Let me begin with a narrative of events that happened in Ireland ninety-five years ago. It is May 1921; the Irish War of Independence, the first guerrilla war of the twentieth century, has been dragging on for more than two years. A group of seven Irishmen, who had constituted themselves the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic, proclaimed the inauguration of that republic at the General Post Office in Dublin on Easter Monday, April 24, 1916; all seven of them faced British firing squads within a month. Not much happened by way of revolution in Ireland for the next two and a half years, although Irish Republicans continued to prepare for the coming struggle. Meanwhile, the First World War wound down. The next skirmish of the Irish struggle for independence dates to January 21, 1919, when a small group of Irish Republicans belonging to the
Third Tipperary Brigade attacked and killed policemen who had been riding shotgun on a cart filled with gelignite at Soloheadbeg in County Tipperary. Martial law throughout Ireland was declared by the British authorities the next day.¹

More than two years after the Soloheadbeg ambush, another in a series of ambushes took place, also in Tipperary but further north, at Coolboreen near Newport. The ambush was intended to eliminate Harry Biggs, a British District Inspector of the so-called Black and Tans, demobilized British soldiers from the First World War brought in to supplement the Royal Irish Constabulary in suppressing the Irish rebellion. Biggs, 26 years of age at the time, had fought in World War I and had more than once had disciplinary and possibly psychological problems while in service. Biggs established a particularly hateful reputation for himself in the Newport area after his arrival there in December 1920. Among other things, he had detained and used the father of a local Irish Republican militant as a hostage against his two sons. He kept the old man tied up in the police barracks at Newport, but sometimes forced him to ride so bound in the front seat of police vehicles traveling through the countryside, where the ‘ditches’ (really dikes) that hemmed in narrow rural roads made them suitable for ambushes. Biggs also burned down the family home of the hostage as retaliation for his two sons’ revolutionary activities.

On Saturday, May 14, 1921, local Irish Republicans, including the older son of Biggs’s hostage, found out that Biggs and some companions had driven without their hostage late that afternoon downhill from Newport, evidently heading for tea at a British loyalist household in the district. When they were returning in the gathering dusk of that same day, they were ambushed around 7 p.m. at a tree-shaded turn in the road called Coolboreen. Two of them were killed. The IRA men thought that they had killed two men, but on closer inspection they realized that they had shot dead not only Biggs but also a young woman of the local British settler gentry, Winifred Barrington, the 25-year-old only daughter of Sir
Charles and Lady Mary Rose Barrington. The IRA men regretted that Miss Barrington, who was said to have been dressed in horseback riding clothes and wearing Biggs's military cap, had been shot, and said as much to another young woman in the party, who roundly abused them.\(^2\)

As we approach the date of the first centenary of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, I wish to share with you and my respondents some thoughts about making war as well as about making peace, especially making war and making peace as they have been understood in the faith traditions of Jews, Christians and Muslims. War has been made in Ireland as well as peace over the past century, and I will return to that topic and what happened at Coolboreen on May 14, 1921, at the conclusion.

I.

WAR AND PEACE IN THE ISRAELITE/JEWISH TRADITION

Before there was a theory of just war in Christianity or of *jihad* in Islam, there were what scripture scholars refer to as ‘holy war motifs’ in the theological-literary accounts of the escape of Israelite slaves from Pharaonic Egypt under the leadership of Moses. I must emphasize that ‘holy war’ as a term is not found in the Hebrew Bible; it is scholarly shorthand for the ancient Israelite notion that God waged war on behalf of Israelites, especially in their experience of the exodus from Egypt.

When did the exodus as an event happen? Even more basically, did the exodus from Egypt actually happen? These are valid questions.\(^3\) Egyptian sources recall no massive escape of Israelite slaves from their territory at any time.\(^4\) That does not mean there were not many smaller escapes of Israelite and other slaves oppressed in Egypt. The faith of Israel is a commitment of a community and its members to a single God—the Lord—who delivered the people of Israel from polytheistic bondage, whether it was Egyptian bondage in the late second millennium BCE or Assyrian and Babylonian bondage in the first millennium. In the accounts of the exodus from Egypt in the last four books of the Torah and the references to the exodus from Babylon in the exilic and post-
exilic prophets, the point made is the same: Israel’s unique and only God delivered and continues to deliver God’s people from bondage to many gods and bondage as well to many human masters and mistresses.

This is where so-called ‘holy war motifs’ arise in the Hebrew Bible. There were in antiquity far greater military powers than Israel in what is now the Middle East. Furthermore, before Israel was a geographical location, the children of Israel were a herding population who traversed the Fertile Crescent, like many other populations. “A wandering Aramaean was my ancestor” (Deut 26:5a), the devotee offering the first fruits in the Temple was instructed to say. There were at least two wandering Aramaeans: first, Abraham, a native of what is now southern Iraq, who had also lived as a migrant in what is now Turkey before coming to present-day Israel and Palestine. The second wandering Aramaean was Abraham’s grandson Jacob, whose name was later changed to Israel. Each of them “went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien” (Deut 26:5b).

The territory into which Abraham came as a herder—the same land into which Joshua and his followers came after crossing the Jordan—was “a land flowing with milk and honey” (Deut 26:9). Abraham and his family were not the first people to enter that land, which knew a past history of conquest by various Middle Eastern populations at least since the Early Bronze Age (3200-2000 BCE). If Abraham and Lot reconnoitered that land for grazing their flocks, there were other herders as well as farmers and merchants whom these ancient migrants from Mesopotamia encountered. These other inhabitants may have included some of the people enumerated in the second account of God’s covenant with Abram: “the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites” (Gen 15:19-21).

In the beginning, at least, the biblical account of Abraham suggests that the patriarch and his entourage coexisted peacefully with these peoples, but that may be an idealized history. When Abraham wished to bury his dead wife, Sarah, the Genesis narratives tells us that Ephron son of Zohar,
a native of Hebron, wanted to give the land freely to the patriarch, but Abraham insisted on purchasing it. Twice in that passage we are told that “Abraham rose and bowed to the Hittites, the people of the land” (Gen 23:7; see also 23:12). No event better symbolizes peaceful coexistence between different tribes than Abraham’s bowing before the people of the land at Hebron.

Even in Genesis one source foreshadows the future migration into Egypt of Abraham’s descendants and their bondage there (Gen 15:13). Oppressed in Egypt, the people of Israel entered into the experience of exodus: “The L ORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders” (Deut 26:8). As suggested earlier, this statement may denote repeated experiences of deliverance from oppression over many centuries, liberation of Israelites who for one reason or another had been enslaved in Egypt or elsewhere. The Israelites experienced God as a warrior (’ish milchamah: Ex. 15:3) fighting on their behalf, doing battle in their midst while they themselves—basically powerless people—escaped captivity.

Recall the song sometimes said to be the oldest verse in scripture: “Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron’s sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. And Miriam sang to them: ‘Sing to the L ORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea’” (Ex 15:21). That is, of course, the subjective view of Miriam and her two brothers, Moses and Aaron: while God delivered them, God simultaneously destroyed their oppressors. Not only were they delivered from oppression by neighboring nations but the L ORD also brought them “to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey” (Ex 3:8). The faith of Israel centered not only on liberation from bondage but also on divinely-authorized territoriality, the settlement of Abraham’s descendants and the followers of Moses and Joshua in a particular place, what came to be called erez Yisrael (the land of Israel). That land, however, was also occupied by other populations, as noted above.
Even if the Israelites experienced divine intervention in their escape from Egypt, not every military activity in later centuries qualified as a battle in which the Lord engaged on behalf of Israel as a warrior. A source critical of King David narrates events late in his royal career that revealed the king's lack of confidence in God's military support. David ordered a military census to be taken in both Israel and Judah even though Joab, the army commander, advised against it. After the military census was complete (2 Sam 24:9), David suddenly understood the original objection raised by Joab, the suggestion that the king was no longer relying on God. When a plague devastated the land for three days, the aging king lamented the results of his military hubris: “I alone have sinned, and I alone have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? Let your hand, I pray, be against me and my father's house” (2 Sam 24:17). That prayer seems to have been answered in the subsequent collapse of the united kingdom of Israel and Judah at the end of Solomon's reign.

Despite those early divine assurances of liberation from bondage and settlement in the land of milk and honey, later Israelites were possibly unique in antiquity in that they came to realize that Israel really did not have an exclusive copyright on the Lord. “Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped” (Isa 45:1a). There is, however, some Judean subjectivity in this ascription by Second Isaiah of messianic status to Cyrus II of Iran; this messianic title was given to Cyrus not because he was a world-conqueror but because he liberated Judeans from captivity in Babylon. Cyrus, in fact, liberated other captives from Babylon as well, but what mattered to Second Isaiah was the release of the Judeans.

Later Jews, exiled by the Romans from Jerusalem in the late first century CE, settled in Galilee and eventually as far away as Babylonia in the Tigris-Euphrates valley. The Babylonian Talmud, one version of the scholarly elaboration of Jewish law at that time, was basically completed in an exilic setting during the first five centuries of the Common Era. In at least one strand of its complex text, the Talmud recognizes that the God of Israel
has very broad perspectives indeed. The Judean-centered subjectivity of Second Isaiah gives way in the Talmudic era, at least partially, to a broader Jewish inter-subjectivity, a sense that the Lord has compassion not only on the people of Israel but also on their enemies. Both in the Tractate Megillah (10b) and in the Tractate Sanhedrin (36b) of the Talmud God questions the angels who wish to sing a song to celebrate the triumph of the Israelites over the Egyptians at the exodus. “My handiwork is drowning in the sea,” God says of the dying Egyptians. “Would you utter a song before me?” Some of the magnanimity of the Jewish tradition can be seen at its most expansive in a text like this.

Let me touch very briefly on the developments that led to modern Israel. The desire to return to the land of Israel persisted in Jewish tradition throughout eighteen centuries of diaspora. Every Passover Seder ends with the wish that Passover will be celebrated “next year, in Jerusalem!” The twelfth-century Spanish Jew Judah Halevi ended his days shortly after arriving in Jerusalem. At the conclusion of his life he found it possible to pray not only in the direction of Temple mount, but right there. “God chose to dwell in you [Zion] /,” Halevi wrote, “and happy is the man He chooses to bring near/ to make his home within your courts.”9 That centeredness on Mount Zion in Jerusalem continues in the faith tradition of Jews to the present day. Zionism bears a family resemblance to many other nationalistic traditions of the late nineteenth century, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, but the Jewish theological orientation to Jerusalem and to the hill of Zion makes it unique among nationalisms. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 guaranteed Jews the right to return to and settle in their ancient homeland provided that “nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.” Despite the desires of Cultural Zionists like Judah Magnes and Martin Buber to coexist with Palestinian Arabs,10 the State of Israel today has many difficulties with its Palestinian and other Arab neighbors. The proponents of the Zionist cause began more than a century ago to buy property from Palestinian landlords,
but tensions between Zionist settlers and local Palestinians began to develop, especially after World War I. Both Israelis and Palestinians today experience different subjectivities in this matter, as did their ancestors. This is not the place to assign blame to one or to the other population or to both, but simply to underline these different subjectivities and the very human tragedy they entail. Let me paraphrase what the Holy One said to the angels: God’s handiwork—Israelis and Palestinians, Jews, Christians and Muslims—are drowning in the sea. “Would you utter a song before me?”

II.
JUSTIFYING WAR IN THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION

Christians for their first three centuries had little to do with war. The North African Saint Maximilian, martyred in 295, inspired by the counter-cultural theology typical of the North African church, refused to shed blood for the sake of imperial Rome. The warfare imagery of the New Testament is just imagery, mainly referring to asceticism, the spiritual battle against sin: “Put on the whole armor of God,” we read in the Epistle to the Ephesians, “so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph 6:11). Jesus urged Peter to put his sword back in his scabbard in the Garden of Gethsemane (Jn 18:11), but not every later successor of Peter has issued the same command. Christianity changed dramatically with the victory of Constantine over Maxentius at the Milvian bridge in 312. Constantine was only baptized on his deathbed in 337, but Christianity gradually came to dominate Rome from the later fourth century. By the next century Christians had come up with a way of justifying war.

Saint Augustine, writing at the beginning of the fifth century, justified war in part because he was reacting against his former Manichean view that the Hebrew Bible was the work of an evil god, not revelation authorized by the one God and Father of Jesus Christ. Rejecting that Manichean doctrine, Augustine found it possible to say that God approved
of the victories of the Israelites over their enemies. Augustine lived at a turbulent time in North Africa. Violently inclined Donatists, a type of hyper-rigorous Christians, and especially a thug element loosely connected with them, the Circumcellions, had taken it on themselves as early as the fourth century to destroy orthodox Christian churches and attack their lay and clerical personnel. It was bad enough a century earlier when Roman pagans were making martyrs in North Africa, but when these heretical Christians were threatening the life and limb of orthodox Christians, Augustine judged that they posed a genuine threat to the tranquility of ordinary society and had to be dealt with coercively, even militarily.

Tranquillitas ordinis (“the tranquility of order”)—Augustine’s definition of peace was sometimes cited as justification for punitive war. That tranquility of order was so important for Augustine that he felt that the Christian could refuse to worship idols at the command of the Roman imperial authority, and even die as a martyr for that refusal, but the Christian should still find value in Rome, symbolically represented as Babylon. “Babylon, the first Rome, as it were, pursues its course alongside the City of God on pilgrimage in this world.” As Augustine lay dying in 430, Vandal barbarians who had arrived in North Africa from Europe a year earlier were storming the gates of Hippo. Augustine’s views on Roman imperial governance and on making war emerged from this setting, the subjective viewpoint of a besieged North African Roman citizen and Christian bishop confronted with a rising tide of terror.

Later moral thinkers distinguished two aspects of the ethical approach to war: what have been called succinctly in Latin jus ad bellum and jus in bello. Neither term is as ancient as its Latin rendering might suggest. The first supplies reasons that may justify going to war against some nation perceived as an enemy; the second specifies, once war has been declared, which warlike activities are justifiable, and which are not. Radical pacifists will contend that we Christians, like Jesus, should not resist evil. The New Testament deals principally with interpersonal moral
concerns; the community that wrote the New Testament had no political power. Christians in the long run had to depend partly on the Hebrew Bible and more on the philosophical traditions of the Greeks and the Romans to come up with such a theory of justifiable or unjustifiable war.¹⁸

Not only did Augustine introduce theories to justify war in certain circumstances; later first-millennium Christians went much further, in some sense sacralizing certain types of warfare. Pope Leo IV (r. 847-855) promised the ninth-century Frankish Christian army who fought to rescue papal Rome from Muslim Arab pirates that they would not be denied entry into the kingdom of heaven if they died in that cause.¹⁹ Later popes made similar promises on God’s behalf, culminating in the call for the First Crusade by Pope Urban II in 1095.²⁰

Fatal subjectivity came into play most clearly in the notion that such warfare in the Holy Land against Muslims—the Sunni Seljuq Turks and the Shi’i Fatimid forces—could serve as a form of penance for Christian knights.²¹ The Latin word for penitential pilgrimage, peregrinatio, quite literally means ‘foreignness,’ exile from one’s homeland as punishment for sins; it was a typical penance of first-millennium Irish monks.²² Peregrinatio was the term the first Crusaders employed to describe what they were doing in what were much later called the Crusades.²³ The cadet sons of European nobility set out for the Holy Land by an indirect route, murdering the Jews of the Rhineland in 1096 while en route. In 1099 knights of the First Crusade gathered into the precincts of the Temple Mount or Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem Jews and Muslims resident there as well as local Christians who dressed in very similar ways, slaughtering them mercilessly.²⁴

Thomas Aquinas was writing in the thirteenth century when Manicheism had once again surfaced within Christian Europe and when, at the same time, the whole Christian world quaked in fear of the power of their Muslim opponents on the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. Thomas writes calmly and clearly about just and unjust war, frequently citing Augustine when he treats the topic in the second
section of Part II of the *Summa Theologiae*, Question 40. Thomas had dined at the table of King Louis IX of France—Saint Louis who died as a crusader on the shore of Tunisia in 1270—and he was probably thinking of the Crusades when he wrote about what justified war and what did not.

Of the four questions and answers written on the legitimacy of war by Thomas, our interest is focused only on the first: whether it is always sinful to wage war. Note the negative bias from which Thomas begins. Thomas may have dined with Saint Louis, but he knew that most Crusaders were not saints. He quotes the words of Jesus: “Everyone who takes up the sword will perish by the sword” (Mt 26:52). He also cites the words of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount: “I say to you, do not resist an evil person” (Mt 5:39). Reaching the provisional conclusion that war is always sinful, Thomas cites one particular instance of such sinful war: the mock-war of jousting tournaments that actually kill people.

Starting out with that negative general judgment on war, Thomas then argues that sometimes war is justifiable. Three things are necessary for a war to be considered just. First of all, there has to be “the authority of a ruler at whose command war is waged.” Freelance soldiering is not good, but soldiering for a justly established government concerned with the common good could possibly be legitimate. Thomas quotes Augustine against the Manichean Faustus: “The natural order that would foster peace among mortal human beings demands this: that the authority to declare war and counsel war belongs to rulers.” For Thomas, as for Augustine, there is no question of authoritative legislative bodies representing the general populace; the only rulers both knew were kings or emperors, weak or strong. Note how this response comes first in the argument of Thomas: only legitimate authorities can declare a just war.

Much more succinctly Thomas presents what constitutes a just cause for war: “Those who are attacked deserve to be attacked because of some misdeed [they have committed].” Once again Thomas falls back on the teaching of Augustine, especially his commentary on the Book of Joshua: “Just wars are usually defined as wars that avenge injuries—if a nation or
state has to be punished for refusing to make amends for wrongs inflicted by its citizens, or to restore what it has taken away unjustly.” There are immense possibilities for misuse of this principle, given the subjectivities of belligerents and what belligerents subjectively define as wrongs inflicted on them and how belligerents estimate what belongs to them.

Thirdly, Thomas insists that “the belligerents should have a rightful intention, so that they intend either the promotion of good or the avoidance of evil.” He notes quite sagely that “it may happen that a war is declared by a legitimate authority and for a just cause, but is nevertheless rendered unlawful through a wicked intention.” Once again Thomas quotes Augustine against the Manichean Faustus: “Desiring to cause pain, a cruel need to take revenge, a spirit that is both relentless and implacable, a fierce desire to fight back, and the desire to dominate, and similar passions—all these things are rightly blameworthy in war.”

This is where jus in bello comes into effect. A lot of wars, even wars that might be considered morally justifiable, are vitiated precisely by such subjective attitudes in those who wage war and in their commanders, people who engage in actions that can make a just war unjust. Let me mention very briefly as examples actions that have made various wars unjust: “enhanced interrogations” by the CIA or the secret police operatives of dubiously moral allies after the year 2001, waterboarding and sexual humiliation of enemy combatants by U.S. army personnel in Abu Ghayrb after 2003, and finally, on an older and much larger scale, the deployment of nuclear weapons that killed over 200,000 non-belligerents at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

Both Augustine and Thomas looked at war from a subjective point of view they found hard to escape. Augustine presumed that Roman imperial rule in North Africa, shaken as it was by the fifth century, was good, or at least better than the chaos of barbarian domination of North Africa. Thomas presumed that King Louis and whoever else ruled in Christian Europe had not only the right to rule in Europe but also the right to intervene in the Muslim governance of North Africa and the Middle East. Neither
Augustine nor Thomas was capable of understanding the possibility of a revolution against established empire or monarchy.

Who are we to criticize these subjective presuppositions of Augustine and Thomas? The subjective presuppositions of Americans and their allies since 2003 have clashed headlong with the subjectivities of Iraqis, Syrians, Sunnis, Shi’is,‘Alawis, Yazidis, Isma’ilis, Mandeans and Christians in what were once the Arabic-speaking areas of the Ottoman Empire. No one in the Middle East or in the countries that have intervened in that area is thinking intersubjectively about these problems. We might well attend to the words spoken by Jesus to a militant disciple: “Put your sword back into its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword” (Mt 26:52).

III.

JIHAD IN THE MUSLIM TRADITION

The media seem confident that jihad means ‘holy war,’ but it does not.27 The verbal noun jihad only occurs four times in the Qur’an (9:24; 22:78; 25:52; 60:1), and it means not ‘holy war’ but ‘struggle.’28 There is a word for war in Arabic, harb, or even qital, fighting; they are generally thought to designate something quite different from jihad. To understand the seventh-century Arab environment of Muhammad one needs to recall that mutual raiding (ghazw) for camels and other booty between Arab groups played a central role in the cultural economy of pre-Islamic Arabia.29 That Arabic word for mutual raiding has entered English as razzia. Surely there were oases of peaceful sowing and reaping in Arabia before Muhammad, but they seem to have been exceptional. Disunited Arabia, at least in the years before Quranic revelation, demanded struggle for survival.30 When Muhammad began to proclaim in Arabia a message of peaceful unity—divine unity and human unity—he was met by obduracy in his home town, Mecca. In the year 622 Muhammad and his disciples withdrew from Mecca, where they were actively persecuted, and migrated to the oasis of Yathrib, later renamed Medina, “the town of the Prophet.”31 It was from the time of that withdrawal from Mecca and the
uprooting and disinheritation it involved that Quranic passages begin
to deal with *jihad* as the struggle to survive, the struggle to recuperate
what was lost by those who had migrated from Mecca to Medina. In later
historical periods withdrawal (*hijra*) from a territory hostile to Islam is
often considered a necessary prelude to engaging in *jihad*.32

As a form of the verb in the third way of conjugating verbs in Arabic,
*jihad* and its cognates can deteriorate into something quite fatally
subjective: my struggle or our struggle to survive, to overcome opposing
forces, can sometimes disguise a desire to gain power by conquering or
exploiting others. It is likely that the early Muslims were influenced by
the exemplarity of the Byzantine Empire, “where the idea of religious war
and related notions were very much alive.”33 In the historical period of
the first four caliphs (632-661 CE), much of what might have been called
*jihad* continued the ancient pre-Islamic tradition of razzia, but the newly
converted Muslims of the Arabian peninsula could no longer legitimately
raid each other. Instead, they branched out into those areas of the Middle
East that had been militarily exhausted by the long war between the
Byzantine and Persian empires, a war that had only ended in the year 628.
The Islamic legal tradition hedged *jihad* around with restrictions that
do not allow every form of violence to be called *jihad*. *Jihad* is not to be
waged against fellow Muslims, for instance, nor is it to be waged against
People of the Book—Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians, in the first place,36
but that category was generously expanded to include people as various as
the Vikings and certain non-Muslim populations in the Sahara.35

When an opponent of Muhammad came running up to the Muslim army
after the conquest of Mecca in the year 630, crying out that God was the
only God and Muhammad God’s messenger, one of Muhammad’s closest
followers, Usama ibn Zayd, the son of Muhammad’s adopted child, killed
the man on the spot. The Prophet, when informed of this, confronted
Usama with a startling severity: “Who will absolve you, Usama, from
ignoring the [man’s] confession of faith?” Usama replied that the “the man
had pronounced the words merely to escape death.” But Muhammad only
repeated his question over and over again, “Who will absolve you?” Usama was so ashamed of what he had done that he later said, “I wished that I had not been a Muslim heretofore and had only become one that day.”

When the Muslim community in Arabia branched out into the rest of the Middle East, the majority Christian populations of Egypt and Syria in the later seventh century sometimes (but not always) welcomed the transfer of power in those two areas from Byzantine Greek to Muslim Arab rule. For one thing—and theology was more important at that time than it is now—the Muslim conquerors had no interest in enforcing Chalcedonian orthodoxy on the Miaphysite Christians of Egypt and Syria or the Nestorian Christians of Iraq. For another thing, and much more practically, the taxes imposed by the Muslim Arabs were lower than those imposed by the Byzantines. For at least the first few centuries of Islamic history the Muslim rulers of Egypt and Syria were not terribly intent on converting the locals to Islam. The jizya, a tax paid by such subject populations, as well as kharaj, tax on their landholdings, helped to pay the bills of the expanding Arab empire.

Egypt only became majority Muslim when it was ruled in the early second millennium CE by Mamluks, slave soldiers, many of whom had been born Greek, Georgian, Sicilian, Bulgarian or Albanian Christians. Kidnapped and forced into conversion, Mamluk subjectivity made them into bad Muslims, forcing many others to embrace Islam. The horrors currently being perpetrated by ISIS in Syria and Iraq, not only against religious minorities but also against fellow Muslims, remind me of the work of the Mamluk slave armies in the early second millennium. Al-Qaida, wherever it has cropped up, Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria and its environs, al-Shabab in Somalia and Kenya: all of them oppress even more Muslims than non-Muslims. Many of these self-described mujahidun fi-sabil Allah (“strugglers on the path of God”) employ Islamist rhetoric as a stick with which they threaten the stability of Muslim-dominated governments they do not like. It does not mean that they are really such rigorous Muslims themselves.
Jihad is often described in the Muslim tradition in terms of two types of subjectivities: jihad al-akbar (the greater struggle which is asceticism, fighting one's own vices) and jihad al-asghar (the lesser struggle which is battling for an Islamic cause). The greatest Muslim struggler—the greatest ascetical mujahid—of the past century was undoubtedly the Pushtun pacifist, Abdul Ghaffar Khan. The Pushtuns, a wholly Muslim population, constitute today the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan and the second largest in Pakistan. A warrior people, not unlike the pre-Islamic Arabs, the Pushtuns preserve down to modern times traditions of clan rivalry and revenge-taking.

Pushtunistan was divided in 1893 between British India and independent Afghanistan. Three years earlier Abdul Ghaffar Khan was born in the village of Utmanzai in Pushtunistan and he grew up imbued with the culture of his people, although his parents also exposed him to Western and even Christian missionary education. Among the central lessons young Khan took from that Christian schooling was the ideal of unselfish service to fellow human beings, especially in the promotion of basic education. The British authorities did not react positively to the idea that education not controlled by them was good for the Pushtuns. Abdul Ghaffar Khan came into constant conflict with the colonial authorities after 1910, the year when he opened his first school in his native village. So popular was his work for the educational enlightenment of the Pushtuns that within a few years he was universally acclaimed with the title Bacha Khan, an honorific somewhat clumsily translated as King of the Khans.

Newly a widower at the age of 25 in 1915, the year that Mohandas Gandhi returned from South Africa to India, Bacha Khan became enthused as well for the anti-colonial sentiment spreading over India after the First World War. Bacha Khan first encountered Gandhi in 1920 and remained a faithful disciple of Gandhi for the rest of his life. The British exiled Bacha Khan from Pushtunistan and he often spent time with the Mahatma in central India, campaigning nonviolently for Indian independence and
for Hindu-Muslim solidarity. The partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 was for both Bacha Khan and the Mahatma an inestimable tragedy. Bacha Khan finally spent thirty years of his life in jail—fifteen before 1947 in British India and fifteen after 1947 in independent Pakistan. Although he swore allegiance to Pakistan, the authorities of that new nation never trusted him and he eventually became identified with an attempt to create a Pushtun state carved out of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

In the pre-independence era, starting in 1929, Bacha Khan founded a nonviolent, red-shirted army of his own normally rather violent fellow Pushtuns. That unarmed militia he called Khudai Khidmatgar: “God’s Servants.” Counterintuitive as it was, the oath of the Khudai Khidmatgar harnessed the militancy of the Pushtuns in a direction that most had previously thought impossible for Muslims, and especially for Pushtun Muslims: nonviolence.

I am a Khudai Khidmatgar; and as God needs no service, but serving his creation is serving him, I promise to serve humanity in the name of God. I promise to refrain from violence and from taking revenge. I promise to forgive those who oppress me or treat me with cruelty. I promise to refrain from taking part in feuds and quarrels and from creating enmity. I promise to treat every Pushtun as my brother and friend. I promise to refrain from antisocial customs and practices. I promise to lead a simple life, to practice virtue and to refrain from evil. I promise to practice good manners and good behavior and not to lead a life of idleness. I promise to devote at least two hours a day to social work. 40

How did Bacha Khan justify such a nonviolent, peacemaking program in Islamic terms? More than once he used as an example for his fellow Pushtuns the patience (sabr) exercised by Muhammad and the first Muslims as long as they remained in Mecca (610-622). Such patience was ideally suited to a time and place when the Muslim community was a minority and challenged by a hostile majority. “There is nothing surprising,” Bacha Khan wrote, “in a Muslim or a Pushtun like me
subscribe to the creed of nonviolence. It is not a new creed. It was followed fourteen hundred years ago by the prophet all the time he was in Mecca.”

Bacha Khan lived on well beyond his hero Gandhi, dying in Pakistan in his 98th year in January 1988. Honored in India, he was and is often despised in Pakistan, although there is a Pakistani university named after him, an institution attacked by the Pakistani Taliban on this year’s anniversary of the death of Bacha Khan. At the end of his life Bacha Khan requested that he be buried at Jalalabad in Afghanistan, perhaps as a symbol of his transnational vocation as the Bacha of the Pushtun people. Bacha Khan lived his long life to the end as a man committed to peace and service of humanity in a world of violence: “I am a Khudai Khidmatgar; and as God needs no service, but serving his creation is serving him, I promise to serve humanity in the name of God.” Al-baqā’ li’llāhi: Only God lives forever. Rahimahu Allah: May God have mercy on Bacha Khan and on all peacemakers.

EPILOGUE

Making war and making peace are both arduous tasks. The signers of the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic realized that they had to constitute themselves the “Provisional Government of the Irish Republic” until an election could be held. “Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishment of a permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, hereby constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people.” Thus they laid claim to what Thomas called “the authority of a ruler by whose command war is to be waged,” the first and most basic of the principles Thomas required for just war. Their opportunity to establish “a permanent National Government” came with the general election that was held in both Great Britain and Ireland late in 1918. Of the 105 seats allotted to Irish delegates in the British
House of Commons, the vast majority, 77, went to Sinn Fein candidates. Once elected, however, those 77 delegates—or at least those not currently in detention in either Ireland or England—decided not to proceed to Westminster, but to meet instead at Mansion House in Dublin where they constituted themselves the first Dail Eireann, the Assembly of Ireland. The Soloheadbeg ambush in Tipperary, which I mentioned at the beginning, took place the same day.

In order to demonstrate the justice of their cause, the signers of the 1916 Proclamation enumerated some of the “wrongs inflicted” on the Irish people over many centuries in Ireland, a history of wrongs that justified their uprising. “We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty; six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms.”

On the steps they would take to achieve Irish independence, the signatories of the 1916 Proclamation insisted that they and their followers were committed to restrain themselves from anything that would render their struggle “unlawful through a wicked intention,” as Thomas Aquinas would put it. Thus they prayed “that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline, and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.”

The man who shot District Inspector Biggs at Coolboreen on May 14, 1921, fought in Tipperary and neighboring counties throughout the guerrilla war that eventuated from those principles enunciated in Dublin on Easter Monday 1916. He was unhappy in the long run with the way that struggle for independence ended. The Anglo-Irish Treaty worked
out in London in the second half of 1921 left Ireland with the half loaf of the so-called Irish Free State, made up of 26 of Ireland’s 32 counties, independent in domestic affairs but dependent on the United Kingdom in international affairs. Full British rule would continue in the six northeastern counties of Ireland, an integral part of the United Kingdom. Those who were not happy with this result turned against the Irish signatories who had subscribed to that Treaty in London and a short but terrible civil war ensued in Ireland, in some cases dividing families.

In October 1922, the Catholic Bishops of Ireland, led by Cardinal Logue, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, issued a pastoral letter condemning those who refused to accept the results of the Anglo-Irish Treaty and the resultant Free State, maintaining that their struggle for a unified Irish Republic was an unjust war. “No one,” they wrote, “is justified in rebelling against the legitimate Government, whatever it is, set up by the nation and acting within its rights.” Just a few years earlier Cardinal Logue had felt the same way about the legitimate government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Neither Cardinal Logue nor many of the other Catholic bishops in Ireland had shown much enthusiasm for an independent Irish Republic. “All those,” the pastoral letter continues, “who, in contravention of this teaching, participate in such crimes are guilty of the gravest sins, and may not be absolved in Confession, nor admitted to Holy Communion, if they purpose to persevere in such evil courses.” The man who had shot Biggs in 1921, and who had continued the struggle for an Irish Republic even after the results of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, found himself cut off from the sacraments of the Church after 1922, a situation that continued as long as he remained in Ireland.

Eventually, with the collapse of the civil war late in 1923, the man who shot Biggs was elected, while still in detention, to a Sinn Fein seat for Tipperary in Dail Eireann, a seat for which he had never campaigned and which he never took. He and many other Irish Republicans would not agree to take the oath of allegiance to the King necessary for participation
in the governance of the Irish Free State. He resigned that seat in 1928 after five years of police harassment and left Ireland for New York in March 1929. There he married in 1932 and, with the birth of a daughter in 1933 and a son six years later, decided to settle, even taking American citizenship. His heart badly damaged by two bouts of rheumatic fever, one as a schoolboy and the second when he was “on the run” in 1920, he did not have long to live, dying in January 1944, shortly after his forty-fifth birthday.

This evening, a few days before the civil calendar centenary of the Easter Rising, I pay tribute to those seven Irish nationalists who issued that call to arms on April 24, 1916, so many of them poets and teachers, and even one a union agitator. Had those men been spared the firing squad, the future of the Irish Republic, the future of peace-making in that island, might have been very different. May the souls of the signers of the Proclamation, executed a century ago this spring, the souls of Winifred Barrington and Harry Biggs, and the soul of the man who shot Biggs at Coolboreen in May 1921—my father, Paddy Ryan ‘Lacken’—rest at long last in peace.
NOTES

1 For an account of this event, see policehistory.com: “The Soloheadbeg Ambush-21 January 1919.”

2 On this event, see Kevin Hannan, “Tragedy at Coolboreen: The Death of Winifred Barrington,” The Old Limerick Journal 24 (1988): 107-113. For a more recent account, very well researched, see Pakie Ryan, “Harry Biggs,” Newport News (Newport, Tipperary: Newport Newsletter Committee, December 2013), 67-87. Pakie (Patrick) Ryan, a veterinarian based in Newport, although he comes from elsewhere in Tipperary, is not a relative of mine.

3 For a recent example of eloquently argued controversy among Jewish scholars on the historicity of the exodus from Egypt, see the March 2015 exchanges between Joshua Berman, Richard Hess, Ronald Hendel and Benjamin D. Sommer in Mosaic: Advancing Jewish Thought available online at mosaicmagazine.com.


6 On Abraham's going down into Egypt, see Gen 12:10-20; on Jacob/Israel's going down into Egypt see Gen 46, esp. 1-4.


8 There are shorter lists of such populations elsewhere in the Genesis account of Abraham: “The Canaanites” (Gen 12:6), “the Canaanites and Perizzites” (Gen 13:7). In Exodus the list includes “the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites” (Ex 3:8).


“The peace of all things lies in the tranquility of order; and order is the disposition of equal and unequal things in such a way as to give to each its proper place.” *The City of God against the Pagans*, ed. and tr. R. W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 938. [De civitate Dei, 19:13.]

Ibid., 824 [De civitate Dei, 18:2].


Pope Leo IV, much harassed during his ninth-century papacy by ‘Saracen’ invasions of Italy, wrote to the Frankish Army that “whoever will have died faithfully (which we mention without hoping for it) in the struggle of this war, the kingdom of heaven will hardly be denied to him. For the Omnipotent One knows that, if any one of you will die—and he has died for the truth of the faith, the salvation of the fatherland and the defense of Christians—he will receive the aforementioned prize.” *Leonis Papae IV Epistolae et Decreta, Patrologia Latina*, ed. J. Migne 115: column 0655d, available through the Fordham University Library at http://pld.chadwyck.com/all/fulltext. My translation from Latin.

Fulcher of Chartres reports Urban II’s exhortation at the Council of Clermont as a call to rescue the Christians of the Middle East from the expanding Muslim empires in that zone: “Although, O sons of God, you have promised more firmly than ever to keep the peace among yourselves and to preserve the rights of the church, there remains still an important work for you to do. Freshly quickened by the divine correction, you must apply the strength of your righteousness to another matter which concerns you as well as God....All who die by the way, whether by land or by sea, or in battle against the pagans, shall have immediate remission of sins. This I grant them through the power of God with which I am invested.” See the fuller text through Fordham
University’s *Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, ed. Paul Halsall, available online at legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/urban2-5vers.html.

21 Pope Urban II had promised to “whosoever will set out to free the Church of God at Jerusalem from motives of devotion alone, and not from motives of gaining honor or getting money, that journey will be accounted [for him] as all penance.” See *Enchiridion Symbolorum, Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum*, ed. H. Denzinger and A. Schönmetzer, S.J., 32nd ed. (Barcelona/Freiburg im Breisgau/Rome/New York: Herder, 1963), 868. My translation from Latin.


23 The historian H. E. J. Cowdrey develops this theme briefly: “It must be remembered that medieval Latin had no special word for a Crusade up to the thirteenth century, when such words as *crux*, *crusata*, and *croseria* came gradually into use. Writers had hitherto used such words as *iter*, *expeditio*, and, above all, *peregrinatio*.” See his article “Pope Urban II’s Preaching of the First Crusade,” *History: The Journal of the Historical Association* 55 (1970): 177-88.


26 *Answer to Faustus*, XXII: 74 (note 12 above).

27 Rudolph Peters, a Dutch scholar who has published extensively on *jihad*, continues to call it ‘holy war’ even though he acknowledges that “‘Holy War’ is, thus, strictly speaking, a wrong translation of ‘jihad,’ and the reason why it is nevertheless used here is that the term has become current in Western literature.” See *Jihad in Mediaeval and Modern Islam*, tr. and annotated by Rudolph Peters (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 4. The Eurocentric cast of this sentence needs no further commentary.


30 See Rudolph Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam: A Reader* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers: 1996), 1: “It is clear that the concept [of jihad] was influenced by the ideas of the war among pre-Islamic Northern Arabic tribes. Among these, war was the normal state, unless two or more tribes had concluded a truce.” Henceforth this work will be cited as Peters, 1996.


Ibid., 4.

On this topic, see Georges Vajda, “Ahl al-Kitab,” *EI* 2 I: 264a-266a.


On the origins of the Mamluks and their non-Muslim ancestry, see D. Ayalon, “Mamluk,” *EI* 2 VI: 314a-321a. Ayalon notes quite succinctly that “Muslim-born Mamluks constituted ... only a very marginal element in Mamluk society” (317a).


For very similar views of the difference between Muhammad’s experience of revelation and teaching in Mecca (610-622) and in Medina (622-632), see Mahmoud Mohamed Taha, *The Second Message of Islam*, tr. Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na’im (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, new ed. 1996).

In this they imitated what the Hungarian delegates to the Vienna parliament had done in 1867, constituting themselves the first Hungarian parliament at Budapest. Arthur Griffith, the founder of Sinn Fein, had written an article on this theme as early as 1904 but later expanded it into a book. The third edition was first published in 1918 and later reprinted as *The Resurrection of Hungary* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2003).

For a very different interpretation of the elements of just war theory and the 1916 Rising, see Seamus Murphy, S.J., “Imposing Independence,” *America* 214 (April 25, 2016), 20-23.

“Pastoral Letter of His Eminence Cardinal Logue, the Archbishops, and Bishops of Ireland, to the Priests and People of Ireland,” *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* XX (1922): 543. Cited below as “Pastoral Letter.”
Peter Donnelly, a priest of the Archdiocese of Armagh, takes a more benign view of Logue in his sudden change from defending the legitimacy of British governance in Ireland to defending the legitimacy of the Irish Free State in 1922, but Donnelly does so with a suitable sense of irony: “If the Irish hierarchy, to borrow a phrase from Oscar Wilde, did not quite succumb to turning bad people into good at a moment’s notice, nevertheless an element of what might be regarded as historical ‘revisionism’ appears quickly to have attended the 1921 ‘settlement’. Cardinal Logue, for example, who had resolutely opposed physical force, lamented the death of Michael Collins, its chief architect during the Anglo-Irish war, as a ‘young patriot, brave and wise’. Of such ‘patriots’ Cardinal Logue had said just two years previously: ‘No object would excuse them, no motive would could justify them, no hearts unless hardened and steeled against pity, would tolerate their cruelty’. See Peter Donnelly, “Bishops and Violence: A Response to Oliver Rafferty”, *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 83 (Autumn, 1994): 331. See also the article to which Father Donnelly was replying, Oliver P. Rafferty, S.J., “The Catholic Bishops and Revolutionary Violence in Ireland: Some 19th and 20th Century Comparisons,” *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 83 (Spring, 1994), 30-42, especially Rafferty’s account (34) of Archbishop (later Cardinal) Cullen’s controversy with Frederick Lucas, the founding editor of the British Catholic weekly, *The Tablet*. Lucas, an English convert to Catholicism, had defended as early as 1843 the right of the Irish to take up arms against the British in Ireland, a stance much opposed by Cullen. Once Catholic Emancipation had been granted by the British to Irish Catholics with the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829, the Irish hierarchy tended ever after to be Empire loyalists. For a more recent account of the reactions of the Irish bishops to the 1916 Rising, see Oliver P. Rafferty, S.J., “The Church and the Easter Rising,” *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 105 (Spring, 2016): 47-57.

“Pastoral Letter,” 544.
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