

Review of: "Active Peacebuilding as a Challenging Task of the Catholic Social Ethics"

Diana González Martín¹

¹ Aarhus University

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The article focuses on the meaning of peace from a European Christian perspective. In order to define peace the author quotes references from the Bible and the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1993), among other. This the notion of peace defended throughout the article is constructed as an opposite to hatred, as the contrary to war, or as the absence of war, should be qualified by recent contributions on positive peace ([Galtung and Fischer 2013](#); [Lederach 2005](#); [Rojas-Robles 2018](#)), imperfect peace ([Muñoz 2001](#)), transformative peace ([Ramos 2015](#)) and agonistic peace ([Martín, Hansen and Grondona 2021](#)), otherwise the main argument of the article seems to me reductionist and Manichean. Moreover, the approach to define war, as well as the outlining of the difference between 'adversaries' or 'enemies', is moral rather than political. I think that treating the notion of peace from a moral point of view depoliticises the reasons that cause war conflicts ([Cento Bull and Hansen 2016](#)). Dealing with this issue from a Christian point of view should not be at odds with a re-politicisation of wars, since the Church, from the time of colonisation, joined its interests to those of the state, taking an active part in politics.

The section of "A Brief Excursion Into the History of Christian Views of a Just War" is promising, because it could help to understand the problematic and deliberate confusion from Christian theologians between moral and politics. However, this is a very brief section and such an important milestone for the historicization of "just war" in Christianity like the Valladolid debate that took place in Spain in 1550-1551 in the context of the first stage of colonization of current America but the Spanish Crown are not mentioned at all. Since there are not cases to relate the author's arguments these seem too theoretical, too vague. In this sense it could be useful that the author would see more about the peace message of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (ComECE) "Truth, Memory and Solidarity. Keys to Reconciliation and Peace" (1999) in section "Condemnation of any wars by the popes of afterwar time".

In the section "Trends in Treating the Concept of Active Peacebuilding Over the Last Decades" the arguments of the author on the concept of "active peacebuilding" could benefit from a dialogue with references that consider conflict as an opportunity to grow and enhancing democracy ([Nagle 2014](#); Mouffe 2005).

In short, I think it is always a good thing to talk about peace and to look for notions of peace that we can apply to our societies in order to live better. The contribution of European Christian morality to the idea of peace has been significant, as the author argues, but such a contribution remains unfounded in the absence of case studies, which help us to analyse both the Vatican's contributions to peace, but also to war throughout history, as well as its undeniable political role. Finally, bringing the references to the notion of peace from a Christian perspective into dialogue with references from other fields,

such as political agonism, would give the article a more convincing solidity.