the divine state in which Adam and Eve were created. With this transformation, the Divine Nature of God enables us to, as Jesus instructed in St. Matthew 5:44, "*Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.*" The Holy Spirit gives us power to overcome the sinfully violent instincts that cause destruction in the world and in the lives of so many people every day.

Violence in any form is contrary to the law of Christ. Indeed, Jesus said in St. Matthew 5:38-39: "*Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.*" He, who was innocent of all, led by example and refused to take revenge against those who smote him and killed him. Instead, he loved them, forgave them, and calls for us to "*Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*" (Matthew 5:12).

St. Paul later reminded the Ephesians that, "*we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against, principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*" (6:12). He also exhorted the Romans to, "*Bless them which*

persecute you: bless, and curse not...Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, vengeance is mine; I will repay, sayeth the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (12:14, 19-21). This teaching reinforces the commands of Jesus to remember that our fight is against Satan and his devices, that we must love our enemies, and we are to exert extraordinary effort to avoid conflict with mankind.

In matters of citizenship, the gospel teaches us that civil authority is ordained of God and should be obeyed (Romans 13:1-7, Titus 3:1-2), but our primary citizenship and allegiance is in and to Christ's Kingdom (I Peter 2:9-10). This citizenship thus guides all of our beliefs, thoughts, and actions—especially those actions with regard to physical violence. Christ instructed the disciples to "*Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's,*" (Matthew 22:21), which compels us to respect earthly authority in responding to the call of a military draft but to refrain from participation in combatant service.

As followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, we believe in explicit obedience to His commandments and precepts, which instruct to "*resist not evil*" (St. Matthew 5:39), and that we "*follow peace with all men*" (Hebrews 12:14). Jesus told Pilate, "*My kingdom is not of this world, if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.*" (St. John 18:36). These scriptures, along with St. Matthew 26:52, James 5:6, and Revelation 13:10, compel us to believe and profess Christians should not shed blood nor take human life.

As citizens of Christ's Kingdom of Peace (St. John 14:27), we are constrained to oppose participating in war, armed insurrection, property destruction, violence to our fellow humans, and

the destruction of human life. The destruction of life and the violence necessary to warfare are contrary to the spirit and mind of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 2:4, 9:6-7). Our duty as sanctified Christians is to promote peace and goodwill, to foster understanding and trust among all people, and to work for the renunciation of war and violence as means to settle disputes. We are thus firmly convicted that the commands of our King should be obeyed (Acts 4:19-20; 5:29). Therefore, we cannot in good conscience serve as armed combatants, and hereby claim exemption from all military service for those who register officially with the church as conscientious objectors to war.