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Pope calls for nonviolence in 2017 World Day of Peace message

Calls us to “make active nonviolence our way of life”

Today in his message “Nonviolence: A style of politics for peace,” for the 50th World Day of Peace, celebrated each year on 1 January, Pope Francis urges people everywhere to practice active nonviolence and notes that the “decisive and consistent practice of nonviolence has produced impressive results.”

The Catholic Nonviolence Initiative, a global effort to affirm the vision and practice of active nonviolence at the heart of the Catholic Church, is heartened by and deeply grateful for the Holy Father’s call to political and religious leaders, heads of international organizations, and business and media executives to “apply the Beatitudes in the exercise of their respective responsibilities. It is a challenge to build up society, communities and businesses by acting as peacemakers. It is to show mercy by refusing to discard people, harm the environment, or seek to win at any cost. ... To act in this way means to choose solidarity as a way of making history and building friendship in society. Active nonviolence is a way of showing that unity is truly more powerful and more fruitful than conflict.”

The Catholic Nonviolence Initiative was formed to advance the requests made in the Appeal to the Catholic Church to re-commit to the centrality of Gospel nonviolence, the final statement of the landmark Nonviolence and Just Peace Conference held in Rome in April 2016 and co-sponsored by the Holy See’s Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Pax Christi International, and other organizations.

“It was especially noteworthy that we received Pope Francis’ message at this time,” said Marie Dennis, co-president of Pax Christi International. “Last week we gathered with member organizations in Africa for our regional conference, ‘Nonviolence in Africa: Creating a future of hope,’ during which time the attendees endorsed the Appeal to the Catholic Church to re-commit to the centrality of Gospel nonviolence. Much of our time together during those days focused on how to reclaim civil space and how to promote nonviolence in many ways. The Holy Father’s message for 2017 deeply resonates with us as the work Pax Christi International and its member groups has been dedicated for years to finding creative and peaceful solutions to violent conflict.”

For more information, including many World Day of Peace resources for parishes and communities, visit www.nonviolencejustpeace.net or email nonviolence@paxchristi.net.

Catholic Nonviolence Initiative

Affirming the vision and practice of active nonviolence
at the heart of the Catholic Church
www.nonviolencejustpeace.net

A project of Pax Christi International, the international Catholic peace movement