

[Your Name]
[Street Address]
[City, State, ZIP]
[Email Address]

[Date]

The Most Reverend [Full Name]
Bishop/Archbishop of [Diocese]
[Chancery Address]
[City, State, ZIP]

Your Excellency:

I write to you as a Catholic of your diocese, grateful for the Church's witness on behalf of peace, and deeply troubled by the United States' ongoing war against Iran. I am asking you to speak out publicly and forcefully, to reiterate Catholic teaching on just war and the inviolable dignity of human life, and to call upon Catholics — including those in public office and in uniform — to examine their consciences in light of that teaching.

I especially want to thank Cardinal McElroy for his clear condemnation of the Iran War. In a March 9th Catholic Standard interview¹, Cardinal McElroy spoke about the primacy of non-violence, “Non-violence must be the first stance of Catholics in the world,” as well as the moral illegitimacy of the Iran War from a just war perspective: “At this present moment, the U.S. decision to go to war against Iran fails to meet the just war threshold...”

The bishops of the United States, through USCCB president Archbishop Coakley, have already echoed Pope Leo XIV's appeal for an end to the “spiral of violence.” Cardinal Cupich, in his March 8 statement, “A Call to Conscience,” has gone further, calling the war “a war of choice” and “the height of folly and hubris,” and condemning the moral debasement visible in the government's treatment of real killing as entertainment. These voices are essential and right. I urge you to add your own.

Three issues in particular call for the Church's clear and specific voice:

First, the question of just war. This conflict does not satisfy the conditions that the Catholic tradition has required for centuries. It was launched without a declaration of war by Congress, without exhausting diplomatic alternatives, and without proportionality — the targeted killing of Iran's supreme leader and senior military leadership, and the bombardment that has already killed over 1,000 civilians, including children killed at school, cannot be reconciled with the principles of discrimination and proportionality that are at the heart of just war doctrine. Pope Leo XIV has made this plain from the window of St. Peter's Square. Catholics in the pews, in the military, and in Congress need to hear the same from their own pastors.

¹<https://www.cathstan.org/us-world/in-interview-cardinal-mcelroy-says-u-s-entry-into-war-with-iran-not-morally-legitimate-citing-catholic-just-war-teaching>

Second, the right — and duty — of conscience in unjust orders. Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the Archdiocese for the Military Services said in January, in the context of a potential invasion of Greenland, that it would be “morally acceptable” for a soldier to disobey a “morally questionable” order. That principle applies with full force here. Catholic service members confronted with orders to participate in operations that violate just war criteria have both the right and, ultimately, the moral obligation to follow their conscience. They need their shepherds to remind them of this.

Third, a deeply alarming development that demands a clear response from the Church: credible reports, including more than 110 complaints filed with the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, indicate that U.S. military commanders have been telling troops that this war is “biblically sanctioned,” that “President Trump has been anointed by Jesus to light the signal fire in Iran to cause Armageddon and mark his return to Earth,” and that the graphic violence of this war fulfills “fundamentalist Christian end of the world eschatology.” This is not Christianity. It is not Catholic Christianity in any form. The idea that a political leader has been divinely anointed to launch a war that triggers the Apocalypse is foreign to Catholic teaching and directly contrary to it. The Catechism is explicit that no one may presume to know the hour of the End, and that war is never holy in itself. The Church has a special responsibility to name this heresy clearly and publicly, before it does further damage to the faith and conscience of Catholic men and women in uniform.

I am humbly asking you to:

- Like Cardinal McElroy, issue a public statement reiterating Catholic just war teaching as it applies to the Iran war;
- Like Archbishop Broglio, address directly the right and duty of Catholic service members to follow their conscience when given orders they believe to be unjust;
- Condemn clearly and publicly the use of Armageddon theology and Christian nationalist eschatology to motivate or justify military action, and affirm that such teaching is incompatible with Catholic faith; and
- Call upon Catholics serving in Congress to vote against any supplemental appropriations that would fund the continuation of this conflict, and to support War Powers measures to bring it to an end.

The Church has a voice that no politician has. Pope Leo XIV is using his. The American bishops have begun to speak. I am asking you, as my bishop and pastor, to speak too — clearly, specifically, and without delay.

Respectfully yours in Christ,

[Your Name]

[Parish, if you wish to include it]