

Nonviolence in the Church

Introduction

Since July 2017 a group of six women and ten men from fifteen countries ranging from Pakistan to Guatemala, Zambia to occupied Palestine, have been meeting in a virtual global roundtable to explore the challenges and opportunities of “Integrating Gospel nonviolence at every level of the Church.” Peacebuilders and practitioners of active nonviolence --- clergy, religious and laity --- we have shared our experience of many successful programs and best practices of nonviolence in the Catholic Church worldwide. As Pope Francis observed in his 2017 World Day of Peace message, “The Church has been involved in nonviolent peacebuilding strategies in many countries, engaging even the most violent parties in efforts to build a just and lasting peace.”

Our dream is to integrate the spirituality and practices of Gospel nonviolence throughout the life and work of the Church: in its dioceses, parishes, agencies, schools, universities, seminaries, religious orders, voluntary associations, development agencies and ministries throughout the world. We ask: What if 1.3 billion Catholics around the globe learned and embraced the spirituality and practice of active nonviolence --- in their families, their parishes, schools and in the political life of their countries , thus as Pope Francis envisions, “building nonviolent communities that care for our common home?”

“In the most local and ordinary situations and in the international order, may nonviolence become the hallmark of our decisions, our relationships and our actions, and indeed of political life in all its forms.” (Pope Francis, 2017 World Day of Peace Message)

We draw inspiration from Blessed Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador, who was radically converted to the poor through the faithful nonviolent witness and martyrdom of his close friend, Fr. Rutilio Grande. His courageous and prophetic path thereafter inspired a nation and later the world with his ‘violence of love.’ “We have never preached violence, except the violence of love, which left Christ nailed to a cross, the violence that we must each do to ourselves to overcome our selfishness and such cruel inequalities among us. The violence we preach is not the violence of the sword, the violence of hatred. It is the violence of love, of brotherhood, the violence that wills to beat weapons into sickles for work.” As he announced the Good News, and denounced the injustices and repression in his beloved El Salvador, he too would follow in the way of martyrdom. Romero’s example is a call to the entire Church to take up our cross and live out the prophetic nonviolent love of Jesus in all we do.

In this document we share the fruits of many months of a lively global dialogue on how Gospel nonviolence and peacebuilding can become more fully integrated into every level of the Catholic Church. We focus this reflection on nine key areas of Church life, gathering promising practices and exemplary organizations and programs of the practice of Gospel nonviolence in:

1. Bishops & Episcopal Conferences

2. Catholic NGOs & JPICs
3. Ecumenical & Interfaith Action and Dialogue
4. Education
5. Families & Parishes
6. Liturgy
7. Policy Makers-UN-Diplomats
8. Religious Communities & Lay Movements
9. Women & Gender Equality

The organization of this document follows these nine key areas, each one noting 1) promising practices and 2) exemplary organizations and programs – all that demonstrate the dynamism and effectiveness of active nonviolence. These nine key areas are then followed by recommendations which we offer to the Holy See on possible ways to more fully integrate Gospel nonviolence into the life of the Church. Finally, we offer brief concluding reflections.

A Caveat: While our global roundtable has worked hard over the past year to gather a large variety promising practices of nonviolence as well as exemplary organizations in the Church, we recognize that this is only a ‘snapshot’ of a multitude of experiences and programs of active nonviolence and peacebuilding that exist within our Church as well as in the larger society. As sixteen practitioners from fifteen countries we offer these as merely a glimpse of a much broader and richly hued canvas of peacebuilders around the world who practice active nonviolence as a spirituality and as a more effective answer to injustice than the violence that devastates the earth as well as the human dignity of millions of its inhabitants.

Roundtable Participants

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Key Areas.....	3
1. Bishops & Episcopal Conferences.....	3
2. Catholic NGOs & JPICs.....	7
3. Ecumenical & Interfaith Action and Dialogue.....	12
4. Education.....	16
5. Families & Parishes.....	19
6. Liturgy.....	21
7. Policy Makers-UN-Diplomats.....	23
8. Religious Communities & Lay Movements.....	25
9. Women & Gender Equality.....	26
Recommendations to the Vatican.....	28
Conclusion.....	32

Key Areas

1. Bishops & Episcopal Conferences

The first key area where Gospel nonviolence can be more fully integrated into the life of the Church is by our bishops and episcopal conferences. The impact of public statements by bishops on the spirituality and practice of active nonviolence has a powerful effect on the Catholic faithful. We celebrate the leadership of many bishops, some noted here, who have witnessed and taught about the power of Gospel nonviolence. This section includes a list of promising practices and exemplary organizations and programs in dioceses and episcopal conferences that were highlighted by the participants of our roundtable. Additionally, at the conclusion of this document we identify recommendations for the Vatican on how to explicitly integrate nonviolence into the public leadership of the Catholic hierarchy around the globe.

Promising practices

- In the context of Pope Francis' [2017 Message for the World Day of Peace](#) entitled "*Nonviolence: a style of politics for peace*," the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union ([COMECE](#)) hosted in its Brussels office a "*Prayer & Breakfast*" in order to promote Gospel nonviolence. The event gathered around forty representatives of the European Union, churches and civil society. In his [address](#), [Archbishop Jean-Claude Hollerich](#), Archbishop of Luxembourg and President of [Justice & Peace Europe](#), highlighted that "*nonviolence is the key to peace*." More information on the event can be found [here](#).
- Archbishop William Lori, Baltimore, (U.S.) [Pastoral Letter on Nonviolence](#) begins a dialogue in his archdiocese on nonviolence, racism and struggle for justice based on the principles of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Bishop Paride Taban developed the [Kuron Peace Village](#) in South Sudan with the support of PAX Netherlands, teaching active nonviolence to youth and former combatants. *The village was founded amongst tribes who habitually fought each other, and it began with development activities (initially agricultural projects, but it now includes a primary school, clinic, vocational training, youth activities, community mediation initiatives, an airstrip, roads, bridges and even an internet cafe). It models peace through development, but it should be made clear that it is not primarily a "development project"; it is a peace initiative.
- Holy See Mission at the United Nations in New York cosponsored event for diplomats at the UN on 2017 World Day of Peace message with Maryknoll and Pax Christi International, [Nonviolence: A Style of Politics for Peace](#) with a panel of nonviolence practitioners and diplomats moderated by Archbishop Bernardito Auza, the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the UN.
- In response to the extra-judicial killings in the Philippines, Cagayan de Oro and some other dioceses have started drug rehabilitation programs for those addicted to show that there are nonviolent ways if addressing the issue.
- South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) Action Plan for Peace (APP) has been developed in response to the outbreak of civil war in South Sudan in December 2013 and is currently being rolled out, made up of three pillars: (1) Advocacy – both international advocacy but also internal advocacy aimed at changing the narrative within the country from violence to peace, and addressing issues such as hate speech; (2) Neutral Forum dialogue – to create safe spaces where stakeholders at all levels can be brought together to build trust, and to address the root causes of the conflicts; (3) Reconciliation (including trauma healing) – a national process which begins at grassroots (village) level and gradually builds up through counties and states to national level. APP envisages a ten to twenty year process – there is no "quick fix."
- New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) [People to People Peace Process](#) – late 1990s to early 2000s – see [link](#).
- [Bishop Don Tonino Bello](#) - Italy. One-time President of Pax Christi Italy, known in Italy for his peace-work, challenges to the Iraq War and Balkans wars; led a peace march to Sarajevo, has considerable writings/homilies on peace.

- Promising practices in Gospel Nonviolence from Uganda and Congo: Justice and Peace promoters trained in Conflict resolution, Peace building, Mediation, Carry civic Education about Elections, constitutionalism and other Government Laws and Policies, Reconciliation, Counselling, Trauma healing, Training of Justice and Peace promoters at Sub Parish and Parish levels, Advocacy-Human rights for prisoners, children and workers/ minority groups and just policies and laws, Environmental protection, Promotion of good cultural practices at the sub parish and diocesan levels.

Exemplary organizations and programs

- Dioceses, Church entities applying Gospel nonviolence:
 - Pope Francis' 2017 World Day of Peace message and [Nuclear Disarmament: Time for Abolition](#).
 - Many bishops' conferences have "Justice and Peace" commissions whose president is often a bishop.
 - A list of all the European Justice & Peace commissions can be seen [here](#). [Europe]
 - Since the creation of the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development which now also includes "Justice and Peace," many European Justice & Peace commissions enlarged their scope covering [Justice, Peace and Care of Creation](#). [Europe]
- With regard to the specific work on Gospel nonviolence:
 - The Justice and Peace Commission of the Scottish Bishops' Conference is engaged in several [campaigns](#) promoting peace and disarmament, with Bishop William Nolan as its president. [Europe]
 - President of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese in Luxembourg, Prof. Jean-Paul Lehnens, is a promoter of nonviolence. [Europe]
 - Lehnens is also a member of the [Executive Board of Justice and Peace Europe](#).
 - [European and US Catholic Bishops Call for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons Globally](#) [Europe] [North America]
 - The Archbishop of Luxembourg, Mgr. Jean-Claude Hollerich, SJ is [president](#) of the Conference of European Justice & Peace Commissions, COMECE, and Bishop President of Pax Christi Luxembourg. [Europe]
- Statements by Bishops and Episcopal Conferences on Nonviolence:
 - Africa:
 - [A message from the bishops of South Sudan: Do not be afraid; rise above adversity](#) — a "message of encouragement and hope" — was released by the Catholic bishops of South Sudan on June 16, 2016. It can also be found on the [Solidarity with South Sudan website](#).

- Bishop Kevin Dowling C.Ss.R., Rustenburg, South Africa: [A Catholic Vision of Nonviolence for Africa](#) (December 5, 2016).
- Bishop Kevin Dowling, C.Ss.R., Rustenburg, South Africa: [“Nonviolence and Peacemaking: Lessons from Oscar Romero, Denis Hurley and Pope Francis.”](#) (January 25, 2017).
- Asia:
 - [Japanese bishops conference endorse](#) the Appeal to the Catholic Church to re-commit to the centrality of Gospel nonviolence and sent letter to Cardinal Peter Turkson.
 - [Ten Days for Peace \(2017\)](#), a message from the president of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Japan.
 - **Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP): The Many Names of God and the Blessing of Peace**, April 30, 2015: “To kill in God’s name – this is one of the most painful contradictions of our time! ...Jesus is the incarnation of the supreme welcome of the other.”
 - **CBCP: Striving for a Just Peace, the Moral Road**, July 11, 2015: “All-out war us not the answer to the Mindanao situation... We want a Bangsamoro Basic Law that is rooted in social justice...”
 - **CBCP Statement on Torture**, June 23, 2015
 - **CBCP: On the Killing of Voiceless and Defenseless Lumads**, September 11, 2015, Your Brother’s Blood Cries Out to Me from the Ground! (Gen 4:10)
 - **CBCP: Pastoral Appeal to Our Law Enforcers: Appeal to Reason and Humanity**, June 20, 2016: “To kill a suspect outright, no matter how much surveillance work may have antecedently been done on the suspect, is not morally justified. Suspicion is never the moral equivalent of certainty, and punishment may be inflicted only on the ground of certainty.”
 - **CBCP Ethical Guidelines on Proposals to Restore the Death Penalty**, September 14, 2016: “To every man and woman is open, by the Savior, Jesus Christ, the invitation to the fullness of life. Every man and woman is a person redeemed by God’s own Son, made an adopted son or daughter of God, and heir to the promise of the Resurrection. This is the dignity of the human person. It is this dignity that the death penalty transgresses.”
 - **CBCP Pastoral on Deaths and Killings**, January 30, 2017: “We, your bishops, are deeply concerned due to many deaths and

killings in the campaign against prohibited drugs. This traffic in illegal drugs needs to be stopped and overcome. But the solution does not lie in the killing of suspected drug users and pushers... Every person has a right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty. Society has ways and processes to catch, prove guilty and punish perpetrators of crimes. This process must be followed, especially by agents of the law.”

- **CBCP Statement on Marawi, Terrorism and Dialogue**, July 10, 2017: “We all cry from our hearts: War in Marawi, never again! War in Marawi, no more! We therefore call for the return to normalcy and peace in Marawi and its environs as soon as possible... The basis for peace and understanding already exists. It is part of the very foundational principles of both faiths: love of the One God and love of neighbor.”
- [CBCP Bishops Oppose Arming Priests in response to the killing of priests](#), June 12, 2018: “We are men of God, men of the Church and it is part of our ministry to face dangers, to face deaths if one may say that way. But we would do it just what Jesus did,” he said.
- Europe:
 - [German Bishops’ Conference: “Gerechter Friede“ \(“A Just Peace“\)](#), September 27, 2000
 - [East Germany \(GDR\) Catholic Bishops, Pastoral Letter on Peace \(1983\)](#)
- North America:
 - “The church is in the midst of a fundamental reappraisal of how to balance the Christian obligation to nonviolence with the need to resist evil in the world... The power of nonviolence, once relegated to the category of romantic idealism, has emerged as a potent force for social transformation and the building of lasting peace.”
---Bishop Robert McElroy of San Diego, speaking after Pope Francis’s remarks at a Vatican conference on nuclear disarmament held in November 2017.
 - [The Challenge of Peace, USCCB 1983](#), God’s Promise and Our Response, a pastoral letter on war and peace by the USCCB, May 3, 1983.
 - [The Harvest of Justice is Sown in Peace, USCCB 1993](#), a reflection of the USCCB on the tenth anniversary of the Challenge of Peace.

- [A Statement to the Muslim Community, Catholic Bishops of Saskatchewan 2017](#): “condemning violence, particularly violence in the name of God, whose name is peace,” January 30, 2017.
- Latin America:
 - Conference of Latin American Bishops, Medellín, Colombia (1968); excerpts on [justice](#), [peace](#) and [poverty](#) from final document, September 6, 1968 ([Excerpted by Gerald Schlabach](#))
 - Archbishop Oscar Romero, El Salvador: [The Church and Popular Political Organizations](#): Third Pastoral Letter of Archbishop Romero, co-authored by Bishop Arturo Rivera y Damas, Bishop of Santiago de María, Feast of the Transfiguration (August 6, 1978)
 - Archbishop Oscar Romero, El Salvador: [The Church’s Mission Amid the Nation Crisis](#): Fourth Pastoral Letter (August 6, 1979)
 - Archbishop José Luis Escobar Alas, San Salvador: Pastoral Letter: [“I See Strife in the City”](#): On the Occasion of the Feast of the Beloved Blessed Oscar Romero (March 24, 2016)
 - [Aparecida](#) (Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean) #541-543: peace and violence issues are addressed; the power of love is contrasted therein with violence
 - Writings of Dom Helder Camara of Brazil

2. Catholic NGOs & JPICs

A second key area of church life that roundtable participants identified as critical to the strengthening the practice of active nonviolence is the leadership of Catholic non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and organizations that advocate for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPICs). Here we note some of the promising practices and exemplary organizations and programs identified in the roundtable discussions. Again, we share at the conclusion of this document a number of recommendations and suggestions to the Vatican to support the flourishing of programs and practices of active nonviolence among Catholic NGOs & JPICs around the globe.

Promising practices

- **Education within [Pax Christi \(Flanders\)](#)**: Consisted of two three day trainings on the origins of Pax Christi and on active nonviolence in 2006 and 2007 based on the vision, strategy, method, and spirit of active nonviolence developed by Jean Goss and Hildegard Goss-Mayr. They add additional insights or methods, such as the Nonviolent Communication of Marshall Rosenberg, the Equivalence Model of a Belgian anthropologist Pat Patfoort, and the model that was created

by a French-speaking organization from Belgium, Sortir de la Violence, that is called 'The Wheel to Change your Way of Looking' or the 'Art of Dialogue.'

- **Pax Christi peacebuilding in Eastern Europe and Africa:** Pax Christi (Flanders) supports groups that aim for nonviolent resistance in the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and DR Congo. These groups live and work in armed conflict or in so-called frozen conflict, and provide Pax Christi (Flanders) with concrete images of how nonviolence works on the ground.

[This site](#) gives an overview of ten years of work of reconciliation between Saint-Petersburg (Russia) and a small town in Chechnya, Aldy. Just recently, Pax Christi's work in Ukraine has organized two trainings on nonviolent conflict transformation and supported a Christmas action for children at the frontline (Ukraine/ People's Republic Donetsk). Children of Belgium have written Christmas cards to the children in East-Ukraine and vice versa.

In DR Congo, Africa Reconciled, an organization that promotes peace and reconciliation, based upon our formations of 2001-2007. In 2014, their founder came to Belgium to talk about reconciliation. Now they are official partners of Pax Christi International. They provide training to young adults on how to transform situations of injustice into a positive alternative. Also in DR Congo, the reintegration of ex-combatants into society is being supported by Pax Christi.¹

- **Training and education for faith-based organizations, religious communities & congregations in Belgium:** Three people train these groups: Father Jo Hanssens, Father Jan Vanden Berghe, and Annemarie Gielen. They have assisted in many sessions since 2006. The key is to have someone inside a community or organization, who is interested in nonviolence.
- **Gang violence in North America:** Gang violence has become an epidemic on the streets of the United States and the Northern Triangle of Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras) along with other parts of the world. Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles, California, founded by Jesuit Fr. Greg Boyle in the 1980s is the largest gang intervention program in the world with a remarkable success rate. "Nothing stops a bullet like a job" is core to Homeboy's philosophy, along with boundary-breaking love and 'kinship.' Their 18 month wrap-around rehabilitation program includes placing enemy gang members alongside one another in the workplace, where mutual dehumanization begins to dissolve as they discover over time that they have much more in common than they ever imagined.
- **Peace education and practice in Honduras:** Honduras is the second poorest country in the western hemisphere with one of the highest homicide rates in the world. In the Archdiocese of Tegucigalpa, a Caritas-based curriculum is being implemented in a substantial number of parishes which seeks to catalyze a culture of peace by focusing on three distinct groups: children, youth, and families. Although it is too early to measure the long-term impact, already there

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<http://www.paxchristi.net/news/re-integration-ex-combatants-central-africa/476#sthash.7eypu7sm.dpbs> and
<http://www.paxchristi.net/news/pax-christi-supports-ex-combatants-reintegration-great-lakes-region/3969#sthash.YrKGev45.dpbs>

has been a significant shift in the mindset of those who have engaged in this holistic program which helps to form parishioners to be active instruments of peace and reconciliation in communities plagued by violence.

- **People's Resistance Against Mining Company²:** Mining exploitation has become a major concern of JPIC-VIVAT members in Indonesia. Some 35 villagers of Tumbak, including women, formed a living fence to block the vehicles from entering the land. It was reported that some mothers made a bare-chested symbolic act of protest in the defense of their rights to their own collective lands. Land grabbing by the mining company had to be stopped. On October 13, 2014, 1,500 people simultaneously led a peaceful protest against mining in the three cities of Ruteng, Borong and Labuan Bajo, in the whole district of Manggarai. They demanded that the local government stop all mining activities, revoke all mining business licenses (IUP), and no longer issue new mining permits in the district, said Father Simon Suban Tukan SVD. The action was organized by the Catholic Church of Ruteng Diocese in Manggarai.
- **Project with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC):** Men and women religious in the Eastern DRC gathered on April 2 to 9, 2016 for a workshop on the *Pastoral, compassionate and Spiritual Response to the Challenges of Victims Suffering from Sexual Abuse in Conflict*. The professional team from the United Kingdom that is working on an *International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict* presented the information on the two last days. This workshop was planned by men and women religious who are highly experienced on the DRC and those in Rome who are knowledgeable about Eastern DRC, the JPIC Secretariat, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London. Work to strengthen the development of the networking there is ongoing.
- **Prayer vigil for peace and roundtable dialogue:** *Solidarity with South Sudan and Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission*, both of the *Union of Superiors General (USG)* and the *International Union Superiors General (UISG)*, organized two events to promote "Building Peace Together" for South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The first event was a prayer vigil with Pope Francis presiding in St. Peter's Basilica on November 23 with around 1500 people in attendance. Pope Francis said in his homily "we want to sow seeds of peace in the lands of South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo." The second event, the Roundtable Dialogues, took place on January 18, 2018 and was intended to develop the message of Pope Francis from the prayer by raising awareness around the urgent need for peace in these two countries and, through dialogue, suggest concrete actions.
- **Three sets of case studies from the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) experience in the areas of peacebuilding:** A collection of case studies was published and it is available for downloading from the CRS webpage: (A) Pursuing Just Peace in 2008 (case studies in faith-based peace building, including three that were ecumenical or interreligious; from Rwanda, Togo,

² Information shared from a Dossier the 15th Anniversary publication, an article by Paulus Rahmat SVD, "People's Resistance Against Mining Company" in *May all have life in its fullness and dignity – VIVAT International 2000 – 2015*, pp.48-51.

Colombia, Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina, India, Uganda and the Philippines). (B) Equity and Extractives in 2010 (involving natural resource-related conflicts in Angola, Nigeria and Peru). (C) Interreligious Action for Peace: Studies in Muslim-Christian Cooperation in 2017 (from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Philippines, Central African Republic, Kenya, Tanzania, Niger/Nigeria border and Egypt).

In addition, the Center for Mission Research and Study at Maryknoll published an Orbis book of case studies called “Artisans of Peace: Grassroots Peacemaking among Christian Communities,” co-edited by Tom Bamat. It included case studies from Northern Ireland, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Guatemala, Rwanda, and the USA (gang situations).

- The Asian Center for the Progress of Peoples (ACPP), a faith-based NGO in Hong Kong. The ACPP's main work is to serve justice and peace efforts in Asia, although in recent years, we have been mainly inactive, in an effort to review our role and work. Presently our only work in the region is as a member of the Coordinating Team of the Asia-Pacific Justice and Peace Workers Network (APJPWN), an informal network of people working in the area of justice and peace (including integral human development) in the region; a network which includes personnel of episcopal or religious justice, peace and integrity of creation commissions (JPIC), personnel of human development agencies and other faith-inspired social justice organizations. Our network includes people from Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan and Australia. The ACPP also organizes exposure, immersion, encounter, and social justice training programs locally in Hong Kong.
- Justice and Peace Commission of the Diocese of Kasere joined by Justice and Peace Commission of Tangaza University Nairobi Kenya visited the bereaved families and contributed support to orphans and widows in Kasere District.
- Justice and Peace Clubs have been introduced in Ugandan Catholic schools and universities to promote justice and peace there.

Exemplary organizations and programs

- [The Sant Egidio Community](#): Their highly effective “Schools of Peace” bring children together in places of poverty and violence around the world across socio-economic, ethnic, and religious barriers. This method helps new generations break free from old paradigms and prejudices and even impacts the older generations through the transforming experiences of their children.
- [Faith in Action](#), formerly known as PICO, is a faith-based community organizing network, founded in 1971 in the US by Jesuit Fr. John Baumann. Rooted in community listening campaigns of one-to-one meetings, they provide a platform and a methodology for the marginalized to find their own voice and nonviolently call on political leaders to make public commitments on critical issues for the sake of community transformation. In 2017, in collaboration with Cardinal Turkson and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Integral Human Development, they convoked the first-ever U.S. Regional gathering of the World Meeting of Popular Movements, instituted by Pope Francis.

- The JPIC network of religious in the countries of Central America, and in particular JPIC of the Franciscan Family, have played a catalytic role in prophetic nonviolence in the region. Accompanying vulnerable communities in their nonviolent struggles for basic human rights, such as water, and standing against political corruption and destructive practices such as metallic mining, they have served as a sign of hope for the suffering and the voiceless. In El Salvador in particular, JPIC religious proved to be crucial change agents in the processes that led to the landmark national ban on metallic mining, the first of its kind in the world.
- [Franciscans International](#), which serves as a voice of the Franciscan Family at the UN, has amplified the denunciation of human rights violations, offering hope for nonviolent possibilities of those suffering under corrupt and oppressive political leadership.
- [The Dutch Conference of Religious Orders and Congregations \(KNR\)](#) has been promoting nonviolence. It was their central topic in 2017. The Conference has created a special committee for the study and propagation of nonviolence. In 2017, it organized a retreat on this topic and the message of the conference for Advent was on nonviolence.
- [VIVAT International Nonviolent Advocacy](#), whose vision entails attaining a world of equality, justice, reconciliation, peace and care of environment, engages at the grassroots level as well as doing advocacy work at the UN.
- Human Rights Office Kandy (HROK), Sri Lanka
- Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), Thailand
- [Precious Blood Ministry for Reconciliation](#), Southside Chicago: working with inner-city youth holistically addressing roots of violence, through restorative justice to bring healing and reconciliation
- [Omnia Institute](#), Chicago: addressing Religious Extremism through building Leadership skills in local and international contexts
- Afghan Peace Volunteers, Kabul: inter-ethnic peacebuilding, activism, relationship building
- Peacebuilding Project, International Assistance Mission, Kabul: peacebuilding in communities, schools, universities, organizations, women's groups (trauma, conflict transformation, dialogue processes)
- [Voices for Creative Nonviolence](#), USA, Afghanistan, Syria, Oman, et al.
- [The Human Rights Center Fray Bartolome de Las Casas](#), AC (Frayba) in Chiapas, Mexico, was founded in 1989 on the initiative of then Catholic bishop of the Diocese of San Cristobal de Las Casas, Don Samuel Ruiz Garcia, who considered it necessary to create a space for human rights that could respond to the demands of communities and organizations and defend their rights. It is a non-profit civil organization which monitors, documents, and litigates human rights violations in the state of Chiapas, particularly in indigenous territory.
- [International Service for Peace](#), established in 1995, the SIPAZ project, has developed as a permanent program in Chiapas that plays a role of dissuasion and prevention of socio-political violence in Chiapas, and in a timely manner in Oaxaca and Guerrero, to contribute from the nonviolent perspective in the construction of positive peace in these states.

- [SERAPAZ](#), a civil, Mexican, independent, and non-profit organization founded by Don Samuel Ruiz Garcia and inspired by his work. They provide services for peace, justice, and dignity through the accompaniment and strengthening of social actors as well as in the articulation of processes and local initiatives for the positive transformation of conflicts.
- [Catholic Workers Movement – Uganda](#)
- [Refugee Law Project, Makerere University](#)
- [Rwenzori Forum for Peace and Justice](#)

3. Ecumenical & Interfaith Action and Dialogue

In John 17 Jesus prays that we might all be one, as he and the Father are one, ‘that the world may believe,’ indicating both how the scandal of division amongst Christians mitigates against our witness to our nonviolent God of love and peace, as well as pointing the way toward hope. At Vatican II, our church embraced a new era of dialogue with peoples of other faiths and with the world.

We are now further blessed with a Pope who has chosen the very name of Francis, desiring ‘a poor Church for the poor,’ seeing in St. Francis one who also ‘loves and protects creation’...a ‘man of peace’ in contrast to a violent world at war. We embrace our deep and organic bonds with other Christians and peoples of other faiths, in this common pursuit of a lasting world peace through active nonviolence.

In this section we lift up this third key area of church life, showing examples of exemplary practices as well as model organizations and programs around integrating nonviolence into ecumenical and interfaith spaces of the Church and its outreach. Recommendations for to the Vatican on ecumenical and interfaith practices of active nonviolence follow at the conclusion of this document.

Promising practices

- COMECE regularly engages in [ecumenical and interfaith cooperation](#) on questions related to peace & development, such as recently on the question of the concept of “resilience” or possibly in the near future on the question of “partnership” in the EU-ACP context (in cooperation with the [Baha’i International Community](#), the [Conference of European Churches \(CEC\)](#) and the [Quaker Council for European Affairs](#)).
- Theologian Ana Rafai from Croatia is engaged in the initiative [RAND-Regional Address for Nonviolent Action](#), an organization that offers training courses on non-violent conflict management. Together with members of Muslim and Christian (Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant) communities, RAND established a network called “**Believers for Peace.**” The network organizes interreligious peace conferences under the title “*Through Building Peace, We Praise God.*”
- [The Miriam College Center for Peace Education](#) in the Philippines actively engages with interfaith groups such as the Peacemakers Circle, Teach Peace Build Peace Movement and the UN Interfaith (UNI) Harmony Partners Manila. These groups are frequent resource persons in training activities for students and teachers (from both within and outside of Miriam College), focusing on the value

of nonviolent conflict resolution and respect for one another despite differences. A 2018 Forum between Muslims and Catholics focused on two challenges for nonviolent action: gun violence and the Mindanao peace process.

- [The Flemish Catholic Education Organization](#) recently developed the concept of the Catholic dialogue school, which tries to give an answer to the multi-religious and multi-cultural society in Belgium.
- In response to violent extremism in the Philippines, interreligious dialogue is a proactive way of standing against the violence. It also contributes to the peace process.
- In the Philippines, relief missions to Marawi evacuees show the concern of dioceses over the plight of internally displaced persons, regardless of religion.
- [Fondacio Asia](#) has an interfaith program among young people of various faiths in Myanmar, known as Clubs. They operate in a number of dioceses. It is preventive, and builds good will.
- [Inter-Religious Council of Uganda](#) has had several meetings with the Uganda government of and the people of Rwenzori region especially Kasese and Bundibugyo District and visiting the burial ground of people killed in the Palace and visiting the grieved families while spreading the Nonviolence.

Exemplary organizations and programs

- [Miriam College](#) in the Philippines has initiated an interfaith dialogue twinning project between young Christians and Muslims who have harbored negative images and feelings toward each other due to historical circumstances exacerbated by the armed conflict between government and Moro armed rebels. Going on since 2004, the twinning is between students of Miriam College, a Catholic school in Metro Manila, and Rajah Muda High School, a school attended by Muslims in North Cotabato, a conflict-affected area in Mindanao. The twinning project's goal is to break down the barriers of prejudice and to encourage both groups to be schools for peace. It builds trust and relationships by exchange programs and mutual solidarity. The activities include letter-writing, joint peacebuilding workshops, informal interactions, the joint publication of a newsletter, and the respective peace clubs' social concern and anti-war/pro-peace activities. The program has shown dramatic attitude changes in both Muslim and Christian students towards the other faith – a real achievement in a country where prejudices between Muslims and Christians still exist.
- The Philippines has been exemplary in a multiple array of ecumenical and interfaith initiatives for nonviolence and peace which include:
 - The Silsilah Dialogue Movement is an interreligious movement which “envision[s] a life-in-dialogue for all Muslims, Christians, and peoples of other living faiths in respect, trust, and love for one another, and moving together towards a common experience of harmony, solidarity, and peace.”

- The Bishops-Ulama Conference (BUC) unites Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims in a joint effort to initiate dialogue aimed at improving understanding between Muslims and Christians.
- [Ecumenical Peace Platform](#) focuses on encouraging the Philippine government (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) to resume peace talks. It is composed of religious leaders in the country.
- [The Peacemakers' Circle Foundation, Inc.](#) is a non-stock, non-profit, and non-partisan organization composed of people of diverse cultures and beliefs who recognize the Oneness of Humanity and are guided by the principles of Unity in Diversity, Good Will, and Cooperation. Thinking globally and acting locally, it strives to bring forth the highest ideals and teachings of diverse faiths to help bring about positive change. It has undertaken many activities to bring about interfaith harmony in general and Muslim-Christian understanding in particular.
- The Sant'Egidio Community is strongly engaged in [ecumenical and interfaith action for nonviolence and peace](#); every year on January 1 – the World Day of Peace - they organize [marches for peace](#) all over the world, with committed ecumenical/interfaith participation. Since Pope John Paul II's landmark interfaith gathering for peace in Assisi in 1986, the Sant'Egidio Community has continued the tradition with an annual international interfaith meeting for prayer and dialogue, always focused on peace. Examples of their impact include helping broker the peace in Mozambique in 1992 and working to develop Humanitarian Corridors for refugees from Ethiopia and other troubled nations.
- Interfaith Peace Summits in Assisi
 - [September 20, 2016 Gathering](#)
- Some ecumenical contemplative and/or missional communities active in promoting justice and nonviolence:
 - [Taizé](#), an ecumenical contemplative community established in France in 1940 with a strong appeal to young people and a global impact.
 - Focolare is a movement founded by Chiara Lubich in 1944 involving some 2 million adherents in 182 countries – the majority being Roman Catholic. There is a growing number of non-Catholics from 350 churches and ecclesial communities. The movement also includes many from other world faiths and some who do not adhere to any particular religious faith. Their charism is to promote the unity and brotherhood of all peoples.
 - [Chemin Neuf](#) is a Roman Catholic community with an ecumenical vocation, which grew out of a prayer group in Lyon, France, in 1973. It currently has around two thousand members in over 30 countries. Couples, families, and celibates, men and women, have chosen the adventure of community life to follow Christ poor and humble, in order to serve the Church and the world.
 - [InnerChange](#) is an ecumenical Christian Order among the Poor, serving on five continents in a posture of 'missional ecumenism' seeking to be an instrument of love, justice and nonviolence at the margins. It is part of a small family of similar communities known as '[New Friars](#)'.

- Larger ecumenical networks, old and new, hold promise for demonstrating and promoting the power of unity and nonviolent peace. Two such networks with which the Catholic Church enjoys a close relationship are:
 - The [World Council of Churches](#) (WCC), established in 1948, is a community of churches on the way to visible unity in one faith and one Eucharistic fellowship. To this end it promotes a 'clear witness to peace, to reconciliation and nonviolence, grounded in justice.' Though the Catholic Church is not a member of the WCC per se, it is represented in certain committees. Pope Francis made a special trip to Geneva for its 70th anniversary and praised the ecumenical programs, moving forward the cooperation of the one church in Christ.
 - The [Global Christian Forum](#) (GCF) is a movement of representatives from diverse Christian churches, organizations and traditions meeting on an equal basis, to foster mutual respect and to address common challenges together. It especially promotes relationships between and among Christian churches and traditions which have not been in conversation with each other previously. At its recent 3rd world-wide gathering in Bogota, Colombia (and quite conscious of the bold, yet embattled, peace process in that place), there emerged a strong, united desire to be agents of justice, peace and reconciliation in the world.
- [Church and Peace](#) is a European ecumenical peace church network of communities, training centers, peace organizations and peace service agencies. It participates in [the ecumenical dialogue](#) of the conciliar process for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation and is a catalyst for common initiatives and projects.
- An example of bridging the grassroots level with Church structures with regard to promoting nonviolence can be the initiative founded by the Franciscan [Marko Oršolic](#) who created the [International Multi-religious and Intercultural Center](#) (IMIC) in Bosnia. IMIC provides platform for promotion of inter-religious dialogue and reconciliation in order to deal with the violent past of the Balkan wars.
- Catholic Relief Services has also worked on Muslim-Christian dialogue in Mindanao, Bosnia, Sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere: projects aim to resolve conflicts, working on resolving land disputes and promoting interfaith dialogue. CIRCA: Capacity for Inter-religious Community Action is a CRS project in West and East Africa in which workshops teach shared values of Christians and Muslims as the basis for conflict transformation. Each CIRCA training period ends in a concrete project together.
- [The Program for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa](#) (PROCMURA) is an African-wide network of Christian and Muslim communities working together for justice, peace, and reconciliation. It is the oldest and pioneer interfaith organization in the continent of Africa, established in 1959.
- Sudan Ecumenical Forum (SEF) (late 1990s to 2011) brought together Sudanese churches with international ecumenical partners for international advocacy for peace under the auspices of WCC. Three priorities were agreed upon – bombing of civilians, oil exploration and exploitation, and the right of self-determination for

southern Sudan and other marginalized areas – and these were pursued internationally at all levels.

- [People for Peace in Africa](#) (Nairobi, Kenya) is an interfaith, but mainly Catholic group focused on non-violence and conflict resolution in eastern Africa.
- Taize Brothers, Bangladesh: grass-roots inter-religious dialogue, education, advocacy, relationship building.

4. Education

Imagine the spirituality and practice of Gospel nonviolence being taught in the thousands of Catholic educational institutions around the world, from seminaries and universities to secondary and primary schools as well as in catechesis and the formation of religious. This is the vision of Catholic Nonviolence Initiative for this fourth key area of integrating nonviolence into all aspects of church life. The following section includes a list of promising practices and exemplary organizations and programs which illustrate the enormous potential seen in the international Catholic educational system for integrating the message of Gospel nonviolence into the body of the Church.

Promising practices

- **Miriam College Infuses Nonviolence:** Using a "whole school approach" where nonviolence is infused in the life of the whole school: vision-mission, curriculum, teaching-learning methods, student discipline policy, decision-making structures, and engagement with the larger community. [Miriam College](#) has this approach as a goal because it is more effective for building a culture of peace. Nonviolent strategies are used even in their mass or public. Solidarity with other civil societal organizations (horizontal engagement) and vertical engagement with government actors are elements of the holistic approach to peace education.
- **Teacher Training in Quezon City, Philippines:** Another strategic practice is the training of teachers, including teachers from colleges of education or teacher education institutions who are educating the prospective teachers, used by the [Center for Peace Education](#). When the groups are from Catholic schools or largely Catholic, they include the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative (since 2016) and the nonviolence of Jesus. However, all trainings include sessions on values shared by major faith traditions: nonviolence, justice, love and compassion.
- **Peace Clubs in Schools:** A third example would be the formation of Peace Clubs among the students, if the goal is to capacitate not only the educators but also the youth/students toward being part of the critical mass of people who will reject violence and work for positive peace. In the situation of Miriam College, they have student clubs that carry the name of Pax Christi and they help with awareness-raising actions, fundraising, and lobbying. Part of this effort to cultivate young peace advocates is to have formal courses on peace studies. In Miriam College, they have a minor in peace studies and its graduates have built careers in peace and humanitarian organizations.
- **Nonviolence in an Interfaith Educational Setting:** The Catholic Board of Education (CBE), Faisalabad Diocese finds a Muslim school where a few

Christian children are studying. There is no Christian school in the neighborhood of that community. The team from CBE goes first to the community and gets the Christian parents ready for the idea to make their kids the vehicle to transport the idea of peace and nonviolence. Values of peace, tolerance, nonviolence and loving rather fighting back are discussed with the key staff first. Then the CBE team meets the Christian children in the Muslim school at regular intervals. Individual attention is given so that they can talk about nonviolence and also show in their behavior that they practice tolerance and promote peace. The process is slow and laborious but very effective.

- [The School for Peace](#) in the village of Neve Shalom – Wahat al-Salam (“Oasis of Peace”) in Central Israel was established in 1979 by the Dominican father Bruno Husar as the first educational institution in Israel promoting broad scale change towards peace and more humane, egalitarian, and just relations between Palestinians and Jews. It works with professional groups, women and youth, creating a genuine egalitarian dialogue between the two people. Through workshops, training programs, and special projects, the School for Peace develops participants’ awareness of the conflict and their role in it, enabling them to take responsibility to change the situation. Since it was established, 60,000 Jews and Palestinians (both Christians and Muslims) have participated in School for Peace programs.
- [The Pilgrims of Ibillin](#), a school started by Melkite/Greek Catholic Archbishop Elias Chacour in Galilee/Israel, is another such promising experience promoting equal rights and respect.
- Trial pedagogy in active nonviolence in Anglican schools in Australia (Brendan McKeague). New this year (2018) has been a unit on Peace and Nonviolence. This unit was developed for trial use in ASC schools in 2018 through a collaborative project of the ASC and Pace e Bene Australia. This unit introduces peace and nonviolence as a philosophy and practice, allowing students to become aware, explore and gain knowledge in order to develop an informed view of their own. The unit has also encouraged students to explore personal, faith, societal and global perspectives and apply problem solving and new skills to particular issues where violence is involved. The scriptural basis for a theological (Christian) foundation for peace and nonviolence has also been considered, as well as individual and organized Christian responses to injustice and conflict. It has given students a chance to reflect on and practice a nonviolent response to conflict in their lives and the world.

Exemplary organizations and programs

- Many Catholic universities and colleges all over the world have a center for peace studies and/or formation programs in this domain. On many campuses the university chaplaincy is engaged in this work for peace.

- [Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines](#) (CEAP): a network of around 2,000 Catholic schools in the country has started to collaborate with the Center for Peace Education at Miriam College in Quezon City in training Catholic educators in nonviolence. This is in its nascent phase and there is much to do to reach more Catholic educators. The Center is the committee chair for Justice and Peace Education within the CEAP and there is a forthcoming manual that will be completed this 2018 which will include a module on "Re-committing to the Nonviolence of Jesus."
- [Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict](#) (GPPAC): a global network and as the name indicates it wants a shift from reaction to prevention with regards to violent conflict; includes a focus on [peace education](#).
- [Global Network of Women Peacebuilders](#) (GNWP): Nonviolence is integrated in their training sessions and activities.
- Faith-based Christian organizations in Israel/Palestine such as:
 - [Kairos Palestine](#), a Christian Palestinian movement, born out of the Kairos Document, which advocates for ending the Israeli occupation and achieving a just solution to the conflict.
 - [Sabeel Liberation Theological Center](#), which strives towards theological liberation through instilling the Christian faith in the daily lives of those who suffer under occupation, violence, injustice and discrimination.
 - [Al-Liqa Center](#), "Al-Liqa" is Arabic for "encounter." In that spirit, the center focuses on interfaith and cultural dialogue, Palestinian Contextualized Theology, youth activities, international activities, and the publication of journals, newsletters, books and occasional papers.
 - [The Arab Educational Institute](#), a member of Pax Christi International, a Palestinian organization that furthers education, peacebuilding and dialogue in the Palestinian cities of Bethlehem, Ramallah and Hebron.
 - [The Holy Land Trust in Bethlehem](#), through a commitment to the principles of nonviolence, they aspire to strengthen and empower the peoples of the Holy Land to engage in spiritual, pragmatic and strategic paths that will end all forms of oppression.
 - [Pilgrims of Ibillin](#): Melkite Bishop Elias Chacour in his Educational Institution in Ibillin, Israel.

All promote nonviolence concepts by working ecumenically and with other religions. Many cooperate with Pax Christi, Justice and Peace and others.
- [Pace e Bene](#), based in the U.S., with offices around the world, rooted in the spiritually grounded practice of active nonviolence, working with individuals, organizations, and movements to strengthen their efforts to abolish war, protect human rights, end poverty, challenge injustice, heal the planet and meet today's profound spiritual task: to build a more just, peaceful and nonviolent world.
- [Little Friends for Peace](#): Little Friends for Peace (LFFP) welcomes adults and youth to experience, learn, and practice peace through various peace education programs. They believe that all people can create homes, classrooms, teams, and workplaces where everyone gives, everyone gains, and everyone wins.
- Miriam College, see description above.

- [Teach Peace Build Peace Movement](#) is an independent, non-partisan and non-profit organization that aims to make every Filipino child and youth a peace builder. It spearheads a strategic initiative running peace education programs for children in conflict and non-conflict zones using a holistic approach.
- The School for Peace in Neve Shalom, Israel, established in 1979, assimilates the principles upon which [Neve Shalom Wahat al-Salam](#) was founded in conducting courses and seminars for Arab and Jewish youth and adults in Israel and the Palestinian Autonomy.
- Peace Educators Australia
- [Pax Christi UK – Peace Education](#)

5. Families & Parishes

“It is fundamental that nonviolence be practiced before all else within families...The family is the indispensable crucible in which spouses, parents and children, brothers and sisters, learn to communicate and to show generous concern for one another, and in which frictions and even conflicts have to be resolved not by force but by dialogue, respect, concern for the good of the other, mercy and forgiveness. From within families, the joy of love spills out into the world and radiates to the whole of society.” (Pope Francis, 2017 World Day of Peace, 5)

Families and the community of families that comprise Catholic parishes are the building blocks of a peaceful world that resolves conflicts nonviolently. The following section offers some promising practices and exemplary organizations and programs in our experience that demonstrate the important role parishes and families play in peacebuilding.

Promising practices

- **Nonviolent marches in Cremisan Valley, Palestine:** An initiative of Parish priests in leading nonviolent marches after Sunday service to protest state violence of environmental destruction, confiscation of land, and separation of families by building a wall in a community where Christians, Muslims and sometimes Jews participate.
- **Rev. Ashraf Tannous and Fr. Jamal Khader in Israel/Palestine:** The experience of The Reverend Ashraf Tannous, Lutheran Pastor in Beit Sahour, Palestine and Father Jamal Khader, Roman Catholic Parish Priest, Ramallah, West Bank, Palestine. They affirm the nonviolence of the Palestinian community by building partnerships with churches and schools all over the world. Besides regular social violence, Palestinians have to deal with state violence and therefore need to be equipped to respond nonviolently.

This is an advocacy initiative with the following benefits:

- Sharing the nonviolent approach among all believers by also changing the preconceptions and views about the Palestinian people.
- Promoting alternative pilgrimage that not only strengthens faith and connection with the Creator, but reveals the true picture of oppression in the Holy Land and advocates striving for a just peace.

- Encouraging the support of Palestinian products to ensure quality, economic support and regaining the dignity of human beings. For Fr. Jamal Khader, instilling the love of God and the forgiveness of Christ at an early age ensures equal rights, tolerance, and respect among the parishes. Regular Lenten meetings, family retreats, and tolerance of other faiths minimize problems that will always arise. It is then the responsibility of the parish priest to mediate and find peaceful solutions between genders.
- **Peace Camps in Washington, United States:** One example of a best practice is the work of [Little Friends for Peace](#) (LFFP) in the United States, Washington, DC, more specifically. Their [Peace Camps](#) provide a framework for peace education on the family and parish level.
- **Prayerful nonviolent resistance in Faisalabad, Pakistan:** In the city of Faisalabad, there is a shanty town, a railway colony where the poor live. Fr. Bashir Francis, the parish priest, has trained and organized the Catholic laity well.

On March 2, 2018, right in front of their houses, the government, in collaboration with the political representatives, decided to build a road which would apparently cut off their water supply. The people were furious. The youth wanted to fight immediately. They were ready to pick up the stones thrown to build the new road. In fact, some already had stones in their hands when one women's group acted. The women's group, the Rosary Group, decided not to fight back but instead took their beds outside and sat on them and prayed the rosary. The youth hardly joined the rosary, but they threw the stones to the ground and waited. As the rosary was ending, one of the elders (men's group) of the St. Paul group said, "Friends, let us go to the civil authority and tell them they needed water at all cost." The woman leader of the Rosary Group said, "Take two members of the women's group also." The men reluctantly agreed.

The city mayor was surprised to see men and women in one delegation. A woman spoke up in a firm but calculated way, "We want water, or else we are not going home." The men immediately agreed with the woman. The mayor was confused as to what to do. This combination of men and women, this combination of prayer and asking for their rights, this combination of being polite but firm, this resort to silent peaceful means was working and working well. The Cathedral parish of Faisalabad was blazing along a new path successfully.

- **"Strengthening Families":** The African Synod had a theme on Family and in the Diocese of Livingstone they trained couples to do this program in various parishes. The program had a strategic plan with various topics on Dialogue, Justice and Peace, and others. These programs were done with couples, creating forums to share their experiences and draw out some meaningful way of living in a Gospel way. We found that it was very successful where people otherwise did not have any forums for them to express their experiences of conflict and how to create peace in family situations.
- South Sudan's churches have embraced John Paul Lederach's pyramid model – grassroots, mid-level and high-level – and actively seek to mobilize and

conscientize the grassroots to influence the middle-level in order to effect change at the highest level. See the [paper on the People to People Process](#).

- In every parish in Uganda, small Christian communities comprised of ten families are established at the village level and they perform daily prayers for peace, guidance and counseling for people struggling with substance abuse and those affected by war, along with poverty eradication.

Exemplary organizations and programs

- [Caritas Jerusalem](#) and [International](#) have worked for years worked with people addicted to drugs who have become violent. Caritas has set up centers but also sent many Christian young adults from Jerusalem for rehabilitation in Italy. Many of these young adults are now recovered and have returned to the country working to eliminate different forms of violence.
- [Kairos Palestine](#) helps train “young ambassadors,” equipping them with leadership, rhetoric, and knowledge skills, in order to empower them to act and present a nonviolent answer of resistance toward the violent powers dominating the conflict context. They grow into spokespersons reflecting their faith and nonviolent values in their behavior and in building a pluralistic community.
- Directly related to the best practice example given above, Little Friends for Peace (LFFP) is an example of an organization already applying nonviolence at the family and parish levels.

6. Liturgy

At the heart of the life of the Church, liturgical celebrations can be a powerful expression of the way to peace in following the nonviolent example of Jesus. The following section includes some promising practices and exemplary organizations and programs where Gospel nonviolence is a subject in eucharistic liturgies, public prayer and popular devotions.

Promising practices

- **Integrating the language of nonviolence:**
 - The prayers of the faithful or general intercessions are an excellent opportunity to integrate nonviolence into the liturgy. The faithful offer up their own intentions in smaller congregations. There is that liberty but it depends on the celebrant. There are some who could give leeway for this. Other examples in the liturgy include the passing of the peace and the sending out at the end of Mass.
 - Homilies can be an important area to integrate the language and message of Gospel nonviolence into the liturgy as well, along with reflections on specific passages in terms of understanding Gospel nonviolence.
- **Pax Christi proposals for the Eucharistic liturgy:** Another good practice is the annual proposal for the liturgy during the annual Peace Week campaign of PC Netherlands, as well as PC Flanders, in September. Pax Christi Netherlands

distributes texts for prayers and songs, together with suggestion for biblical lectures. They are meant for both Catholic and Protestant services. Pax Christi UK distributes texts for the Eucharistic celebration of Peace Sunday in January.

- **Exsultet in Faisalabad, Pakistan:** On Holy Saturday night are the Prayers of the Paschal Candle, the Exsultet, it is possible to bring the theme of Christian nonviolence into this.
- [Reflections on peace and nonviolence for the post Easter readings](#), created by Pax Christi UK
- [Liturgy for Ash Wednesday](#): This was used in a public way, in the streets and outside the Ministry of Defense building in London. This is the 36th year of the event, challenging war and nuclear war in particular.
- **Way of the Cross, combining nonviolence and the Stations of the Cross:** For example, the Way of the Cross (Via Crucis), is one that is adapted to the social conditions of the poor and the marginalized, goes to seats of power, aligned with justice and compassion for the poor. It happens every year in Washington, D.C. on Good Friday, and is planned and coordinated by Maryknoll. This happens in many places and it is important to take advantage of opportunities to share this. This is not the liturgy, per se, but it would be celebrated and held up on behalf of the popular Church. Below are several examples:
 - [Franz Jagerstatter, Way of the Cross](#)
 - [Way of the Cross based on the experiences of Conscientious Objectors in First World War](#)
 - [Economic and Ecological Way of the Cross, Good Friday, March 30, 2018](#)
 - [The Contemporary Way of the Cross \(Palestine\)](#)
- Also, in Pakistan, the blessing of homes around Easter. When priests go to the home in general, there is a possibility of introducing prayers around nonviolence because it is not a liturgical practice. It is important to put our message of Christian nonviolence in prayers and services to be used especially wherever there is violence. Additionally, Holy Hour, Bible services, and Passion hymns, offer opportunities.

Exemplary organizations and programs

- Pax Christi International and regional/national sections
- [“Living a Nonviolent Life,”](#) reflection booklet by the Marianites of Holy Cross

7. Policy Makers-UN-Diplomats

Policy makers, diplomats and activists in the public sphere who advocate for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation are key protagonists in showing the effectiveness of active nonviolence and peacebuilding in resolving conflicts. The leadership of the Church in promoting dialogue, negotiation and conflict transformation

is critical to building a more peaceful world. Here the role of the bishops and the Holy Father, as well as the diplomatic corps of the Holy See and Catholic NGOs advocating at the UN and with national governments is essential to promoting a just peace.

Here we share promising practices and exemplary organizations and programs as identified by our roundtable as exemplifying the power of active nonviolence and peacebuilding approaches in politics and the sphere of public policy.

Promising practices

- **Personal encounters from a European perspective:** Policy makers tend to be more receptive to thoughts on nonviolence if they are underpinned by concrete examples and results; it is good to link the nonviolence discourse to a certain policy reference framework (e.g., the implementation of the *EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy*) or a current policy debate in order to highlight the pertinence of the issue for their work.
 - Closed door dialogue meetings with policy makers from Brussels-based institutions, e.g., EU, NATO, UN offices, ICRC, etc. (i.e., those hosted by COMECE or the Quaker Council for European Affairs)
 - Often more efficient than public conferences – open and frank exchange, not just a series of monologues
 - COMECE is a partner of the EU in the Dialogue foreseen by Article 17 TFEU (Dialogue between the European institutions, churches, and religious communities)
 - Bilateral meetings
- **Successful Conference at the University of San Diego, United States:** Cardinal Peter Turkson was present as well as other bishops who joined active nonviolent practitioners and military personnel. The aim was around engaging active nonviolence in the political sphere.
 - [The Catholic Church Moves Towards Nonviolence? Just Peace Just War In Dialogue](#)
- **Contributions to policy debates in Europe:**
 - Reflection papers (e.g., COMECE, [Europe's Vocation to Promote Peace in the World](#))
 - Proposals for amendments to resolutions and legislative texts votes at the European Parliament
- **Campaigning for the abolition of nuclear weapons:** Another example of a best practice is lobbying with the Philippine foreign affairs officials as well as with the other Asia-Pacific states' delegates at the UN in support of the Treaty Prohibiting Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The keys to the successful negotiation of the TPNW in the UN last July 2017:
 - Good leadership: The campaigners from all around the world were working together well, led by an international team that was very dedicated and systematic in their leadership.

- Good preparation of the members/campaigners: At least a day of meeting, planning and strategizing before major events/the negotiation conference was very helpful because that was the time that specific objectives and methods for the coming events were more clearly defined.
- Use of all possible nonviolent strategies for awareness-raising and advocacy; they were both traditional and nontraditional such as printed articles/op-eds, TV guesting, face to face conversations with diplomats, forums, seminars on disarmament education, petition-signing, lobbying with parliamentarians, emails, social media, etc.
- A strong sense of unity and solidarity among campaigners which included faith-based groups was very beneficial. The potential of social media was huge. The activities were in the nature of persuasion, a very important nonviolent method. The delegation had to persuade diplomats using the strength of the cause itself. We lifted up the humanitarian consequences of these weapons. All of the Asian nations that we engaged with voted for the treaty except Singapore.
- **Nonviolence in Belgium to ban landmines in 1995:** Pax Christi Flanders' work on landmines in Belgium as a leader in that movement as part of a broad coalition with many different parties. Humanitarian consequences were essential and stressed the importance of relaying what is happening on the ground in different places and translating those experiences in lobbying efforts.
- **Pax Christi International Position Paper:**
 - [Call to the International Community to Support Policies that Promote Nonviolent Approaches to Sustaining Peace](#)
 - Calls for utilization of the Church's Diplomatic Corps, additionally saying that "church leaders around the world have influential roles in policy processes for peacebuilding through cooperation with public policy officials.

Exemplary organizations and programs

- [Pax Christi International](#)
- [Justice & Peace Europe](#)
 - They plan to continue with the [organization of "Prayer & Breakfasts"](#) for policy-makers in Brussels at the beginning of each year on the respective themes of the Pope's Peace Message.
- Quaker Council for European Affairs
 - Recently published a [handbook on nonviolent approaches](#)
- [Church and Peace](#): an ecumenical network of peace movements
- [European Forum on Armed Drones](#) (EFAD)
- [International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons](#) (ICAN)
 - Used active nonviolent strategies in its campaign for the TPNW, mainly strong persuasion based on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of a nuclear detonation. The main appeal is to the heart, reason, and conscience of states' delegates.

8. Religious Communities & Lay Movements

Religious communities and lay movements have tremendous transformative potential in promoting Gospel nonviolence in the life of the Church. With their global reach and the depth of their networks they touch the lives of the faithful in significant and formative ways. Here we note some promising practices and exemplary organizations and programs in the experience of our roundtable participants.

Promising practices

- **March of the DR Congo to Piazza San Peter to thank Pope Francis:** The Congolese Catholic Chaplaincy of Rome, the community of priests and religious, and the lay associations of Congolese invited friends of the Congolese to participate in a march they organized for February 11th. After celebrating mass, over 350 persons departed from the Congolese Church to march to St. Peter's Square with the purpose of raising awareness about the critical situation in the DRC and to thank Pope Francis for his prayerful support and concern for the ongoing conflicts in DR Congo.
Their demonstration focused on several needs in the Congolese community:
 - The urgency to exercise pressure on multi-national companies that are supplying weapons to armed groups and who are exploiting their wealth to the detriment of the people;
 - The promotion of a coherent response to the consequence of insecurity and the critical humanitarian assistance needed due to the millions of deaths that have occurred from malnutrition, disease, and poverty as a result of war;
 - The consistency in their stance to see that free, transparent, and democratic elections take place.
- **"Peace Weeks" in Church and civil society:** This is a model that can be updated and used as a tool. This includes education, information, lobbying, etc. In the Netherlands this gives the opportunity to actively engage Protestant, Jewish, and Muslim organizations and individuals.
- The Dutch Conference of Religious Orders and Congregations (KNR) has been promoting nonviolence. It was their central topic in 2017. The Conference has created a special committee for the study and propagation of nonviolence. In 2017, it organized a retreat on this topic and the message of the Conference for Advent was on nonviolence.

Exemplary organizations and programs

- [Young Christian Workers](#) (YCW) in Japan, a movement of and for young people
- [Pax Romana ICMICA/MIIC](#) (International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs), and international association of Catholic inter-disciplinary organizations, groups and individuals primarily engaged in dialogue between the

Christian faith and cultures; a social movement for empowerment, advocacy and solidarity for a peaceful, equitable and sustainable world.

- [Jesuit Refugee Service](#), an international Catholic organization with a mission to accompany, serve and advocate on behalf of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons.
- [FOCSIV](#), employing international volunteers and young people in civil service who have made their human and professional contribution available to the poorest populations.
- [Corpi Civili di Pace](#) (Civil Corporations of Peace): working to promote the values of Nonviolence, ownership, transparency and integrity in different countries of the world such as Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, Guinea Bissau and the Balkan countries.
- The Community of Sant'Egidio, see previous description.
- Faith in Action, formerly known as PICO, see previous description.
- JPIC network of religious, see previous description.
- Franciscans International, see previous description.
- VIVAT International Nonviolent Advocacy, see previous description.
- Pax Christi International and its regional/national sections, see previous description.

9. Women & Gender Equality

The leadership of women in peacebuilding and the practice of active nonviolence is well documented. To integrate the spirituality and practice of Gospel nonviolence more completely into the life of our Church we must recognize the challenges faced both in Church and society that prevent full gender equality. The contributions women religious to peacebuilding while serving in war zones and areas of extreme violence is inspiring. At the same time grassroots movements for peace that employ active nonviolence are often led by lay women who courageously challenge the status quo of gender inequality. This section offers some promising practices and exemplary organizations that affirm gender equality and the leadership of women in peacebuilding efforts.

Promising practices

- Union of Superiors General (UISG) effort to promote gender equality as a focus in various relationships with the Church.
- Initiative by the JPIC Promoters working group on collaboration of men and women in the Church and society.
- The experience of programs in East Africa focused on specific social issues such as the early marriage of girls.
- JPIC initiative supporting and creating a network with religious women and men in the DR Congo and South Sudan in pastoral compassion for the victims of sexual violence there.

- The experience of Latin American contexts where awareness and consciousness-raising has been focused on reconciliation in areas that have suffered long term violence and women have been key leaders.
- The presence of nuns as educators in private schools and universities run by churches has also helped in the formation and view of young Palestinian women leaders who are empowered and demand their rights.
- The canonization of two Palestinian nuns has added to the respect of women.
- The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land has adopted a new constitution regarding family issues which guarantees the equal rights of women in marriage, divorce, heritage, and adoption. It is the first in the Arab world.
- Successful awareness and consciousness-raising among religious in the episcopal conferences of India and South Africa.
- Sisters of the Troubles and their work in Northern Ireland.

Exemplary organizations and programs

- [Legion de Marie](#), a lay apostolic association of Catholics who, with the sanction of the Church serve the Church and their neighbors on a voluntary basis in about 170 countries.
- [Voices of Faith](#), which aims to bring together leaders in the Vatican with the global Catholic community, so they can recognize that women have the expertise, skills and gifts to play a full leadership role in the Church.
- Pax Christi, see previous description.
- [Global Network of Women Peacebuilders](#) (GNWP). Nonviolence is integrated in their training sessions and activities.
- [Women's International League for Peace and Freedom](#) (WILPF), whose mission is to achieve feminist peace for equality, justice and demilitarized security.
- [Catholic Peacebuilding Network](#) and their work for peace with women religious in Northern Ireland.
- [Catholic Agency for Overseas Development](#) (CAFOD): [Believe in change: A toolkit for the Catholic community to promote gender equality](#).

Recommendations to the Vatican

Bishops & Episcopal Conferences

- Advise the Secretariat of State to consider hosting a conference on nonviolent civilian protection for its diplomatic corps with expert practitioners from global conflict zones.
- Urge the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization to include the spirituality of Gospel nonviolence as a topic for its Catechetical Congress and explore ways diocesan evangelization campaigns can include nonviolence in their toolkit.
- Encourage episcopal conferences to hold regional conferences on Gospel nonviolence based on the model of the April 2016 Rome conference.
- Call upon national bishops' conferences to integrate courses on active nonviolence within its educational systems such as schools, seminaries, catechesis, etc.
- Encourage bishops to hold seminars on Christian nonviolence for the clergy and lay leaders.
- Promote arbitration and mediation at the diocesan level to show that conflicts can be resolved in a nonviolent way.
- Building upon [Pope Francis' Christmas address to the Roman Curia](#) on 21 December 2017, the bishops' visits *ad Limina Apostolorum* that also involve meetings with the various dicasteries could include on their agenda an exchange on practices promoting nonviolence and peace. This may apply in particular to the meetings with representatives of the Secretariat of State and the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

Catholic NGOs & JPICs

- Develop more programs that promote nonviolence, such as the 2017 conferences and seminars on *Nonviolence: A Style of Politics for Peace*.
- Encourage Bible reading among Christian communities and the faithful to emphasize the social teachings of the Church in catechesis programs.
- Introduce some nonviolence initiatives and contemplative dialogue between clergy and women religious as to how we can move forward.
- Build and strengthen ties of encounter, formation, and mutual engagement between effective Catholic NGOs and JPIC Commissions and the Catholic faithful at large, by calling on Bishops conferences to prioritize these relationships, particularly in responding to local manifestations of violence between individuals and people groups, and against the environment.

Ecumenical & Interfaith Action and Dialogue

- Provide more support for ecumenical and interfaith grassroots initiatives and projects in the field.

- Make nonviolence a regular agenda point at ecumenical and interfaith encounters at ecclesiastical and Vatican levels.
- Encourage Catholic schools and religious formation programs to adopt ecumenical and interfaith competence trainings. We have to intensify our efforts in reducing and eliminating prejudice towards the religious “other.” This prejudice has led to demonizing others which can lead to harming them. Let us start with our Catholic schools by convincing and training our school administrators and teachers around interreligious competence and tolerance, and also start with our formation programs for the men and women religious and the parishes.
- Stress the values and principles that we share in common with other faith groups when we do interfaith work because of the theory of homophily that says people tend to have non-negative relationships with those they perceive as similar to themselves.
- Make the goal of interfaith actions that of working together and cooperating for the common good because our global problems are shared and affect us all regardless of faith or religion.
- Call on bishops’ conferences to foster and strengthen local ties (‘dialogue of life’ and ‘dialogue of action’) between the Catholic faithful, in their respective dioceses and nations, and ecumenical and interfaith organizations and efforts for justice, active nonviolence and peace.

Education

- Urge the Congregation for Catholic Education to encourage Catholic schools and educational associations in various countries to make peace and nonviolence education a major thrust, beginning with the rediscovery of and recommitment to Jesus’ nonviolence.
- Organize a global conference on peace and nonviolence education or request global educational organizations such as the International Federation of Catholic Universities to make this the theme for their global conferences.
- Look for close collaboration with the most influential Catholic organizations in the field of education, discussing with them the best methods to implement nonviolence in the life and work of Catholic educational institutions. For higher education and research it could be: IFCU (International Federation of Catholic Universities), ACCU (Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities in the US) and the international network of Jesuit universities and colleges. For secondary (and primary) education: JECSE (Jesuit European Committee for Secondary and primary Education, National Catholic Educational Association in the U.S.) and its counterparts in other continents.
- Increase social animators trained in working with people on social issues, including nonviolence.
- Give social media more importance and use it more effectively for promoting tolerance and nonviolence. Peace is a cause that requires struggle and effort to maintain it everywhere. Governmental sanctions can be avoided if every nation is respected. No more talk of isolating our enemies.

- Instruct all Catholic institutions to live nonviolently and not only to preach nonviolence but to practice it in the model of Jesus.

Families & Parishes

- Teach right relationship with one another, the Earth, and the Self at the family and parish levels.
- Challenge the cultural understanding of submission in some cultures.
- Promote and teach justice, peace, and reconciliation at the family and parish levels.
- Emphasize at all stages and venues of family and parish life the necessity of living Gospel nonviolence.
- Prioritize peace education in the spirit of Gospel nonviolence at the family and parish levels.

Liturgy

- Highlight examples and moments of nonviolence in the Gospels and in Scripture in the Mass.
- Introduce nonviolence into para-liturgies and other forms of celebration outside of the Eucharistic liturgy.
- Allow more freedom in the composition of liturgical texts for the Eucharistic liturgy.
- Encourage liturgists and writers to insert nonviolence in prayers and songs; liturgists should share these with ordinaries to introduce it in parishes and dioceses.
- Urge bishops to use language of Gospel nonviolence in prayers and share these with dioceses.
- Encourage dioceses and parishes to use the language of nonviolence in their prayers of the faithful or general intercessions.

Policy Makers-UN-Diplomats

- Integrate into the formation and the training of Vatican diplomats a stronger emphasis on nonviolence.
- Create spaces for and engage in genuine dialogue bringing together policy-makers, Church actors, academia and broader civil society at and across all levels and sectors (local, regional, global).
 - E.g., recent COMECE Dialogue co-organized by the Holy See in the Vatican on the (Re-) Thinking of Europe. The program included presentations in a plenary setting as well as splitting into smaller groups which allowed for open and frank debates.
- Strengthen the capacity and role of the Holy See in the field of negotiation and conflict mediation.
 - E.g., Colombia, Cuba.

- Enhance the link between the Church hierarchy/global Church and the local Church/grassroots movements.
 - The Church's position should be communicated in a more effective manner so that message will reach Catholics in parishes and communities.

Religious Communities & Lay Movements

- Integrate nonviolence into educational programs of religious institutes who run educational programs, schools and universities.
- Prioritize Gospel nonviolence in the outreach and promotion of religious communities and lay movements.
- Ask religious institutions and associations of lay movements to endorse the appeal to the Catholic Church to re-commit to the centrality of Gospel nonviolence.
- Cultivate deeper relationships and connections with lay movements and organizations working in conflict areas, e.g., Pax Romana, Community of Sant'Egidio, FOCSIV, CIDSE, CAFOD, TRÓCAIRE, et al.
- Integrate nonviolence with all topics that have to do with peace.

Women & Gender Equality

- Prioritize the biblical understanding of women and men created as equals. If women are considered "lesser" then remember that Christ stands with the oppressed.
- Pursue equity in ecclesiastical courts for women. Women living with dignity can create a better atmosphere for all.
- Provide clarification around the notion of gender ideology which creates a lot of confusion when it comes to gender justice.
- Encourage dioceses and parishes to use the language of nonviolence in their prayers of the faithful or general intercessions intentionally taking in consideration gender equality terms.

Conclusion

We conclude with these recommendations, representing the fruit of our labor over the past year together. We offer them to the Holy See as potential strategies to further integrate Gospel nonviolence into the life, work and structures of the Church: its dioceses, parishes, agencies, schools, universities, seminaries, religious orders, voluntary associations, development agencies and ministries throughout the world. This document represents the culmination of a yearlong process of international collaboration on how Gospel nonviolence and peacebuilding can become more fully integrated into every level of the Catholic Church. This process has produced a collection which is far from exhaustive yet in many ways representative of the diverse work being done in the fields of active nonviolence and peacebuilding within the Church as well as the greater whole of society. Coming from fifteen different countries around the world, we offer these recommendations as an indication of the much broader work being done around the world by practitioners of active nonviolence as spiritual discipline, resistance, and the work of peace and justice.