

PEACE: INVESTIGATING THE MEANING OF THE CONSISTENT LIFE ETHIC DURING WAR TIME

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Not long ago there was an epidemic of chaos here in the city of Buffalo. Gun violence had taken over our streets. Area clergymen and concerned citizens, held a [prayer rally for peace](#) at Niagara Square asking for an end to the violence, mostly stemming from drug and gang-related activity.

Expand that beyond our city, and you have just a minuscule view of the fear that millions of people hold around the world, especially in Ukraine right now. Their cries for peace and help can be heard around the globe, but what can we do?



This is where the notion of the “consistent life ethic” comes into play. The consistent life ethic is a position held by many people for the betterment and support of the fallen and weak in our society. Those who support the consistent life ethic oppose war, abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, economic

injustice, and racism. This may also branch into other areas that would cause suffering to people, particularly those among vulnerable populations.

One organization within the state of New York that supports the consistent life ethic is [Feminists Choosing Life of New York \(FCLNY\)](#). FCLNY educates on the impacts of publicly sanctioned lethal violence, including violent military action. In their position paper on [war](#) FCLNY references author and consistent life ethic proponent Wendell Berry. Berry explains in his essay [The Failure of War](#), “we cling to the hopeless paradox of making peace by making war.” Governments and militaries dehumanize war’s victims by referring to “targets,” “collateral damage” and “acceptable losses” to change public perspective, gain support, and soften the blow. The cost of war extends beyond the loss of human life into financial, environmental, social, and political casualties that are essentially immeasurable.

National security policies must be developed to address inevitable conflict of national interests and “careful and intensive” diplomacy is necessary. FCLNY advocates the nuclear reduction and non-proliferation strategy suggested by [Rehumanize International](#) in *Toward the Abolition of Strategic Nuclear Weapons*. The strategy entails an initial 50% reduction in nuclear arsenals around the world to build mutual trust and later an additional reduction by 1/3 with a focus on those weapons with the greatest destructive capacities.

Other strategies include lowering nuclear readiness to ease tensions felt by non-nuclear countries, revising nuclear doctrine and military law giving military personnel permission to refuse orders to deploy weapons against unauthorized locations such as city-centers.

We are not politicians, but private citizens. You may be feeling uneasiness and sadness over these events, and feel that you want to help, but don't know how. FCLNY will be co-hosting a free [medical supply drive and anti-war demonstration](#) on April 29th at 6:00 PM at the Dnipro Ukrainian Cultural Center. If you would like to join, please reach out info@fclny.org.