



# War, Peace, Justice: An Unfinished Tapestry . . .

*Anthony J. Marsella*

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War, peace, and justice are the eternal threads of human history - each thread with distinct symbols, colors, and appeals, each thread with its defining events, forces, heroes, and villains. We speak of these threads too often as abstractions! They are not! They are tangible threads - strands of substance - filling place, proportion, and consequence across time. The threads are inextricably linked, yet their connections are often not acknowledged. Together, they constitute an unfinished tapestry of the human condition, each thread simultaneously a cause, consequence, and challenge. Today, leaders speak of "endless wars." Wars continuing for centuries! Each generation of humanity struggles to escape the ravages of war only to find all lessons learned, all vows and promises made, and all treaties signed by human hand are fading before emerging contexts, consequences, and challenges - new foes, new fears, new concerns, new weapons of unimagined costs . . . and force. Appeals are made to national security. Clarion calls are sounded: protection of sacred lands, fellow citizens, founding ideologies. The Motherland - Fatherland - Homeland - Whose Land - My Land! With each, the tapestry is stretched and torn again upon an aching and bending loom. There are no victors in war! No triumphs! Only survivors - body and mind scarred with fear, horror, and sorrow. Only endless inscribed granite markers and monuments, remembrances of un-lived lives. Few rise to speak for peace and justice . . . companion threads with war in the unfinished tapestry. There are those, past and present, who speak for peace and justice, aware of the power residing in their recognition and use as arbiters of our choices. We acknowledge their wisdom, courage, and determination to halt war. Their words and lives unfold before us as sources of virtue and merit. Their message is clear: cease reliance upon violence, destruction, and death - choose peace and justice as arbiters of life. The metaphor of the unfinished tapestry of human history in the title of this volume, and the absence of a loom for weaving threads, was gleaned from the writing of Edna St. Vincent Millay, one of the most notable and talented poets of the 20th century, in her published collection of sonnets, *Huntsman, What Quarry?* Her imaginative words are honored in the opening pages of this volume because they capture the seamless nature of the torn and unfinished tapestry before us - the interwoven threads of war, peace, and justice, and the need to build looms and to weave tapestries free of torn edges and tattered views. Our looms have proven inadequate - we have failed as weavers. We separate threads and strands but are unable to weave a tapestry, informing us of our errors in choosing war while displaying the wisdom of choosing peace and justice. Wars are not endless! Only our choices nurture this future. History is the story of efforts to complete our unfinished tapestry. Until such time, we remain, as Bishop Tutu of South Africa poignantly stated in speaking of survival amid violence and oppression, "Prisoners of hope."

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