

Editorial

War and peace present us with the gravest of moral problems. For a Catholic it is natural to consider it against the 'traditional' background of the conditions laid down for a war to be just. But it is important to realize that Christians have not always admitted the legitimacy of their engaging in warfare. Nor was the change of attitude easily accomplished, as Mr Windass brings out in his article on St Edmund. It took place slowly, and as we might expect it was the occasion of a good deal of spiritual questioning, reflected in the successive biographies of that 'ambiguous saint'.

Though it is still open to a Catholic to make his own the more severe position of the early Church, to most of us the view that war may morally be waged under stated conditions represents a legitimate development. Yet we are still left with the difficult decision whether those conditions could ever be realized in any conceivable modern war between the great powers. It is not a question we can safely leave to the conscience of the politicians. The teaching authorities of the Church have so far left it to the individual Christian to reach his own judgement, a matter which in the first instance demands hard thought. But like all serious moral problems it also demands prayer.

For those who have reached the conclusion that the only solution is unilateral disarmament, and that in consequence they must take action to influence the political authorities and the public at large, one of the greatest embarrassments is the seeming irresponsibility of many of their associates. Those whose reflection has led them to take the opposite view have in some ways an even harder task, for the very reason that theirs can look the easy way out. Each has to learn to rely on the support which comes from a life lived consciously in God's presence, bringing their difficulties before him in the mystery of prayer. We print Miss Dawson's meditation on some of the issues involved in the hope that it may be of help to those who are rightly trying to treat this grave matter as a spiritual problem.