“If You Want Peace, Work For Justice:” Assessing Pope Paul VI as a Peacebuilder on the Levels of Insight and Action

Christopher W. Hrynkow
St. Thomas More College, University of Saskatchewan, chrynkow@stmcollege.ca

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Abstract

Paul VI was the first reigning pope to travel via airplane. On one such trip, he addressed the UN General Assembly, emphatically declaring "War never again! Never again war!" During the same period, Paul VI also saw the Second Vatican Council through to its completion. Vatican II produced an articulation of substantive peace in one of its final documents, *Gaudium et Spes*. This article employs an analytical yardstick through reading *Gaudium et Spes* in conversation with a Peace and Conflict Studies perspective, as a means to assess Paul VI’s peacemaking efforts on the levels of insight and action. Specifically, this article addresses Paul VI’s diplomatic initiatives, ecumenical outreach, and his contributions to Catholic Social Teaching, inclusive of the establishment of the annual World Day for Peace Messages. One of those messages is the source of what is his most repeated social teaching: “if you want peace, work for justice.”

Keywords: Paul VI, World Day for Peace Messages, Catholic Social Teaching, Second Vatican Council, John XXIII, Peacebuilding

Author Bio(s)

Christopher Hrynkow earned a PhD in Peace and Conflict Studies from the Mauro Centre for Peace and Justice, St. Paul’s College, University of Manitoba and a ThD in Christian Ethics, specializing in Ecological Ethics, awarded jointly by the University of Toronto, the University of St. Michael’s College, and the Toronto School of Theology. Previously, among other appointments Hrynkow taught Conflict Transformation Studies at the Canadian Mennonite University and Conflict Resolutions Studies at Menno Simons College, University of Winnipeg. Currently, he is an Associate Professor in the Department of Religion and Culture at St. Thomas More College, University of Saskatchewan where he teaches courses in Religious Studies, Catholic Studies, and Critical Perspectives on Social Justice and the Common Good. Hrynkow has been teaching and researching about Catholic Social Teaching since 2001.

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—Assessing Pope Paul VI as a Peacebuilder on the Levels of Insight and Action

Christopher Hrynkow

This article overlays an analytical yardstick upon the Second Vatican Council’s *Gaudium et Spes*, which articulated the Catholic Church’s relationship with the contemporary world, to discern content cogent to Peace and Conflict Studies. Also assessed are insights and actions related to Pope Paul VI’s peacemaking efforts. The level of insight focuses on Paul VI’s social teaching—especially those ideas and principles supportive of peacebuilding work and his appeals to the intellect—which connected various concepts and ethical ideologies in a manner that is both informative and holds the potential to move human imaginations, and is further related to the act of mapping out possible worlds and ethical options (cf. Boff, 2011) in order to provide a basis for reflexive action. For its part, action is principally addressed in terms of the Paul VI’s diplomacy and related ecumenical work.

The first portion of this article unfolds the meaning of a phrase that will pepper throughout: a *Peace and Conflict Studies perspective*. The second section provides some contextual background both on Paul VI before he was elected pope, and the period of the Cold War, which is so crucial to understanding the significance of his peace witness. Then, this article surveys Paul VI’s relationship to peace during his papal reign. That survey is foundational for the next section’s treatment of Vatican II’s peace witness, which includes a brief discussion of Pope John XXIII’s contributions toward articulating a vision of substantive peace. When John XXIII died during a conciliar period, Paul VI was compelled to oversee the work of the council. As one of the council’s last acts, *Gaudium et Spes* was passed—a document that is mapped in detail for its relationship to substantive peace and justice. This mapping of Vatican II, in conversation with a *Peace and Conflict Studies perspective*, helps to situate Paul VI’s peacebuilding efforts.

Subsequent sections proceed in that light, beginning with a study of Paul VI’s diplomatic work, and how that melded with his ecumenical outreach to leaders of other Christian denominations, inclusive of a discussion of his efforts to heal a millennium of division and mistrust between the Vatican and the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople. Further emphasis is placed upon Paul VI’s considerable contributions to Catholic Social Teachings. A penultimate
section concentrates on some tensions and promises that came to light through the comparison of Paul VI’s peace witness with Peace and Conflict Studies literature. The short conclusion ties together these threads of the article by situating the contemporary relevance of such tensions and taking forward the promises of Paul VI’s peacebuilding example on the levels of insight and action.

A Typological Note on a Peace and Conflict Studies Perspective

This article frequently invokes “from a Peace and Conflict Studies perspective” as a way to mark points of confluence, analysis, and divergence. This is not an empty phrase. Rather, it represents a deliberate invocation of a conflict transformation and peacebuilding typology inspired by practical and theoretical reflections on issues pertinent to fostering positive peace; that is, of peace consisting of much more than the mere absence of war (cf. Lederach, 2005; Galtung 1969; Second Vatican Council, 1965, as explored below). These positive peace issues include: responding to racism and militarism, ecological health, social justice, awareness of human rights, restorative justice, development of consciousness, solidarity, transformational politics, social justice, ending violence, discrimination and sexism, faith, nonviolence, and conflict transformation. In this manner, “from a Peace and Conflict Studies perspective” invokes the considered interpretation of the fields of (1) Peace Studies, as shaded by Johan Galtung (1967, 1969) concerned with substantive social justice, and (2) Conflict Resolution Studies, which is praxis-centred and, in the transformative approach of John Paul Lederach (1999), tries to shift the energies in a situation of conflict toward positive outcomes and solutions.

These concerns are unfolded further below; for the moment, however, it is sufficient to note that “from a Peace and Conflict Studies perspective,” when employed in this article, can be taken as invoking a set of concerns and commitments related to peacebuilding. These include, but are not limited to placing value on an integral and full coupling of peace and justice. Further, an underlying premise of this phrase is that positive peace is worth naming, celebrating, fostering, and incarnating in different contexts (cf. Hrynkow, Byrne, & Hendzel, 2010). While there are certainly other nuances and framings of “Peace and Conflict Studies,” the article’s take on the phrase accords with key facets of a number of scholarly treatments of the term and its constituent parts (cf. Webel & Galtung, 2007; Bercovitch, Kremenyuk, & Zartman, 2009; Sandole & Sandole-Staroste, 2009; Matyók, Senehi, & Byrne, 2011; Marsden, 2012; MacGinty, 2013; Zelizer, 2013). Let us begin with Paul VI’s life and times.
Background: Montini and the Cold War Context

Although this article will focus on Paul VI’s reign, the context of the Cold War and his experiences prior to being elected at the papal conclave in 1963 are highly significant, informing both his worldview and approach to peacebuilding (see Pallenbergh, 1964, for an overview of these experiences). Giovanni Battista Montini (1897-1978), the man who became Paul VI, was involved in work for peace and justice long before he became Pope (see Hebblethwaite, 1993), notably building on a background that included teaching the history of papal diplomacy and a career as a Vatican official working with the Holy See’s Secretary of State beginning in the early 1930s (see Noel, 1963). During the reign of Pius XII (1939-1958), Montini helped to prevent a more severe allied bombing of Rome. He also acted as intermediary to bring together allied and axis diplomats. His work in this regard was facilitated by the former taking refuge in the Vatican during the Second World War (Clancy, 1963). It was in his capacity as a close diplomatic advisor to Pius XII, with growing influence in the Holy See’s Secretariat of State (Noel, 1963), that Montini also witnessed the escalating tensions associated with the Cold War (see MacGregor-Hastie, 1964/1966).

The Cold War was a period of prolonged conflict, which waxed and waned in intensity and was largely fought through proxy wars between and within less economically developed countries (cf. Zinn, 1967/2013). This period is most frequently dated from the time of geo-political re-positioning after World War II until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 (cf. Will, 2016; Alas, 2017, on the manifestations of the Cold War in El Salvador; Rivero, 2013, on the global impacts of the Cold War, including those felt in Latin America). The hegemonic parties to the conflict were the U.S. and Soviet Union “superpowers.” A particular concern was the possibility of nuclear war between these nation-states. Such a conflict threatened to spawn an Armageddon outcome of biblical proportions, wiping out vital life on the planet (cf. Walker, 2012). For Catholics, the Cold War period was often framed in dualist, Manichean terms as a conflict pitting “good” Western powers that were supportive of religious liberty and privileges for Catholics against “bad” atheistic Communist forces that threatened and persecuted Catholics and other religious believers (cf. Sugrue, 2012). Paul VI’s entire papal reign took place during the Cold War period and relevant manifestations of the conflict are discussed at appropriate points as they emerge below, beginning with a treatment of his relationship with peace when he occupied the Chair of St. Peter.
Paul VI and Peace

The legacy of the reign of Montini as Pope Paul VI (1963-1978) is often overshadowed by the controversy surrounding his encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, which affirmed the traditional Catholic position on the unacceptable nature of artificial birth control (see Paul VI, 1968a; on the controversy surrounding this document, see O’Malley, 2010). Nonetheless, Paul VI made several efforts to contribute to peace and peacebuilding on the levels of insight and action during his pontificate. For example, on the former level (cf. Eaton, 2007; Melchin & Picard, 2008 on insight as a response to conflict-inducing challenges), he inaugurated the World Day for Peace (January 1st, annually), coinciding with a day of Holy Obligation recognized by many national Bishops’ conferences in the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church (see Paul VI, 1967b). According to the Roman Catholic liturgical calendar, the first day of the Western New Year marks the celebration of the solemnity of the motherhood of Mary, the “Queen of Peace” (John Paul II, 1999). It also was the Feast Day of the Holy Name of Jesus, the “Prince of Peace” (Paul VI, 1977). While Paul VI tactfully chose a day associated with peace in multiple senses and when many Roman Catholics are meant to attend Mass, he also intended the World Day for Peace to be more than merely a Catholic concern. In this regard, Paul VI (1967b) wrote that it is: “to true Peace, to just and balanced Peace, in the sincere recognition of the rights of the human person and of the independence of the individual nations, that We invite men of wisdom and strength to dedicate this Day.” The resultant Word Day for Peace Message format is the source of his well-known mantra, “if you want peace, work for justice,” which Paul VI presented as a necessary contextual updating of the biblical Prophet Isaiah’s insight that justice will bring about peace (Paul VI, 1971b; cf. Isaiah 32:17).

During his reign, Paul VI fused Catholic tradition and his personal commitments to craft a vision of peace and justice that offered an antidote to the above-discussed Cold War Manichean-style dualism. In this regard, he renounced temporal power and committed to selling his papal tiara in order to donate the money to the poor shortly after it was used to crown him (cf. Duffy, 2014). As Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, Montini had displayed a globalist orientation, founding a college for international students at the ancient university in his diocese and journeying to multiple countries in Africa and the Americas (Huber, 1967). Paul VI was the first reigning pope to travel by airplane, flying to Jerusalem (January 1964)—initially breaking expectations associated with his office at the time (of remaining in Central Italy) by making an
apostolic journey to the city of peace too often plagued by conflict—where he visited multiple sites of pilgrimage (Serafian, 1964). His second trip was to Mumbai for the 38th International Eucharistic Congress, which was the first time a reigning pope set foot in South Asia (see Hebblethwaite, 1993).

The following year, he undertook an apostolic journey to New York, where he addressed the United Nations General Assembly (see New York Times Staff, 1965, and below). During the same period, after the death of his predecessor (see Cahill, 2002), Paul VI also chaired the Second Vatican Council through to its completion thus putting to rest the possibility that Vatican II’s work would end with John XXIII’s passing (see O’Malley, 2010). That council produced a focused treatment of positive peace in one of its final documents, Gaudium et Spes (Second Vatican Council, 1965). This peace witness will be mapped in the section that follows, with reference to the context of Vatican II, inclusive of a discussion of John XXIII’s role in providing a seedbed for the council fathers’ articulation of substantive peace (cf. Paul VI, 1965c).

**John XXIII, Paul VI, and Vatican II’s Peace Witness**

The Second Vatican Council has been described by the Jesuit historian John O’Malley (2010) as the largest participatory meeting in history. Some two and half thousand Catholic bishops came together in four autumn sessions from 1962-1965 to make decisions about the content of documents dealing with doctrinal matters, church governance, and external relations. To help acquire deeper understandings of the issues at hand, the bishops had support from non-Catholic observers and subject experts including their own *periti*, who were most often theological advisors (see Baum, 2005). Vatican II is known for its methodologies of *aggiornamento* (bringing up to date) and *resourcement* (returning to the sources). In this renewing spirit, the council was called by John XXIII (r. 1958-1963), who some had thought would be a placeholder, caretaker, or transitional pope (see Trevor, 2000). Instead, he became associated with peace and reconciliation and earned the handle “the good pope” (see Tobin, 2013). That appellation stuck largely because John XXIII (1959) invoked themes of conversion in relation to the contemporary world and upheld the example of the earliest Christian communities as part of his call for what was only the second ecumenical (general church) council since the European Reformation period (see O’Malley, 2010; cf. Hales, 1965). Earlier, during the period of the initial Vatican Council in the nineteenth century, the Catholic hierarchy’s social teaching was often more focused on condemning modernity and re-affirming
papal authority (see Vatican Council, 1869-1870) than peace and justice issues. While in the interim, some popes—notably Benedict XV (r. 1914-1922)—had tried their hand at diplomatic peacebuilding (see Pollard, 2005), John XXIII’s reign marked a refocused emphasis on positive peace, as evidenced in his final authoritative papal letter. Such publically circulating letters are called encyclicals, which have become the most significant mode of Catholic Social Teaching promulgated by Popes in the contemporary era. As a result, an encyclical carries with its teachings a certain moral gravitas that is binding upon Catholic conscience (see Gaillardetz, 2003).

In this light, the encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*, is sometimes called Pope John XXIII’s “last will and testament.” To cite a recent example, a heading paragraph for a conference at Georgetown University’s Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, marking the fiftieth anniversary of the encyclical’s promulgation, defined the document as “the *decisive* last will and testament of Pope John and the charter Vatican II needed to embrace an agenda for peace, human dignity and human rights” (Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, & World Affairs Staff, 2013. Emphasis added.). As implied in this citation, *Pacem in Terris* was promulgated during the conciliar period (after the first session) in 1963. It is the first papal encyclical that was addressed, not just (in the customary manner) to bishops or other Catholics, but to everyone of good will (cf. Francis, 2015, #3; cf. #62). When viewed from a Peace and Conflict Studies perspective, the address of the letter emerges as significant. Although the encyclical uses gender-exclusive language as translated into English on the Vatican website, it does make a concerted effort to be inclusive in terms of the audience addressed: “*To Our Venerable Brethren the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops, and all other Local Ordinaries who are at Peace and in Communion with the Apostolic See, and to the Clergy and Faithful of the entire Catholic World, and to all Men [sic.] of Good Will*” (Pope John XXIII 1963, #1. Emphasis in the original.).

In this same spirit of expanding the prerequisite conditions for cultures of deep dialogue, encounter, and inclusion (cf. Francis, 2013, #220; #229), with *Pacem in Terris*, John XXIII (1963) employs the authoritative form of the encyclical to outline the rights and duties of persons in a world community in which people of different religions and political persuasions could (and ought to) live in harmony, justice, security, and freedom (see, in particular, section IV). He further predicts the imminent end of colonialism as a reading of the “signs of the times” (see, in
particular, John XXIII, 1963, #23). This methodology of “reading the signs of the times” is not only associated with John XXIII’s inspiration for the Second Vatican Council but also is a biblical imperative, as sourced in the Gospel of Matthew (see 16: 2-3), which is known for its treatment of peace and justice issues as particularly present in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5: 3-12).

As part of John XXIII’s (1963) own application of “the reading the signs of the times” methodology (after the Cuban Missile Crisis), *Pacem in Terris* also defines war, especially nuclear war and the stockpiling of nuclear weapons, as untenable in relation to the contextual realities of the contemporary era (see, in particular, #s 109-119). In this sense, the encyclical articulates the Peace and Conflict Studies concept of positive peace (see above). The related concept of “structural violence” helps to expose the ubiquitous presence of overt and covert violence within social structures. Such insight also serves to ground Peace theorist Johan Galtung’s influential shading of the difference between “negative” and “positive” peace:

A more expansive concept of violence leads to a more expansive understanding of peace: peace defined as the absence of personal violence and the absence of structural violence. These two forms of peace are referred to as negative peace and positive peace. (Galtung quoted in Müller, n.d.)

*Pacem in Terris*, encompasses these concerns. The following passage is indicative of the flavour of that encyclical’s treatment of peace and justice issues. It references the possibility of a nuclear Armageddon, which was palpable at the time *Pacem in Terris* was promulgated (cf. George, 2013, p. 77), and includes a statement of concern for the social and ecological impacts of arms testing:

There is a common belief that under modern conditions peace cannot be assured except on the basis of an equal balance of armaments and that this factor is the probable cause of this stockpiling of armaments. Thus, if one country increases its military strength, others are immediately roused by a competitive spirit to augment their own supply of armaments. And if one country is equipped with atomic weapons, others consider themselves justified in producing such weapons themselves, equal in destructive force.

Consequently, people are living in the grip of constant fear. They are afraid that at any moment the impending storm may break upon them
with horrific violence. And they have good reasons for their fear, for there is certainly no lack of such weapons. While it is difficult to believe that anyone would dare to assume responsibility for initiating the appalling slaughter and destruction that war would bring in its wake, there is no denying that the conflagration could be started by some chance and unforeseen circumstance. (John XXIII, 1963, #s 110-111)

John XXIII (1963) continues his line of teaching on these matters of positive peace by referencing not only human dignity but also a concern for other members of the larger life community, before ending with a definitive statement on the matter of nuclear arms:

Moreover, even though the monstrous power of modern weapons does indeed act as a deterrent, there is reason to fear that the very testing of nuclear devices for war purposes can, if continued, lead to serious danger for various forms of life on earth.

Hence justice, right reason, and the recognition of man’s dignity cry out insistently for a cessation to the arms race. The stock-piles of armaments which have been built up in various countries must be reduced all round and simultaneously by the parties concerned. Nuclear weapons must be banned. (#s 111-112)

This orientation—connecting the necessity of responding to the stockpiling of armaments with more reasonable and creative approaches based on visions of peace, human dignity, and justice—was carried forward by John XXIII’s successor, Paul VI (see 1965c).

After John XXIII’s untimely death that threatened the continuation of his vision (see Zizola, 1978), a key papal moment dealing with peace at a time of multiple transitions in the Catholic Church (see O’Malley, 2010)—which also set the tone for the Second Vatican Council’s treatment of peace issues in Gaudium et Spes—occurred when Paul VI addressed the UN General Assembly in New York. This apostolic journey to the U.S. was undertaken in the wake of the threats to peace associated with the Cold War and can read as part of series of pilgrimages for peace (see Paul VI, 1965b; the next section; cf. Huber, 1967). For his address at the United Nations (UN), Paul VI symbolically selected the feast of Saint Francis, October 4th, which had the additional advantage of coinciding with Vatican II’s fall 1965 session. This choice of timing also rests, in part, on Francis of Assisi being associated with peace (cf. Boff, 2006). In
that speech, Paul VI famously declared, “No More War! War Never Again!” (Paul VI, 1965b). As council father Remi De Roo (2012a) notes, the Pope’s address had a significant impact in Rome, as evidenced by Paul VI being welcomed back from New York with rigorous applause by those bishops gathered for a deliberative session in St. Peter’s Basilica.

According to De Roo’s (2012a) experience, a key result of the momentum generated by Paul VI’s UN speech was the final form of Gaudium et Spes. Additional stimuli connecting peace and justice were provided by the well-known Catholic nonviolent activists, Dorothy Day and Dom Hélder Câmara, campaigning among the bishops gathered in Rome in an effort to assure that the council “did not forget the poor” in its statements (Kaiser, 2012; cf. Day, 1997; Câmara, 1971). Taking up these concerns, Gaudium et Spes outlines the task of the institutional church in the world to “preach the gospel to all nations” by promoting justice, peace, and cultural development. Promulgated as part of the council’s last set of documents on December 7, 1965, it can be considered the most intellectually developed document coming forward from Vatican II (cf. Baum, 2005, p. 44). In accord with this analysis and seeing his experience and those of the other council fathers as an educative process, De Roo (2012a) emphasizes the need to read the earlier documents of Vatican II in light of the later ones, upholding Gaudium et Spes as generally the most authoritative. This interpretation of the document’s significance adds additional weight to Gaudium et Spes’ affirmation of the principle that world issues matter for Christians: “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ” (Second Vatican Council, 1965, #1).

In that spirit, Gaudium et Spes addressed several peace issues as part of its “evaluation of war with a new attitude” (Second Vatican Council, 1965, #80). A concentration of this subject matter occurs in the concluding section of the document, Problems of Social Urgency, under the title: The Fostering of Peace and The Promotion of a Community of Nations. Here, to cite 17 significant examples, the bishops: (1) emphasize that war threatens the entire human family; (2) declare that that “artisans of peace” are blessed, with reference to Matthew 5:9; (3) comment on the need to set up instruments of peace based on justice and love, with love mediating the demands of justice (Second Vatican Council, 1965, #77); (4) endorse a concept of positive peace, by writing that “peace is not merely the absence of war; nor can it be reduced solely to the maintenance of a balance of power between enemies; nor is it brought about by dictatorship.
Instead, it is rightly and appropriately called an enterprise of justice” (Second Vatican Council, 1965, #78); (5) give qualified support to conscientious objection, based on alternative service (Second Vatican Council, 1965, #79); (6) provide a tempered embrace of active nonviolence (Second Vatican Council, 1965, #78); (7) disallow the often-invoked principle that “all is fair between the warring parties” in a conflict (Second Vatican Council, 1965, #79); (8) issue a general condemnation of total war due to its indiscriminate nature (Second Vatican Council, 1965, #80); (9) affirm that arms racing is a trap, which does not provide for a steady peace; (10) write about war as “age-old slavery;” and (11) speak of a “clear duty […] to strain every muscle in working for the time when all war can be completely outlawed by international consent” (Second Vatican Council, 1965, #81).

Of particular interest from a Peace and Conflict Studies perspective is De Roo’s (2012a) report stating the intention of several of his fellow council fathers was that Gaudium et Spes outlaw war altogether. He asserted that the document would not have contained such a condemnation were it not for the fear of the “communist threat” at that time. Nonetheless, in the final promulgated version of Gaudium et Spes (to continue the above list), the bishops: (12) endorse the need for an effective international authority to keep the peace among the nation-states and allow for positive cooperation to “foster peace” (Second Vatican Council, 1965, #s 81-82); (13) encourage leaders and educators to promote alternatives to an unjust status quo and exercise their moral imaginations in the service of a “pressing need […] to instruct all in fresh sentiments of peace” based upon a change of heart (Second Vatican Council, 1965, #82); and (14) speak of need to free people from both want and economically oppressive structures (Second Vatican Council, 1965, #s 84-85).

Earlier in the document, the bishops also noted the misappropriation of resources that accompanies military buildup: “The arms race is one of the greatest curses on the human race and the harm it inflicts on the poor is more than can be endured” (Second Vatican Council, 1965, #61). In the section on fostering peace, they further (15) recognize several conflict stressors and, in this regard, encourage “Catholic specialists” to study issues like demographic shifts (Second Vatican Council, 1965, #87); and (16) specifically recommend the establishment of Catholic aid organizations like Catholic Charities U.S.A., Catholic Relief Services (U.S.A.), Development and Peace (Canada), and the Catholic Agency For Overseas Development (UK) to address “hardships […] in needy regions” and stimulate the Catholic community to promote
“international social justice,” thus upholding a positive conception of peace (Second Vatican Council, 1965, #90). Moreover, the bishops (17) extol the need for dialogue and cooperation between Catholics and all those “thirsting for true peace” (Second Vatican Council, 1965, #90), arguing that Catholics should work “even with those who oppress the Church [...] together without violence and deceit in order to build up the world in genuine peace” (Second Vatican Council, 1965, #92). Although in the author’s experience this teaching has proved adaptable over time, a specific implication here is that despite the aforementioned debate about the “communist threat” to religious rights at the time, Soviet-led peace initiatives were being officially sanctioned by the council fathers in the interest of the common good (cf. De Roo, 2012b; cf. Rivero, 2013 on Cold War Peace; to get a feel for the tension here, see Bukovsky, 1982, p. 25 on “the churches being first to be put to the torch” by the Soviet regime).

While not without their flaws, the above-presented 17 points sourced from Gaudium et Spes can be said to constitute a noteworthy articulation of substantive peace when placed into conversation with a Peace and Conflict Studies perspective. The timing is significant here, as Gaudium et Spes predates what is sometimes cited as the foundational article in the field by some four years. Peace and Conflict Studies genealogy has been traced to Johan Galtung’s (1969) landmark article in Peace Research, a journal he had founded five years earlier. As such, peace research has a longer pedigree than Peace and Conflict Studies proper. Other origins lie in Maria Montessori’s (1949/2007) work connecting peace and education (see Duckworth, 2008), the Pugwash Conference for Science and World Affairs’ (whose original members, including Bertrand Russell, took inspiration from the Russell-Einstein Manifesto of 1955) work for peace and disarmament (see Russell & Russell, 2009), the opposition to the Viet Nam War (see Zinn, 1967/ 2013), and the civil/human rights movements in places like the U.S. and Northern Ireland during the 1950s and 1960s (see Dooley, 1998). This list of possible origins is by no means exhaustive. It is only offered to illustrate the point that a longer genealogy would help discern a certain confluence between the Second Vatican Council’s peace witness as articulated in 1965 and the work of contemporary religiously motivated actors like Abraham Joshua Heschel and Martin Luther King, Jr., who both employed language that would later be adopted by Peace and Conflict Studies scholars and practitioners.

It can be thus concluded that the bishops display in Gaudium et Spes a contemporary awareness and conceptual sharpness in their writings on peace, inclusive of their concerns for
principled nonviolence and substantive social justice (cf. Heschel & Heschel, 2011; King, 1967). Potential points of confluence, and even of cross-fertilization, abound here—depending upon how one locates the origins of Peace and Conflict Studies and maps the directionality of the influences upon the council fathers, along with the subsequent influence of *Gaudium et Spes*’ peace witness. As a result, a potentially fruitful area of future research may be to trace the influence of figures like Gandhi, King, Heschel, Day, Câmara, and the Berrigan brothers (see Curtis, 1974), on the council fathers; then, in a second movement of mapping, to overlay how *Gaudium et Spes* is employed in their work, and by extension, influences the field of Peace and Conflict Studies. That King, Heschel, Day, Câmara, and the Berrigans all interacted with the council’s teachings and people—motivated by the sometime amorphous “spirit of Vatican II” in support of their work for positive social change—provides points of entry for research examining the vanguard nature of *Gaudium et Spes* in the mid-1960s (cf. O’Malley, 2010).

As a result, the articulation of substantive peace crafted by the council fathers assembled at Vatican II remains prescient, although it could certainly benefit from dialogue with insights emerging in the Peace and Conflict studies literature since 1965 (see below). Seeing the principles, advocated by the Bishops, incarnated would certainly go a long way toward establishing conditions for a nourishing embodiment of positive peace in the contemporary world. In this light, it can be concluded that, working on the level of insight, the bishops crafted a substantive peace witness. As a consequence, when incarnated, the seventeen principles mapped above hold the potential to contribute to efforts to foster cultures of peace in multiple contexts (cf. Hrynkow, Byrne, & Hendzel, 2010; Boulding, 2000). A relevant question thus becomes: how well did the first pope who reigned after (and during) Vatican II fare in relationship to the council’s peace witness?

**Paul VI’s Diplomacy and Ecumenical Work**

One place to begin answering this question on the level of action is with Paul VI’s diplomatic efforts. As mentioned, prior to occupying the Chair of Peter, Montini garnered thirty years of experience as a Vatican diplomat (see Hebblethwaite, 1993). Two related phenomena, from early in his reign, helped to ensure Paul VI attracted the attention of world leaders. First, that focused attention was, in part, a result of the excitement surrounding his predecessor, John XXIII. Paul VI’s contributions cannot be fully understood without reference to John XXIII and the documents produced by the council he called. Additionally, Vatican II, when in session, was
a global media event that attracted the attention of politicians and their constituents (cf. Kaiser, 2012; O’Malley, 2010). Taking over the leadership of the council and the Catholic Church at the time thus presented a space to make tangible impact upon global affairs.

One of Paul VI’s first visits from a world leader was by U.S. President John F. Kennedy on July 2, 1963. President Kennedy was diplomatically received without an official state welcome and allowed to shake the hand of the Pope (rather than kneeling and kissing his ring), so as not to give fodder to Kennedy’s anti-Catholic opponents, who had charged the president with being a papal puppet (cf. Jenkins, 2003). Paul VI used Kennedy’s time at the Vatican to discuss positive peace issues related to the conflict in Viet Nam, the U.S. responsibility to less economically developed countries—most especially those within its sphere of influence—and the need for racial equality in the continental U.S. (see Serafan, 1964). In fact, the Pope often raised issues of peace and justice in his encounters with global actors (see Hebblethwaite, 1993). From a Peace and Conflict Studies perspective, even simple words and actions coming from a pope can be read as employing the dynamics of ritual symbolism in the service of peacebuilding—drawing attention to peace and justice issues from sources where it might otherwise go unheeded (cf. Schirch, 2004).

In a similar light, Paul VI’s aforementioned three early apostolic journeys can be taken as representative of how his creative approach to diplomacy was undertaken in support of both positive peace and conflict transformation. With regard to the journey to Jerusalem, Paul VI had devised an ingenious way to respond to feelers, that Patriarch Athenagoras I and his predecessors had been putting out, for rapprochement in what had been a fraught relationship (see Ecumenical Patriarchate Staff, 2014; cf. Borelli & Erikson, 1996; Lindberg, 2010). With the Second Vatican Council in session in the autumn of 1963, Paul VI suggested that during his upcoming apostolic visit to Israel and Jordan, he and the Ecumenical Patriarch go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land at the same time, so their first meeting could be on neutral ground holding ecumenical significance (for a different, but compatible, emphasis in genealogy of the events that followed in 1964, cf. Ecumenical Patriarchate Staff, 2014). As a result, Paul VI’s January 1964 pilgrimage not only included a meeting with King Hussein of Jordan about contributing to the building of peace in the Middle East, but also the literal embrace between the Pope and Athenagoras I on the Mount of Olives at the first of their two meetings during the Apostolic journey (see Huber, 1967; on the value of such symbolic acts for peacebuilding, cf. Schirch, 2004). The landmark embrace
and their joint prayers can be read, with the help of a Peace and Conflict Studies perspective, as practical theological acts that set in motion the nullification of the mutual excommunications dated back to the Great Schism of 1054 (see Paul VI and Athenagoras I, 1965). Positive peace was at the heart of the framing of these events and the paths they helped to open for reconciliation. When the Ecumenical Patriarch visited Rome in 1967, the two religious leaders issued a joint statement, reminding “government authorities and all the world’s peoples of the thirst for peace and justice which lies in the hearts of all men [sic.],” and exhorting everyone “to seek out every means to promote this peace and this justice in all countries of the world” (Paul VI & Athenagoras I, 1967). This further illustrates how Paul VI was very much following (and, in the case of the 1964 visit, influencing) the direction of the council, while also diplomatically locating peace as a positive contagion (cf. Girard, 1979), which provides a nexus for ecumenical cooperation (see Catholic-Mennonite International Dialogue, 2003).

Similarly, while in Mumbai for the World Eucharistic Conference, Paul VI (1964) redirected some of the media attention surrounding the first papal visit to South Asia to appeal, in harmony with the above-surveyed teachings of John XXIII on positive peace, to all people of goodwill for general disarmament. He further advocated for the alleviation of the suffering of those living in poverty, including the element of active peace correlated with the quest to seek justice as affirmed by the council fathers. In this regard, the Pope called for “a peaceful battle against the sufferings of their less fortunate brothers” (Paul VI, 1964). In turn, it was Paul VI’s diplomatic move, offering this message to the UN in the service of the cause of world peace, that motivated Secretary General U Thant (1965) to set in motion the process to invite Paul VI to the organization’s headquarters in New York City.

As noted above, the Pope’s New York trip in 1965, and in particular his UN address, influenced the direction of Catholic Social Teaching coming out of Vatican II—setting a certain tone for the council, notably in the terms of its treatment of substantive peace. For his part, the Catholic historian Eamon Duffy (2014) highlights Paul’s diplomacy-related influence with reference to religious liberty. Yet, as with applying any list of principles, there were also tensions here in terms of Paul VI’s exercise of diplomacy. The perhaps most glaring example of these tensions was Paul VI’s willingness to make peace, in accord with the council father’s invocation to work with even those who would persecute the church, with the communist regime in Hungary. That diplomatic programming included ordering Bishop Mindszenty to leave the U.S.
embassy in Budapest in 1971. Mindszenty had been an active voice of dissent against the communist regime since the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956. In the interim, clerics who supported the subsequent regime’s efforts for socialism were named “peace priests” (see Ekiert, 1997), exposing the issues referenced by the exploratory questions “whose peace? whose justice?” (cf. Pugh, Cooper, & Turner, 2008), which come into play when a ritually and symbolically charged figure, such as the Pope, takes any particular action in an attempt to grow positive peace in this world.

**Paul VI’s Social Teaching on Peace**

While he never wrote another encyclical after *Humanae Vitae* (just under seven thousand words), Paul VI promulgated over 25,000 words in his annual Word Day for Peace Messages (all but one of which were penned after the controversial encyclical). Working on what this article has shaded as the level of insight, these messages served to flesh out the council father’s discussion of peace. That statement will be supported below; however, a caveat is necessary here. Paul VI also edited and promulgated conciliar documents during his reign (Faggioli, 2012). As a result, the relationship between the Pope’s teachings and the Second Vatican Council’s documents is at times multi-directional, with each taking cues from the other and forming something of a positive feedback loop that is unfolded, in part, above. Despite Paul VI’s influence in this regard, the council fathers still provide a cogent comparative yardstick, not the least because conciliar teachings are generally deemed more authoritative for Catholics than any particular pope exercising his magisterial office alone (cf. Gaillardetz, 2003), adding a certain moral weight to the moral yardstick provided by Vatican II.

Even before the advent of the World Day for Peace Messages, Paul VI’s (1967a) social teaching on peace took on an explicit expression in his third-last encyclical letter, *Populorum Progressio*, which is often given the title “On the Development of Peoples” in English. That encyclical couples visions of positive peace and integral human development. Therein, the Pope wrote:

> When we fight poverty, and oppose the unfair conditions of the present, we are not just promoting human well-being; we are also furthering man’s [sic.] spiritual and moral development, and hence we are benefiting the whole human race. For peace is not simply the absence of warfare, based on a precarious balance of power; it is fashioned by efforts directed day
after day toward the establishment of the ordered universe willed by God, with a more perfect form of justice among men [sic.] (Paul VI, 1967a, # 76)

As this teaching was expressed in his World Day for Peace Messages, Paul VI (1973) emphasized that “like man’s [sic.] life, Peace is dynamic.” For example, Paul VI asserted:

Peace is one of the supreme benefits of man’s [sic.] life on earth, an interest of the first order, a common aspiration, an ideal worthy of mankind, master of itself and of the world, a necessity in order to maintain the conquests achieved and to achieve others, a fundamental law for the free circulation of thought, culture, economy, art, and a demand which can no longer be suppressed in view of human destiny. This is so because Peace is security, Peace is order. A just and dynamic order, We add, which must continually be built up. Without Peace there is no trust, without trust there is no progress. And that trust, We declare, must be rooted in justice and fairness. Only in a climate of Peace can right be recognized, can justice advance, can freedom breathe. (Paul VI, 1969)

Here, in accord with the peace theorist and conflict transformation practitioner Lederach’s (2001) family of peace analogy, which images the “voices of Truth, Mercy, Justice, and Peace as social energies that are alive and present in any conflict” (p. 848), this dynamism allows efforts at conflict transformation to harness these social energies and work towards a situation of symbiotic balance and health between the four concepts. Similarly, commenting on peace as irreducibly coupled to justice, Paul VI (1972b) asked, “why do we waste time in giving peace any other foundation than Justice?” Amplifying such ethical sentiments, Paul VI also emphasized what emeritus Peace and Conflict Transformation Studies professor Jarem Sawatsky (2008), characterizes as “JustPeace” ethics (coupling its constitutive terms). For example, the Pope taught that justice and peace are jointly “fostered by personal sacrifice, clemency, mercy, and love” (Paul VI, 1975). In this light, Paul VI cautioned against adopting an anthropology that saw war and violence as inevitable (cf. Hamburg & Hamburg, 2013, on the possibility of a nonviolent human nature). As a result, he also implicitly downplayed the traditional Catholic Just War approach, which held that the direct violence of war was justifiable when specific
conditions were met (see Bainton, 1960/1990). In place of Just War, Paul VI instead affirmed that peace represented a contextual imperative:

Here on the contrary is our message, your message too, men of good will, the message of all mankind [sic.]: peace is possible! It must be possible!

Yes, because this is the message that rises from the battlefields of the two world wars and the other recent armed conflicts by which the earth has been stained with blood. It is the mysterious and frightening voice of the fallen and of the victims of past conflicts; it is the pitiable groan of the unnumbered graves in the military cemeteries and of the monuments dedicated to the Unknown Soldiers: peace, peace, not war. Peace is the necessary condition and the summing up of human society. (Paul VI, 1972b)

Building upon the premise that it is a tangible possibility for humanity as a whole to effectively respond to these authentic cries for peace, Paul VI (1975) offers a comparison with the related violent logic of dropping a nuclear weapon on the city of Hiroshima—brought again to the public’s attention via the 2016 visit to the city by U.S. President Obama. It is interesting to note, from a Peace and Conflict Studies perspective, Obama’s (2016) speech delivered at the peace park in Hiroshima invoked the need for “moral imagination” and “moral revolution” in the context of ensuring peace. As inspiration for such moral action, Paul VI specifically upheld the Peace and Conflict Studies proto-patriarch, MK Gandhi (cf. Jahanbegloo, 2013), as an example to be emulated (Paul VI, 1975). This endorsement follows upon the Pope naming a moral imperative for what Peace and Conflict Studies theorists have described as “principled nonviolence” over what has been termed “pragmatic nonviolence” (cf. Bharadwaj, 1998) and what Paul VI (1967b) named as “tactical pacifism.” In line with this active approach to principled nonviolence, also endorsed by the council fathers, the Pope named peace as a “duty” (Paul VI, 1973). Here, the Pope’s understanding also echoes Peace and Conflict Studies’ more contemporary articulation of “peacebuilding” (cf. Lederach, 2005), emphasizing that “peace has to be ‘made’” (Paul VI, 1974). Moreover, employing religious language that was later adopted as the theme for a series of official Catholic-Mennonite dialogue groups, Paul VI (1971b) was emphatic that we are all “called to be peacemakers.” The Pope’s example was also brought
forward when the international report on that dialogue cited Paul VI’s aforementioned best known teaching:

This constructive approach to peace (that is, Pope Paul VI: ‘If you want peace, work for justice’) is a complement to the contemporary practice of Mennonites in conflict resolution, conflict transformation, and technical peace-building. It also is supportive of broader conceptions of peace-building now being promoted in both Mennonite and Catholic circles. (Catholic-Mennonite International Dialogue, 2003, #150)

Further, in accord with the council fathers, Paul VI (1975) condemned the international arms trade, along with the related premise that positive peace could be brought about through policies that encourage arms racing. A prime example being invoked here was “MAD,” a policy of pursuing mutually assured destruction through second strike capacity (cf. Lieber & Press, 2006). The Pope specifically characterized such approaches as an attempt to “stamp terror with the name of Peace” (Paul VI, 1974; cf. Walker 2012). Further, in another confluence with a Peace and Conflict Studies approach that accords with Galtung’s theoretical reflections, Paul VI (1977) explicitly named the need to overcome “structural violence” to achieve true peace, helping to ground, particularly in Catholic consciousness, the insight that oppressive forms of social organization are a form of violence (cf. Câmara, 1971).

Moreover, the Pope helped bring other terminology relevant to Peace and Conflict Studies’ treatment of world issues into Catholic Social Teaching. For example, where the council had held back from employing the language of “human rights,” due to the association with the European enlightenment (cf. De Roo, 2012b), Paul VI (1976; 1968) unambiguously named them as representing “progress in peace.” He further framed human rights as existing in mutually enhancing relationships with peace (Paul VI, 1967; cf. Mertus & Helsing, 2006 on peacebuilding and human rights). Additionally, against an articulation of Christian faith that views world governance with suspicion (see Martin, 1999), Paul VI (1972b) endorsed the UN as the type of organization needed to help ensure human dignity across cultures and religions (cf. Marshall, 2013). He further named peace a universal moral responsibility, while noting a special duty for those who hold any measure of influence in shaping the world, to use that influence to promote progress in peace (Paul VI, 1973; cf. Diamond & McDonald, 1996, on multi-track diplomacy for peace). Justice is never far from the surface here. Indeed, for Paul VI (1969), taking up such a
call was the means to attain the coupling inherent in “the actual celebration of the Bible prophecy” wherein “Justice and Peace have met and kissed each other.”

**Tensions and Promises in Paul VI’s Peace Witness**

In what may be read as an eerie coincidence, Paul VI died on August 6, 1978, which was also the anniversary of the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima, an episode of extreme inhumanity that he frequently referenced in his World Day for Peace messages (e.g., Paul VI, 1971b; cf. Hershey, 2009). He had not offered merely a “no” to the direct violence of war but an emphatic “yes!” to positive peace (Paul VI, 1972b, emphasis in the original). Bringing forward a similar commitment, the Catholic priest and peace activist, John Dear (2005), argued that Vatican II’s orientation toward *ressourcement* and, therefore scripture, allowed for a recovery of “the gospel of peace.” In that light, and with the help of a Peace and Conflict Studies perspective, it is evident from the mapping presented above that the Pope’s affirmation of positive peace was given a differentiated expression in the World Day for Peace messages and was supported by Paul VI’s (1965a) advocacy for “a gospel of peace” in accordance with the peace witness of the Second Vatican Council, and its re-affirmation of the importance of both earliest Christian practice and the Bible (on pacifism in early Christian communities, cf. Bainton, 1960/1990; Yoder, 2009). However, given the advantage of up to half a century of hindsight, and when viewed through a Peace and Conflict Studies perspective, some gaps still remain in Paul VI’s peace witness, notably, in terms of ecological and gender justice dimensions of peace.

Despite John XXIII’s cited example, and taking Paul VI’s integrated approach to linking social justice and positive peace, as well as teaching that an “ill-considered exploitation of nature” (Paul VI, 1971a, #24) should be a pressing concern due its potential to destroy human autonomy, Paul VI largely ignored ecological health’s intimate relationship with peace (cf. Paul VI, 1972a, for an exception in relation to the Pope’s condemnation of “atomic, chemical, and bacteriological arms”). Contemporary sources that connected positive peace issues and ecology would have been available to the Pope and his advisors, including Kenneth Boulding’s (1965) famous “Earth as a spaceship” analogy and Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962; 2002), which, among other accomplishments, demonstrated connections amongst the industrial apparatus-associated pesticide use, violence, and negative effects on human health. Furthermore, Paul VI would have unquestionably had access to the insight of the World Synod of Catholic Bishops (1971)—that justice in the world for all people, including elements of sharing on the part of rich
nations and ending structurally violent approaches to development that damage the global commons. Yet, as a caveat here it should be noted that though examples like Carson’s were available, the fuller significance of ecology for peace has only recently come into clearer focus for both popes and Peace and Conflict studies theorists and practitioners (cf. Dorr, 2016; Amster, 2015).

In this regard, Paul VI’s lack of green content stands in contrast to an emerging trend in Catholic Social Teaching that is also present, in different form, within Peace and Conflict Studies today. In the latter area, scholars such as Stephanie Westlund, Randal Amster, and Michael Klare have contributed to the field by firmly interweaving ecology and peace. Westlund (2014) demonstrated that our essential connectedness to the ecological world can be activated to heal post-conflict trauma. Amster (2015) presented several points of entry for understanding connections between peace and ecology. At its heart, his vision of peace ecology represented a melding of the concepts of positive peace with ecological health. This coupling was necessary, Amster (2015) argued, because the problems represented by war and violence can no longer be considered in isolation from environmental degradation. Working against the realization of sustainable outcomes, Amster (2015) continued, are the interests of war, violence, and extractive industries. These segmented interests are compounded by the military-industrial project and its tendency to destroy, divide, and exploit the essential commons of human life. For his part, Klare’s (2002) focus on conflict-stressors that accompany resource exploitation helped him to conclude that renewable energy represents a much more solid basis than extractive industries for peaceful economies.

Westlund’s, Amster’s, and Klare’s contributions received a substantive measure of support in Catholic Social Teaching through the World Day for Peace Message format devised during Paul VI’s papacy. This support came from Popes John Paul II (1989) and Benedict XVI (2009) in their respective messages for 1990 and 2010, which firmly connected peace, social justice, and ecology under a rubric of nonviolent morality. Indeed, the latter message, entitled “If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation” (Benedict XVI, 2009), even mimics Paul VI’s formula that formed the title for his Message for the 1972 World Day for Peace, which also served as the main title for the present article. Further, these green concerns enter the papal teaching tradition in the authoritative form via an encyclical, promulgated by Pope Francis (2015), on social ecology. The latter document, Laudato Si’, includes the treatment of many
issues relevant to Peace and Conflict Studies and cites Paul VI four times, as part of its impassioned plea for all people to take up the duty to care for our common home (Francis, 2015, #3; #83; #127; #231). The final reference cited here from *Laudato Si’* is to Paul VI’s (1976) reflection on the connection between “a civilization of love” and peace, which would presumably help foster “responsible cooperation” in caring for our “common home”—itself, a formula first introduced into Catholic Social Teaching via Benedict XVI’s (2007) World Day for Peace Message for 2008 (#8). Thus it can be seen, Paul VI provided a certain measure of inspiration for the development of integral ecology within the papal teaching tradition (see Francis, 2015, #137, #159; #225; #230), which certainly shares a framing and multiple concerns with Paul VI’s views on integral human development.

Moreover, in terms of the other aforementioned gap in Paul VI’s peace witness, a Peace and Conflict Studies perspective would crave more in terms of gender justice from his teaching and actions (cf. Spees, 2004). This tension remains active today. Although papal social teaching articulates a view of gender equality largely based on a framework of gender complementarity, the demands for gender justice are frequently read as requiring greater movement with regard to the functioning and structure of the institutional Catholic Church. In perhaps the most obvious case of departure from Peace and Conflict Studies’ feminist mode of supporting cultures of peace (cf. Reardon, 1993; Boulding, 2000), the prohibition against woman’s ordination to the sacramental priesthood, which is a gateway to many positions of Catholic ecclesial governance, remains a matter of doctrine that the Catholic Church feels it cannot change (see Francis, 2013, #104). At the time of writing, however, space may be opening up for women to be ordained as permanent deacons (McElwee, 2016). Other feminist issues, such as divergent positions on the range of reproductive health choices that ought to be available to women, are also points of seemingly intractable disagreement between a number of Peace and Conflict Studies scholars and the official Roman Catholic doctrine on birth control—a set of teachings that, in the contemporary period, have been most closely associated with Paul VI’s aforementioned encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*.

While these tensions closely related to social justice, ecological health, and other facets of positive peace should certainly not be underplayed, it remains significant that Paul VI continued the momentum for JustPeace ethics provided by the council and John XXIII. It is notable, from a Peace and Conflict Studies perspective, Paul VI contributed to a shift away from
the just war tradition, which too often resulted in rather shallow justifications for war (cf. Dear, 2005; Cochran, 2014), toward an embrace of nonviolence—now explicitly affirmed by Pope Francis (2016) “as a style of politics for peace” (#1) in the fiftieth World Day for Peace Message. These features marked his approach to peace and, indeed to the papacy, after the council. After *Humanae Vitae*, in particular, he largely retreated from publically pronouncing on sexual ethics and, as is evident in the mapping presented above, a focus on the content of peace writ large became a defining feature of his social teaching and a key to understanding his legacy post-*Humanae Vitae*. As Paul VI wrote in an accessible fashion at the end of his last World Day for Peace Message, “the password is: No to violence, Yes to Peace” (Paul VI, 1977).

**Conclusion**

Coupling peace and justice as Paul VI (1971b) did, in his World for Peace Message for 1972, “If You Want Peace, Work for Justice,” it is already clear that Paul VI had a concept of positive peace, moving beyond a notion of peace as solely marked by the absence of war. With the help of a Peace and Conflict Studies perspective, this article has delved deeper into Paul VI’s peacebuilding work via mapping select examples on the levels of both insight and action. A particularly appropriate yardstick here has been the peace witness of the Second Vatican Council, which helped add an additional comparative dimension for assessing Paul VI’s peacebuilding from a Peace and Conflict Studies perspective. With the advantage of hindsight benefiting from recent developments in the Peace and Conflict Studies literature, this approach allowed for the identification of tensions and promises with Paul VI’s peacebuilding work. Addressing the tensions and carrying forward the promises with such peace witness now becomes a challenge for the world’s 1.3 billion Catholics and others who may be moved by that witness. Peace and Conflict studies practitioners and scholars would do well not to summarily dismiss the transformative potential of Paul VI’s peace witness, even granted that its source lies in a papacy that they might consider too conservative because of the teaching contained in *Humanae Vitae* (indeed, this is an approximation of the author’s own view until he considered more deeply the material presented in this article). Here, the above-cited ethical teaching of the council fathers—to work with those with whom we disagree on other matters in the service of peace and cogent—is prescient in both directions. In a related application on the levels of insight and action, peacebuilding in the mode crafted by Paul VI becomes a suitable point of confluence.
for the task identified by Pope Francis (2015) in *Laudato Si,* of entering “into dialogue with all people” about the urgent task of caring for our common home (#3).

As such, there are numerous reasons to affirm from a Peace and Conflict Studies perspective that caring for our common home in this fashion must be accompanied by the coupling of peace and justice. Peace and Conflict Studies scholars and practitioners can benefit from the legacy of Paul VI’s joining of these two concepts in a number of ways, even if they come to that conclusion through different motivations, and do not agree with the systematizing of ethics over the long arc of his social teaching in areas like ecology, and his treatment of gender. It is helpful that the coupling between peace and justice is firmed up by Paul VI’s embrace of a number of the principles associated with JustPeace ethics. It remains to be seen whether, through dialogue and other transformative processes, such ethics can grow deeper roots in more human communities so as to nourish efforts to care for our common home by incarnating substantive visions of peace and justice. In so much as Paul VI’s peacebuilding work on the levels of insight and action continues to hold the potential to be one of the many streams that nurture a critical mass of people embody JustPeace ethics across contexts and cultures, his legacy as a peacebuilder may still prove to be fruitful in an integral sense.

It is promise of this variety, incarnated through processes of dialogue and action, that may ultimately help overcome the identified tensions with Paul VI’s peace witness, facilitating its joining with other tributaries in the service of the substantive peace and justice. Such a confluence is increasingly necessary, given that too many people so desperately need JustPeace ethics to grow and flourish in order to help overcome all the unnecessary structural and direct manifestations of violence plaguing the global community. Paul VI’s peace witness as mapped in this article, in conversation with that of John XXIII, the council fathers, and contributions from the Peace and Conflict Studies literature, serves to buttress this conclusion. Indeed, this mapping lends support to an ethical premise that it is no longer possible to separate an integral coupling of peace and justice from work for a vital future for all life on this planet. Here, Paul VI’s peace witness work, as assessed on the levels of insight and action, comes together with a number of the other contributions surveyed above, to help foster an ethic of caring for our common home through working to establish conditions of substantive peace and justice. In fact, this synthesis, fostering an incarnation of JustPeace ethics, is only one of many paths of dialogue and action upon which “if you want peace, work for justice” remains cogent ethical counsel for our times.
References


