



Lenten Reflection: Building Resilience and Hope Through the Nonviolent Gospel The Path Forward: From Ashes to Resurrection

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Introduction

As we journey through this Lenten season, we find ourselves at a critical juncture in human history. The *geopolitical landscape reveals fractures in our global community*—withdrawals from international institutions, defunding of humanitarian aid, escalating conflicts, and the erosion of democratic values. ***Yet it is precisely in times of darkness that the Nonviolent Gospel shines most brightly***, offering us not just comfort, but a path forward to build resilience, cultivate hope, and act as faithful citizens in a broken world.

Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount provide our roadmap: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9). In a world that glorifies military might and economic domination, the Nonviolent Gospel calls us to a different way of being—one that *prioritizes relationship over power, compassion over control, and community over competition*.

Resilience is not merely endurance—it is the capacity to maintain our integrity and hope when systems around us are collapsing. As we face the fragmentation of global institutions and the rise of authoritarian nationalism, our resilience must be rooted in something deeper than political structures: our Faith!

As the early Christians, today we Christians and Pax Christi International as a Catholic global peace movement, should continue building resilience by creating networks of solidarity that cross political and religious divides. This means standing with our Muslim neighbours when Islamophobia rises, welcoming refugees when borders close, and advocating for the poor when social safety nets are dismantled.

Lent teaches us that hope is not naive optimism, but a virtue cultivated through spiritual discipline. Daily prayer, fasting from consumerism, and almsgiving to those in need form the foundation of resilient faith. These practices remind us that our ultimate security is not in nations or markets, but in the God who raised Jesus from the dead. We are called to speak truth to power. *This means naming the injustice of spending trillions on military while humanitarian assistance and social budgets falls.* It means challenging the narrative that

violence brings security and that domination equals strength. Our resilience lies in our willingness to be countersigns in a world that has forgotten its way.

In the face of geopolitical chaos, we, more than ever need to strengthen our capacity to cultivate Hope, to organise Hope! It is the virtue that sustains us when all seems lost. It is not wishful thinking, but active trust in God's promise to make all things new. The Gospel reminds us that hope often emerges from the most unlikely places—from the cross, from an empty tomb, from communities that refuse to give up on love.

This hope is embodied in initiatives like the First Conference on the Transition Away from Fossil Fuels in Santa Marta, Colombia, or in the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons NPT. Here, **we civilians see hope in action**—nations coming together to address the climate crisis or United Nations monitor the measures that will help avoid humanity fall in a disaster... not through domination but through cooperation. This is the hope that refuses to accept that violence and destruction are our only options. The crisis of multilateralism demands more than lament—**it calls for reimagining**: structures, ways of building bridges amongst divided, the rule of law coming back to the source of the common good; we should contribute to this new vision, by advocating for institutions that reflect the preferential option for the poor and the marginalized, not the rule for the corporate powers.

As Lent calls us to conversion, so too must our economies be converted from systems of death to systems of life. This means supporting divestment from mining -including weapons manufacturers, advocating for fair trade -at a local and global level, and building economies that serve people rather than profit.

The Nonviolent Gospel compels us to resist injustice without resorting to the methods of the oppressor. This means supporting diplomatic solutions to conflict, advocating for international law, and building movements that challenge the narrative that violence is inevitable. As we resist, we do so with the love that Jesus showed even to his executioners.

Lent leads us through the darkness of Good Friday to the hope of Easter Sunday. This journey reminds us that even in the bleakest geopolitical moments, *resurrection is possible!* **As we journey through this Lenten season, let us commit ourselves to pray, fast, live solidarity and exercise nonviolence in all our life!** For in the end, the Nonviolent Gospel does not call us to withdrawal from the world, but to engagement with it—to build the reign of God one act of love, one act of justice, one act of hope at a time.

May this Lenten season find us resilient in faith, steadfast in hope, and active in love, as we work for the day when "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (*Isaiah 2:4*).