Excerpted from THOMAS MERTON: "PEACE: A RELIGIOUS RESPONSIBILITY," 1962.

In a world where another Hitler and another Stalin are almost certain to appear on the scene, the existence of such destructive weapons and the moral paralysis of leaders and policymakers, combined with the passivity and confusion of mass societies…constitute the gravest problem in the whole history of man. Our times can be called apocalyptic, in the sense that we seem to have come to a point in which all the hidden, mysterious dynamism of the "history of salvation" revealed in the Bible has flowered into final and decisive crisis…

We know that Christ came into this world as the Prince of Peace. We know that Christ himself is our peace (Ephesians 2:14)…The Christian is and must be by his very adoption as a son of God, in Christ, a peacemaker…Hence it must be stated quite clearly and without any compromise that the duty of the Christian as a peacemaker is not to be confused with a kind of quietistic inertia which is indifferent to injustice, accepts any kind of disorder, compromises with error and with evil, and gives in to every pressure in order to maintain "peace at any price." The Christian knows well, or should know well, that peace is not possible on such terms. Peace demands the most heroic labor and the most difficult sacrifice. It demands greater heroism than war. It demands greater fidelity to the truth and a much more perfect purity of conscience. The Christian fight for peace is not to be confused with defeatism… But we believe, precisely, that an essential part of the "good news" is that spiritual weapons are stronger than material ones. Indeed, by spiritual arms, the early Church conquered the entire Roman world. Have we lost our faith in this "sword of the Spirit?" Have we perhaps lost all realization of its very existence?...We still have time to do something about it, but the time is rapidly running out.