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Introduction: Catholic Perspectives on the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the United Nations Women, Peace and Security Agenda

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Abstract: This introductory article frames the contributions to this special issue of the *Journal of Moral Theology*. It does so by introducing the UN's Women, Peace and Security (WPS) initiative at its twenty-fifth anniversary and outlining the core issues and gaps in the literature around the distinct peacebuilding work of Catholic women. While much research has been done on women in peacebuilding and on Catholic peacebuilding, the intersection of the two is underexamined. The article concludes by briefly outlining the focus of each article in this special issue.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the Women, Peace and Security agenda (WPS), was adopted in October of 2000. This special issue of the *Journal of Moral Theology* was undertaken to observe its twenty-fifth anniversary. Approaching and now past that anniversary, the world faces novel challenges, with an increase in violence, authoritarianism, and technological disruptions by artificial intelligence, and decreased multilateral cooperation and aid budgets. The operational principles that ground WPS—that women and girls are more affected by threats to peace and security—are unfortunately still visible and self-evident, and even increasing in severity and urgency. It is in this context that this special issue seeks to explore an under-researched area: the role of Catholic women in peacebuilding.

As global faith in the multilateral system declines and fragmentation increases, peacebuilders everywhere are questioning the theoretical frameworks and assumptions that previously guided their work. The

liberal model of peacebuilding, scholars argue, is entirely dead.[1] The "local turn," which resulted from critical opposition to the liberal model, has similarly been criticized for furthering the center-periphery, global-local binary that it sought to counter. Emerging now in the peacebuilding literature is favor towards a "hybrid"[2] or "adaptive"[3] model of peacebuilding, in which scholars attempt to characterize how local peacebuilding actors work to foster sustainable peace in their localities, regardless of whether these efforts map on to liberal peace constructs or not. Global actors are valued in their interrelation with and support of these actors.

The Catholic Church fits well into this hybrid understanding of peacebuilding. The church for centuries has been both a global and local organization: faith is lived out robustly in tight-knit communities, and these communities often connect closely with each other across large spaces. Catholic communities began, and still thrive, in the global majority—the Middle East, Africa, and Asia are home to some of the oldest Catholic communities in existence, who operate today much as they did in ancient times. The role of Catholic communities in peacebuilding is well documented, as will be explained further below.

Likewise, much literature exists about women's work in peacebuilding (the main focus of the WPS initiative), about the Catholic church's work in peacebuilding, and about the work of Catholic women. Brief summaries follow of the core issues at play in each dimension. Little, however, is written about the experience and expertise of Catholic women in peacebuilding efforts. This special issue begins to fill the gap at the center of the imagined Venn diagram between these topics.

WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING

It is well established that women are disproportionately affected by war and violence, whether through civilian casualties and sexual and gender-based violence, or taking on care roles and providing for their households in the absence of male family members. Not only this, but women are also largely excluded from peace mediation and negotiation environments, despite often possessing skills, knowledge,

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[1] Roger Mac Ginty, "The Liberal Peace Is Over and It Is Not Coming Back: Hybridity and the Emerging International Peace System," *Third World Quarterly* 46, no. 16 (2025): 1999–2018, doi:10.1080/01436597.2025.2559376.

[2] Mac Ginty, "The Liberal Peace Is Over and It Is Not Coming Back: Hybridity and the Emerging International Peace System."

[3] Cassandra Häggblom, "Adaptive Peacebuilding: A New Approach to Sustaining Peace in the 21st Century," *Peacebuilding* 14, no. 3 (2026): 360–361, doi.org/10.1080/21647259.2026.2646833.

and relationships particularly germane to cessation of hostilities and building of sustainable peace. Regardless, women still foster social cohesion in highly effective ways and are key actors in peacebuilding on the community level. Their lack of participation in official rooms does not inhibit their ability to build sustainable peace. With the understanding of these realities, the WPS initiative was born.

Despite modern criticism of its overly "Western" implementation, "it emerged from women on the front lines of conflict—from Liberia and Sri Lanka to Colombia and Iraq. Its essence lies in the largely unwritten experiences of women's organizing, mediation, and peacebuilding through time, and across cultures."[4] Following a globally organized grassroots campaign, UNSCR 1325 was passed and "[acknowledged] that women and girls are harmed by conflict in ways that are distinct, horrific and must be stopped; [and established] that women's meaningful participation in peace processes is essential to preventing, ending and recovering from conflict."[5] The four pillars of WPS are prevention, protection, participation, and relief and recovery. Prevention of conflict ensures fewer adverse results for women, and where gender parity exists conflicts are less likely. Protection refers to the need to protect the rights of women and girls. Participation entails the inclusion of women at all levels of peace and security decision-making, which produces a more durable process. Relief and recovery highlights the unique needs of women and girls and the importance of attending to them in the post-conflict reconstruction process. For example, research on the Colombian peace agreement shows that implementation of gender-specific provisions in a peace agreement is essential to the success of the implementation of the whole agreement.[6]

Yet 25 years on and given the decline of the multilateral system, the WPS agenda faces significant challenges. Many countries have not yet developed National Action Plans (NAPs) to implement the agenda. Some have developed them too recently to show progress, and some developed them a long time ago but have never implemented them. Internationally, peacebuilding efforts are often deprioritized in favor

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[4] Achilleos-Sarll, Columba (she/her), Paul Kirby (he/him), Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini (she/her), Kim Thuy Seelinger (she/her), Rachel Grimes (she/her), Chamindra Weerawardhana (she/her), et al., "Unhappy Birthday! Women, Peace and Security at 25," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 28, no. 2 (2026): 471–517, doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2025.2600069.

[5] "What Is the Women, Peace and Security Agenda?," *UN Women*, October 20, 2025, unwomen.org/en/articles/explainer/what-is-the-women-peace-and-security-agenda.

[6] Madhav Joshi, "Does the Implementation Status of Gender Provisions Affect the Implementation of a Peace Agreement? Evidence From Colombia's 2016 Peace Agreement Implementation Process," *Policy Studies Journal* 53, no. 4 (2025): 1152–1163, doi.org/10.1111/psj.12584.

of security and defense, leading also to fewer resources for gender-specific programming. Despite its origins as a grassroots movement, its institutionalization has led to the aforementioned criticisms as yet another Western policy tool that instrumentalizes gender-related issues instead of empowering and advancing the work. Katrina Lee-Koo, describing her experience in the Asia Pacific region, relates that WPS-funded activities can be "primarily driven by institutional operational outcomes rather than by the ambitions of feminist peace."[7] Danger exists in the tendency to cast women solely as victims of war, while ignoring their ongoing work for peace that often defies western monitoring and evaluation systems.

Despite challenges facing UNSCR 1325 and the WPS agenda ecosystem, it must be remembered that women continue their work in peacebuilding throughout the world, often unheralded, often tirelessly, and often while maintaining homes, children, and other responsibilities. Many are well-organized and efficient despite the challenges they continue to face. Despite this, many are also likely in need of greater support from their local and global communities. Catholic actors in many contexts can serve as a prime example—well connected in their communities, trusted, and effective. The next section will briefly discuss the existing literature surrounding Catholic peacebuilding. To strengthen these and other actors, the WPS agenda will need to refocus and reorganize for the post-liberal peace era.

CATHOLIC PEACEBUILDING

The Catholic Church has a long tradition and history in peacebuilding and diplomacy, drawing on its status as a moral authority and actor. Even in the middle ages, the Pope's moral authority was documented as a power resource used, to better or worse effect, in organization of the feudal structure of the time.[8] Batora and Hynek note that Vatican II saw the church pivot from addressing itself only to its faithful and its own advancement to addressing the world and the rights of all peoples, from which *Dignitatis Humanae* resulted.[9] Today, the church is deeply committed to peacebuilding on all its levels. On the international level, popes have acted as diplomatic actors in their function as head of state of the Holy See. For example, Pope Francis

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[7] Katrina Lee-Koo, "Lessons from a Quarter of a Century Working with WPS in Asia and the Pacific, in "Unhappy Birthday!," 496.

[8] Rodney Bruce Hall, "Moral Authority as a Power Resource," *International Organization* 51, no. 4 (1997): 591–622, doi.org/10.1162/002081897550465.

[9] Jozef Bátora and Nik Hynek, "The Holy See: Global Borderless Sovereignty and Double-Hatted Diplomats" in *Fringe Players and the Diplomatic Order* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), doi.org/10.1057/9781137314697_5.

took his first pontifical journey to Lampedusa and issued a poignant appeal for fraternity with the thousands of migrants perishing at sea and suffering on the island at the time. This action, while mostly symbolic, was powerful and galvanized a global response from actors like the Italian government, which "immediately tabled the issue of migration and trafficking at EU ministerial level discussions," the President of the European Commission, and the International Organization for Migration.[10] At the United Nations, the Holy See maintains diplomatic relations with 184 of the 193 member states to the General Assembly and participates actively in negotiations and meetings.[11] The Vatican has also lent its mediation offices to several international conflicts, including the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Beagle Channel Dispute.

On the domestic level and particularly in conflict-affected areas, local churches often play a major role as well. In many contexts in which the state is weakened, the church is the biggest organization that is trusted by the population, and therefore has the ability to mediate conflicts, advocate for the vulnerable, and provide services and aid to suffering populations. In these cases, the "church" refers not only to the formal structures of bishops and priests and church parishes, but also local religious orders and Catholic organizations, such as schools, hospitals, and humanitarian agencies like Caritas. Catholic organizations like these are often extremely effective peacebuilding actors, since they enjoy the trust of the community and are aware of the needs and issues facing various constituencies. They are also often connected to networks of various kinds, whether faith-based or not, and can advocate for their communities in this way. Catholic values animate their work, which also often leads to more effective peacebuilding: solidarity, subsidiarity, and protection of human rights are all essential to both Catholic works and peacebuilding activities. Catholic figures like Saint Óscar Romero in El Salvador and Maggie Barankitse in Burundi are revered both by the secular and Catholic publics for their work for justice and peace.

Catholic Women in Peacebuilding: The Gap

Regular readers of the *Journal of Moral Theology* likely do not need an introduction to the work and value of Catholic women in general, so let this section focus on the gap in the literature regarding Catholic

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[10] Nigel Baker, "Pope Francis: Holy See Diplomacy Under the First Jesuit Pope," *GOV.UK*, March 13, 2014, gov.uk/government/speeches/pope-francis-holy-see-diplomacy-under-the-first-jesuit-pope--2.

[11] "Our History," *Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations*, holyseemission.org/contents//mission/our-history.php.

women in peacebuilding. The previous section discussed the positive contributions of Catholic peacebuilding efforts to the world, but just as in secular peacebuilding spaces, it has also proven difficult to integrate women's work and expertise fully into Catholic peace-building spaces. When secular entities look to integrate a faith-based approach to peacebuilding, it is often clergy that are sought as representative of the Christian tradition. Katherine Marshall calls this a "double exclusion": women's perspectives are not sought as representative of either faith-based actors or diplomatic or peacebuilding actors. She asserts that women have a great deal to add to both conversations and must be sought out more intentionally in these environments.[12] Maryann Love and Susan Hayward echo this, describing ways in which women can actually become more marginalized and more deeply affected by conflict.[13] There is yet a great deal of work to be done despite the well-established literature that peace processes are more effective with meaningful women's participation, as well as long-standing Catholic teaching about the value of women to society.

Of the existing research on the work of Catholic women in peacebuilding, much focuses on the contributions of women religious. These accounts have begun to display the rich variety of activity carried out by Catholic sisters throughout the world, whether through their work in education, healthcare, and ministry, or peacebuilding in and around conflict zones, which has been consistently undervalued.[14] Luisa Banchoff relates that "there remains a widespread culture of treating sisters as second-class members of the Church, overlooking their education and intellect. . . . Pope Francis . . . [acknowledged] that for many women, work for the Church 'sometimes is more servitude than true service.'"[15] Accounts like those contained in this issue have begun to highlight some of the work and value contributed by these sisters throughout the world.

Yet even as the stories of Catholic women religious are underrepresented, the stories of Catholic women outside of religious

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[12] Katherine Marshall, "Scholars and Practitioners Focused on Women and Peacebuilding Need to Take Religion More Seriously," *Peace Policy, Solutions to Violent Conflict* no. 51 (2022): 5–6, doi.org/10.7274/00000002w3n.

[13] See Maryann Cusimano Love, "Exiting Violence: Women of Faith as Strategic Peacebuilders, Challenges and Opportunities," in *Exiting Violence: The Role of Religion*, ed. Debora Tonelli and Gerard Michael J. Mannion (De Gruyter Brill, 2024); Susan Hayward, "Women, Religion, and Peacebuilding," in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding*, ed. Atalia Omer, R. Scott Appleby, and David Little (Oxford University Press, 2015).

[14] See Luisa Banchoff, "Catholic Sisters: Their Work and Focus on Building Peace," *Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs*, January 30, 2024, berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/publications/catholic-sisters-their-work-and-focus-on-building-peace, and Cusimano Love, "Exiting Violence."

[15] Banchoff, "Catholic Sisters."

orders, particularly in peacebuilding settings, are still more unknown. A wide range of work is being done throughout the world by Catholic women of all kinds, whether through parishes, dioceses, women's organizations both religious and secular, and Catholic organizations like Caritas and otherwise. Women outside the formal religious institutional structures often have the ability to work in a more informal way, which can be extremely effective for backchannel conversations and negotiations that lead to tangible progress.[16]

Notable advancements have been made in the role of women in the church today: the Synod on Synodality (2021–2024) granted women a vote for the first time ever in the history of the Synod of Bishops. Pope Francis, in *Predicate Evangelium* (2022), edited the constitution of the Roman Curia to allow women to lead dicasteries, and since then, several women have taken up such positions, such as Sr. Simona Brambilla as prefect of the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, and Sr. Alessandra Smerilli as prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. While a landmark development, appointing women in leadership positions should be the first step of many in changing previous ways of working. For women's inclusion to be meaningful, they must not just be in the room; they must be heard, valued, and trusted as equal partners in the future of the Church and the world.

ADDRESSING THE GAP

The six articles in this issue all attempt to address this gap with regard to the place of women in the world of Catholic peacebuilding, especially as it pertains to the implementation of the WPS broadly, and in the countries where they focus. They all identify different ways in which peacebuilding mechanisms fail to adequately account for women, either by not being responsive enough to their experiences and needs or by not tapping into their distinct strengths and capacities to foster more sustainable peace. In some, the Catholic actors show pathways to progress in the frameworks of WPS, and in some they are part and parcel of the systems that inhibit or stall that progress. But all indicate the potential for peacebuilders in the Catholic community to champion the aims of WPS in significant ways.

In her contribution to the issue, Lisa Cahill examines Colombia and Kenya to question what role the Catholic Church can play in advancing the WPS agenda. In facing the lack of significant progress on

[16]Katherine Marshall, Susan Hayward, Claudia Zambra, Esther Breger, and Sarah Jackson, "Women in Religious Peacebuilding," *PeaceWorks: United States Institute of Peace*, 2011, https://web.archive.org/web/20260210095651/https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/PW71-Women_Religious_Peacebuilding.pdf.

UNSCR 1325, for Cahill, the enduring challenge is a one of political will. She argues that "cultural support sufficient to ensure that laws are implemented and women office-holders are respected and effective" is a greater need than an increased number of legal enactments for WPS statutes, more gender parity in institutional leadership, or clearer budgetary commitments for carrying out NAPs. According to Cahill, progress will remain stalled no matter how many concrete commitments are made on paper by social and governmental leaders if real political will for change is not created. It is here in the need for cultural transformation and mobilizing political will that Cahill argues the Catholic Church should be more operative. Despite consistent teaching about the sinfulness of gender-based violence, Cahill thinks Catholic leaders in Catholic-dominant cultures have frequently fallen short when it comes to using their influence to effect the kind of cultural change that is needed. She attributes this failure largely to leaders being unable to break themselves away from the patriarchal cultural milieus in which they find themselves. When looking at Colombia and Kenya, two countries with episcopal leadership deeply engaged on matters of peacebuilding, albeit in quite different ways, formal ecclesial momentum against gender-based violence and in support of increased agency and economic opportunity for women has been muted at best. Instead, Cahill observes, "The more comprehensive Catholic contribution is not only more diffuse, decentralized, and inclusive; it is more dynamic, adaptive, and unexpected." Here she lifts up the effectiveness of localized women's organizations and activist networks that operate in accord with the Catholic identity of their members yet outside formal ecclesial channels. For Cahill, these kinds of popular movements are a promising way in which the Catholic community can have a positive impact on WPS, especially if ecclesial leaders can find ways to amplify and accompany their efforts.

John Kiess focuses on the health dimension of WPS. In addition to the disproportionate impact on women's health due to gendered violence associated with conflict, he draws attention to another major health impact that is often overlooked—the disruption of health care services. And, he observes, such disruption is even more problematic in areas where health systems were lacking in the first place, as is often the case in countries that have experienced prolonged war. His article centers on Catholic actors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the ways in which they have helped fill healthcare gaps in the midst of ongoing conflict as a way to demonstrate the potential for faith actors to help advance this area of WPS. Specifically, Kiess has conducted long term ethnographic research since 2008 in the Nyankunde Health Zone. Nyankunde is in Ituri province in the north-eastern DRC, a region that has been deeply affected by decades of war,

including the destruction of the zone's referral hospital in 2002 along with other healthcare infrastructure. Catholics in the zone play a large role in the health system, including many Catholic women serving as community health workers, vital liaisons between healthcare centers and local populations who help administer different health programs and establish trust in formal health systems by those populations. The work of women community health workers is often parallel to involvement in base ecclesial communities. Kiess states that in the development of African base ecclesial communities, which was promoted strongly by Catholic leaders in the DRC, "Gender equality was central . . . and women have found in these base communities a central avenue of empowerment, where they represent the majority of participants and leaders." These *shirika*, as they are called in the DRC, help integrate health with other dimensions of women's well-being, such as trauma recovery and economic opportunity through microenterprise projects. For Kiess, this multifaceted role played by Catholic women community leaders shows how faith-based actors can promote the health dimensions of WPS by distinctively creating "a direct avenue not only for addressing many of the health needs of women impacted by war, but also for empowering women to participate in this response as nurses, midwives, community health workers, and members of supporting communities such as *shirika* groups." And by forging this kind of integrated approach they can also contribute meaningfully to rebuilding larger health systems in areas where war has wrecked them.

In a co-authored article, Sarah DeMarais compares the principle of participation in Catholic social teaching and WPS through two examples of gender-focused interventions by Catholic groups in the Bidibidi refugee settlement in northwestern Uganda. The article includes contributions from people involved with each case: Flora Gicquel, a researcher with Caritas Internationalis, writes about Caritas Uganda's "Women Peace Dreams" initiative, part of Caritas's broader Resilience and Livelihoods Improvement Programme in the settlement; and Augustine Bahemuka, Alfred Avuni, and Paula Likico, practitioners at the John Paul II Justice and Peace Centre (JPIIJPC), describe JPIIJPC's decision to focus on women for leadership and vocational training to promote grassroots peace-building. Using these cases, as well as by engaging with literature on "everyday peace"—a localized, grassroots focused, non-hierarchical understanding of peace that centers on "mundane and embodied experiences, including practices of care"—DeMarais demonstrates how a richer understanding of women's participation can create room to advance the principles of WPS and strengthen peacebuilding outcomes. In her analysis, "Interrogating 'stereotypes' and 'space' in Catholic and WPS discourse illuminates how certain constructs, such as the public/private binary and hierarchical scales like global/local, can distort recognition

of women's participation." The programs in Bidibidi, where women are effectively trained in peacebuilding practices and empowered as community leaders, along with the frameworks of everyday peace, show ways to overcome those limitations.

Moving to West Africa, Yves Tassi Noumbissie, SJ, writes about the Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon, which has been ongoing since 2016. Despite the hostilities, Cameroon did pass a WPS NAP in 2017, though it remains unimplemented while gender-based violence continues to be a major factor in the conflict. Tassi presents the way women's peacebuilding networks have taken meaningful steps to reduce violence in their communities, doing so while leaning into their gender identity as an asset. The two groups on which Tassi focuses are the Southwest/Northwest Women's Taskforce (SNWOT) and the Cameroon Women's Peace Movement (CAWOPEM). He explains how these groups frequently frame themselves as mothers, daughters, and sisters, and in so doing defuse their actions in the eyes of belligerents on both sides of the fighting—they are just women, expressing lament and unthreateningly advocating nonviolence. But, at the same time, they are able to tap into political power and moral legitimacy by highlighting their victimhood, mobilizing through faith, and connecting to matrilineal traditions that give women roles of social leadership during community crises and which run as an under-current beneath the dominant patriarchal culture. According to Tassi, "While doing that, they help change the more general social, cultural, and political conditions that contribute to the non-implementation of UNSCR 1325."

Joseph Evans presents the case of the Shrine to Our Lady of Madhu in Sri Lanka. He argues that while the shrine has effectively served as a centerpiece of interreligious peacebuilding, both during and after the Sri Lanka Civil War that lasted from 1983–2009, that has not translated to effective advancement of women's rights under the rubrics of WPS. In this regard he points particularly to continued post-conflict instances of gender-based violence, a need for more robust trauma recovery resources, and an ongoing lack of spaces for women in national peace efforts, including opportunities to speak openly about and account for instances of sexual violence and displacement during and after the war. In the complex pluralistic context of the Sri Lankan struggles for ethno-national political identities, Mary has become a figure of peace, comfort, and protection across cultural and religious lines. That allowed the Madhu Shrine to serve as a neutral place of sanctuary and as a popular pilgrimage destination for Catholics, Hindus, and Buddhists. But despite this role promoting interreligious cooperation and social cohesion, the shrine has also at times been politicized and used to reinforce gender stereotypes that prevent more meaningful movement against gender-based violence and women's

exclusion from social leadership. And because of a desire to keep the shrine as a politically neutral space, Catholic leaders have been reluctant to push on particular issues related to the conflict like gender-based violence. Evans offers three recommendations for how the popularity of the shrine could be leveraged for more progress toward WPS goals. First, address gender roles within the church and create more opportunities for women to have active roles. He suggests that having more women as partners in regular church operations could create greater awareness of and support for women's post-conflict concerns among clergy so they might be more willing to advocate. Second, the shrine can be more intentionally connected to human rights and women's rights activities by national groups working on those issues. For example, Evans writes that people working on Sri Lanka's WPS NAP could coordinate pilgrimages or other gatherings at the shrine to make use of its cross-cultural and cross-religious appeal for peace and the dignity of women. And third, while the images of motherhood can be used to limit women's access to social and political spaces, Evans argues that the prominence of maternal understandings in Madhu devotions can be used positively in other ways, such as advancing trauma healing or further increasing inter-religious cooperation since the maternal imagery is a key part of the shrine's impact across ethnic, cultural, and religious boundaries.

Finally, theologian Elizabeth Groppe and anthropologist Kali Rubaii co-author an article about women in Iraq. The primary basis of the article's analysis is Rubaii's ethnographic research during 2014–2015 and 2021–2024 on the impacts of the United States' 2003 War in Iraq on women. Rubaii's accounting details the varied ways in which the US campaign created extraordinary burdens for Iraqi women, both through the lasting consequences of the war's destruction and death, including loss of infrastructure and displacement, and the impact of political and economic policies that had long tails after US troop withdrawal in 2011, such as privatization policies that destabilized public sector resources. According to Rubaii, the primary consequences for women "include ongoing reproductive hardship resulting from gutted medical infrastructure and exposure to toxins; a reduction of women's societal status following the dismantlement of the education system; and hefty restorative burdens, as women do much of the reparative cleanup from wartime damages." Her first-hand stories show these consequences powerfully, such as describing the story of an interviewee referred to as Fatima. Born in 1988, Fatima grew up during earlier US military campaigns and economic sanctions and was only able to complete second grade. She, along with her husband and other poor citizens in Fallujah, have done much of the labor to clear rubble and rebuild the city. Her reproductive history has included twins, one of whom died after three days and one of whom

suffers from spina bifida, and a stillbirth due to anencephaly. And these challenges have been compounded by the lack of access to government services, like the inability to access support for her disabled daughter who must live in a wheelchair. She also observes that while protection of women has often been used to justify military action, "the US invasion destabilized Iraq, sparking ransom kidnappings, sexual assault, torture, and random detonations, thereby decreasing women's mobility and access to public spaces." Groppe begins her theological reflections by stating that Rubaii's research demonstrates the failure to attend to just war considerations *post bellum*, even as the more classical criterion for *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* were argued to be lacking by Catholic theologians during the time of the war. Yet Groppe also argues that it may be near impossible for any attempts to establish *jus post bellum* to really succeed or provide sufficient reparation. She therefore suggests that the experiences outlined by Rubaii strengthen the ethical imperative of peacebuilding and support a shift in recent Catholic moral thinking to just peace instead of just war. She offers the example of the "We Have Family in Iraq" campaign by a coalition of Dominican sisters as a possible model for how to actualize that imperative. The article concludes that this Iraq case bolsters the urgency of UNSCR 1325 by showing the extent of war's impact on women and in turn the urgency to follow recent Catholic moral teaching about transcending war altogether. And also, that it shows "the need for the Catholic Church to broaden participation in its mission of evangelical peacebuilding," including for women, echoing the way "UNSCR 1325 celebrates the contributions of women to peacebuilding and calls for the inclusion of women at all tables where decisions about peace and security are being made."

A couple of trends emerge from these cases. One is focusing the Catholic Church's role on cultural transformation. All the cases prioritize in one way or another the Catholic community harnessing its people power and social networks, spiritual and moral resources, and civic trustworthiness to prepare the way for better WPS implementation. Catholics, and faith actors more generally, are well-situated for this preparatory work because of their rooted presence in local communities and attunement to their dynamics and needs while operating from positions that center the values of human dignity, reconciliation, and peace. But the articles also show how these attributes make church actors effective at operationalizing the pillars of WPS, in large part because women are at the center of them. They are invigorating those social networks, leading spiritual formation that fosters personal and social transformation, and providing services for things such as healthcare, entrepreneurship, and mediation, earning trust from populations. They are working on the frontlines of prevention, protection, participation, and relief and recovery. The articles also show

how the institutional church can do more to recognize, celebrate, and integrate these women's contributions, but also make clear that the wider Catholic community has distinct contributions to make to global peacebuilding and the promotion of women within that work. M

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