

Title: Just War, Character, and Moral Injury

Speaker: Dr. Marc LiVecche

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Where: C-138 and via Zoom

POC: Dr. Pauline Shanks-Kaurin, College of Leadership & Ethics

## **SYNOPSIS:**

War wounds the soul. It is not only the violence that warfighters suffer that harms, but also the violence that they do. These soul wounds have come to be known as moral injuries: psychic traumas that occur from having done or condoned that which goes against deeply held moral principles.

The problem is that many warfighters at least tacitly follow the commonplace belief that killing another human being is always wrong--it's just that sometimes, as in war, it is necessary. This paradoxical commitment makes the very business of warfighting morally injurious.

It does not have to be this way.

The just war tradition is grounded in the basic assertion that killing comes in different kinds, including the kind that is morally permitted--even, sometimes, obligatory.

This talk discusses the tradition of just war, focusing on that particular kind of martial character that the tradition shapes. The just warrior, molded by virtue and duty, is able to navigate of several tensions, including that killing in war should neither be too morally difficult to justify and do nor too easy, and that one ought to be able to walk the morally bruising field of battle without becoming irreparably morally injured.

## **BIOs:**

Dr. Marc LiVecche is the McDonald Distinguished Scholar of War, Ethics, and Public Life at *Providence: A Journal of Christianity and American Foreign Policy* and non-resident research fellow at the U.S. Naval War College, College of Leadership and Ethics.