



*Affirming the vision and practice of active nonviolence
at the heart of the Catholic Church.*

A project of Pax Christi International

WORLD DAY OF PEACE 2017

Every day, we hear of issues—such as war, terrorism, or social violence—that affect us and our brothers and sisters around the world. The problems can seem so complex that they can leave us paralyzed, overwhelmed, or even numb. We may wonder, “What can I possibly do?”

In his message for the 50th World Day of Peace, celebrated on January 1, 2017, Pope Francis urges us to overcome such challenges by replacing cautiousness with courage and cynicism with hope.

This year Pope Francis has asked Catholics to focus on Christian nonviolence as a style of politics for peace. What can you do to affirm the centrality of active nonviolence in the message of Jesus, the life of the Catholic Church, and to the calling to be part of the healing and reconciling of both people and our earth?

In our families, schools, and institutions, we must learn the things that make for peace. There are effective Christian ways to counter war, terrorism, and social and domestic violence that can be accomplished without resorting to violence or military options. We must reach out to engage in positive encounters with our neighbors, in civil dialogue for the common good, and building skills to address these problems in meaningful ways.

St. John XXIII reminds us that violence and war can no longer be considered “a fit instrument with which to repair the violation of justice.” But violations of justice must be addressed. Christian nonviolent practices and strategies are ways to effectively address injustice, while also building peace.

These practices include nonviolent resistance to injustice; restorative justice programs for perpetrators of violence and victims of violence; prayers and programs for healing from physical, mental, moral, and spiritual trauma; processes for conflict transformation, whether in families, the workplace, or in communities; formation of Catholic conscience for how to engage conflict; strategies for durable peacebuilding; and unarmed civilian protection programs.

Working together, we can creatively build “cultures of peace” and our churches can become places of peacemaking in our communities.

YOU CAN BE A PEACEMAKER.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- 1. Pray.** Use the *Prayer for Conversion to Gospel Nonviolence* (below) with your family, school, faith community, or in other settings. Include a prayer for conversion to nonviolence and just peace regularly in your prayers of intention. Include in your parish's prayers of the faithful: nonviolent peacekeepers, conscientious objectors, and all who nonviolently risk their lives for peace.
- 2. Get inspired.** Read the [Appeal](#) released from the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative. Host a viewing of "[The Sultan and the Saint](#)" about St. Francis of Assisi's heroic peacemaking adventure in 1220. How might the Holy Spirit be calling our faith community to be active peacemakers?
- 3. Reach out.** Learn about Catholic peacemakers at [Pax Christi USA](#). Post your favorites on social media. @CathNonviolence #WDP17
- 4. Take action.** Adopt a nonviolent practice in your daily life. [Here are 64 ways to practice nonviolence](#): https://www.k-state.edu/nonviolence/media/64ways_list.htm. Tweet the one you are practicing today! @CathNonviolence
- 5. Build peace.** Build an institution advancing nonviolent practices, such as unarmed civilian protection (www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org), nonviolent resistance (www.paceebene.org), restorative justice, and trauma-healing. Advocate for non-military, nonviolent solutions in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, etc.

PRAYER FOR CONVERSION TO GOSPEL NONVIOLENCE

Blessed are the peacemakers, you said,
O Lord, for they shall be called
children of God.

We ask you, Lord, to forgive us
for the times we've caused division or
misunderstanding in our communities.

We know that communion is not
Achieved through violence,
but through constant conversion.

We ask the grace to not speak ill,
not criticize, not to be sowers of strife,
so that peace can reign in our hearts.

From this conversion of the heart, Lord,
lead us to a conversion in actions.
First in our hearts, then in our world
incarnate the power of gospel nonviolence.

Give us the imagination to overcome
all forms of violence with creative nonvio-
lence.

Revive in our church's theology of peace
the nonviolent message of Jesus,

That once again our churches may be
centers of learning for nonviolence and just
peace, centers of conversion from violence to
peace, and from loneliness to joy. Amen.