

OUR MISSION AS ACTIVE NONVIOLENCE

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It seems that DNA of human being is for violence. See the first two sons of Adam and Eve: a brother killing a brother. Ukraine requests more weapons from the West. Myanmar begs ammunitions from Russia, China and India.

The violence and trauma being experienced in this moment by the people of Israel and Palestine—as by the people of Myanmar and by so many others around the world—underscore the critical need for humanity to make a dramatic shift from a global paradigm of war and violence to a paradigm of just peace and nonviolence.

In the midst of an escalating crisis in the Holy Land and proliferating destruction elsewhere those of us gathered at the Synod could contribute to a more just and peaceful world by urging the universal Church to integrate Gospel nonviolence explicitly into our life and work through dioceses, parishes, schools, universities, seminaries, religious orders and voluntary associations.

An official Church teaching on nonviolence and just peace and inclusion in the Catechism of the Catholic Church of a robust description of nonviolence, key nonviolent practices, and the norms of a just peace ethic would deepen Catholic understanding of and commitment to Gospel nonviolence and help inspire a global embrace of nonviolence.

Nonviolence names a core value of the Gospel, in which Jesus combined an unmistakable rejection of violence with the power of love and truth in action.

Nonviolence is a spirituality, a way of life, a method for social transformation and a universal ethic:

- Nonviolence is a spiritual principle that challenges the “spirituality” and “idolatry” of violence;
- Nonviolence is a way of life that “unlearns” the beliefs and ways of violence and “learns” and “practices” of our core identity as nonviolent beings;
- Nonviolence is a strategy for systemic change that mobilizes people-power to dismantle policies but also systems of racism and all the forms of structural violence; and
- Nonviolence is a universal ethic, a cross-cutting, essential dimension of all right relationships – among humans and with the rest of creation.

Nonviolence is a paradigm of the fullness of life that most faithfully challenges and transforms the “culture of violence.” Nonviolence not only offers a qualitatively different way of

challenging specific forms violence and resolving particular conflict, but it is also a stance against the entire framework of the “culture of violence.”

Nonviolence is broader than pacifism. It is much more than the absence of violence and it is never passive.

Nonviolence is more than an ideal or the final goal. It is more than aspirational. Instead, it is central to the process of peace, the journey to justice, and the way to reconciliation.

Pope Francis’ many documents, exhortations, statements, and actions have been imbued with the spirit and dynamic of nonviolence. He has ceaselessly taught us that we are living in the midst of a global culture of violence that dominates, dehumanizes, and destroys our common home and human family, especially the most vulnerable at the margins.

His Holiness has insisted that there must be another way than violence to resolve conflict, foster justice, heal the earth, safeguard immigrants, and end war. This “other way” is not avoidance, appeasement, aggression, or attack. It is a dramatically different way of being in the world, of working for peace, of building nonviolent movement and systems, and of being faithful to the vision of Jesus.

In his 2017 World Day of Peace message, he called us to this other way: **ACTIVE NONVIOLENCE.**

Last Wednesday during the General Audience Holy Father Pope Francis said: “War of Israel and Hamas, Take only one side: **THAT OF PEACE.**”