Catholic INSTITUTE for Nonviolence

PAX CHRISTI INTERNATIONAL

Harvesting the Rich Experience of Active Nonviolence to Guide the Church and the World

A project of Pax Christi International's Catholic Nonviolence Initiative

Catholic INSTITUTE for Nonviolence
PAX CHRISTI INTERNATIONAL

2026 CONFERENCE

Unarmed and Disarming Peace

The Church's Emerging Paradigm Shift to Gospel Nonviolence

Rome | September 9–10, 2026

Conference Goals

To highlight, encourage, and contribute to the emerging focus on Gospel nonviolence in Catholic life, teaching and practice, including the pontificate of Pope Leo XIV; to offer concrete examples of active nonviolence, as well as research and theological reflection on nonviolence, to clarify this emerging paradigm; and to strengthen our internal dynamics as an Institute by drawing together our Associates and research strands.

Guiding Questions

- What does Pope Leo mean by 'unarmed and disarming peace'?
- What does it mean for Gospel nonviolence to be at the center of Catholic life, teaching and practice, and what might be the challenges to centering nonviolence?
- What practices of nonviolence are most effective and for which contexts?
- What would a new paradigm of Catholic nonviolence look like and how can a shift to a new paradigm be facilitated?
- How can "legitimate defense" be framed under this emerging paradigm?

Program History

The Catholic Institute for Nonviolence: A project of Pax Christi International's Catholic Nonviolence Initiative

The Catholic Institute for Nonviolence is a project of Pax Christi's Catholic Nonviolence Initiative (CNI). The CNI was launched to deepen the Catholic Church's understanding of and commitment to Gospel nonviolence following the historic 2016 Rome Conference on Nonviolence and Just Peace, which was co-sponsored by the Vatican and Pax Christi International. (See "An Appeal to the Catholic Church to Re-Commit to the Centrality of Gospel Nonviolence" that emerged from this landmark conference, reproduced at the conclusion of this program.)

Pax Christi International is a worldwide Catholic network of over 100 organizations across six continents working for peace, social justice, and reconciliation. For over 80 years, Pax Christi members around the world—including many living in contexts of violence, injustice, and war—have fostered a deep commitment to active nonviolence.

In September 2024 in Rome, CNI launched the Catholic Institute for Nonviolence, whose mission is to make nonviolence research, publications, resources, and experience more accessible to Catholic Church leaders, communities, and institutions. The Institute's work is organized through three sections: Gospel Nonviolence; Nonviolent Practices and Strategic Power; and Contextual Experiences of Nonviolence.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

Pope Leo's Vision of Unarmed and Disarming Peace: Toward a Paradigm of Nonviolence

8:00

Registration Open

9:00

Welcome / Opening Prayer

Marie Dennis, Co-Director, Catholic Institute for Nonviolence

Introduction — Goals of the Conference and Process

Nicolas Paz, Director, Catholic Nonviolence Initiative

9:30

Overview of Pope Leo's Teaching on Peace and Nonviolence

Ken Butigan, Ph.D., DePaul University, emeritus; Co-Director, Catholic Institute for Nonviolence

9:45

Keynote: Cardinal Charles Bo, Myanmar (by video)

Cardinal Charles Maung Bo, S.D.B., is Archbishop of Yangon, Myanmar, and a leading voice for peace, reconciliation, and active nonviolence within the Catholic Church. As Myanmar's first cardinal, he has accompanied communities through years of armed conflict and political upheaval while consistently advocating for dialogue, human dignity, and interreligious solidarity. His leadership has helped advance the Church's growing commitment to Gospel nonviolence throughout Asia and beyond.

10:15

BREAK

10:30–11:45

Session 1. Nonviolence in Municipality of Caicedo, Colombia during the War

Laura Villanueva

Laura Villanueva, PhD, is the founder of Satoyama for Peace: Ecosystems for Peace and Reconciliation who teaches at the Jena Center for Reconciliation Studies. Her work includes accompanying change-makers in Caicedo as they develop nonviolent responses to armed conflict. Drawing on lived experience, she shares how community organization, resilience, and hope have helped sustain peacebuilding amid violence. Need more information: current title and affiliation to be confirmed.

David Cochran

David Cochran, PhD, is Professor of Politics at Loras College, where he teaches and writes on war, peace, and Catholic social thought. His scholarship examines the moral, political, and practical limitations of war while exploring the promise of nonviolent alternatives. Through his research and writing, he has contributed to contemporary conversations on just peace and the Church's emerging commitment to Gospel nonviolence.

Martha Inés Romero

Martha Inés Romero is Secretary General of Pax Christi International and has accompanied communities affected by violence across Latin America for more than three decades. Her work has focused on reconciliation, restorative approaches, and strengthening the Church's role in promoting justice, healing, and active nonviolence. She has been instrumental in advancing the Catholic Church's growing commitment to Gospel nonviolence around the world.

John Ashworth

John Ashworth is a peacebuilder and longtime missionary whose work in Sudan and South Sudan has focused on reconciliation, Church leadership, and community peace processes. He brings decades of experience accompanying communities through armed conflict while strengthening local capacities for peace.

Belén Garrido

María Belén Garrido, PhD, is an Ecuadorian academic specializing in peace and conflict studies, with a particular focus on civil resistance movements in contexts of armed conflict and hybrid democracies. She currently directs the Regional Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolent Action in the Americas and is Coordinating Associate for the Institute Section on Contextual Experiences of Nonviolence at the Catholic Institute for Nonviolence. She also serves as Principal Researcher at FLACSO Ecuador.

11:45

Nonviolent Practice Presentation on Civilian-Based Defense

Martí Olivella i Solé

Martí Olivella, member of the first group of conscientious objectors to military conscription in Spain (1975). Co-founder of the NOVACT Institute for Nonviolence. Current campaign leader of Stopping Wars with Nonviolent Self-Defense (aturemlesguerres.cat) and Nonviolent Civil Self-Defense. Author of several books on nonviolence (www.noalaguerra.eu).

12:30

LUNCH

1:30

Plenary: The Global Significance of the Catholic Church's Embrace of Gospel Nonviolence

Maria Stephan

Maria J. Stephan, Ph.D., is a leading scholar and practitioner of civil resistance and nonviolent action and a member of the Catholic Institute for Nonviolence Advisory Council. She was closely involved in the creation and development of Pax Christi International's Catholic Nonviolence Initiative,. She is also co-lead and chief organizer of the Horizons Project, which works to strengthen relationships and collective action across movements working to protect democracy, advance justice, and resist authoritarianism. Her scholarship and practice have helped demonstrate the effectiveness of organized nonviolent resistance in confronting violence, oppression, and injustice.

2:15

Session 2. Migration and Active Nonviolence in Context of Democratic Backsliding

Leo Guardado

Leo Guardado, PhD, is Associate Professor of Theology at Fordham University, where his work focuses on systematic theology, peace studies, liberation theology, migration, sanctuary, and Latino/a religious experience. Originally from El Salvador and himself a migrant to the United States as a child, he brings lived experience into conversation with theological scholarship. His work explores how the Church can respond to forced displacement and state violence through sanctuary, solidarity, nonviolent resistance, and a commitment to human dignity.

Emilia González Avalos

Emilia González Avalos is Executive Director of Unidos MN, a Minnesota-based organization working with immigrant, working-class, and Latine communities to build collective power for racial, economic, and gender justice. A longtime member of the immigration justice movement, she has helped grow Unidos MN from a small network into a statewide community-led organization. Her work centers the leadership and lived experience of migrants and others directly affected by public policy, with an emphasis on community organizing, civic participation, and collective action.

Consuelo Amat

Consuelo Amat, PhD, is the SNF Agora Institute Assistant Professor of Political Science at Johns Hopkins University. Her research examines state repression, authoritarianism, political violence, civil society, and armed and unarmed resistance, with a regional focus on Latin America and Africa. Her work on nonviolent movements explores how people build alliances and civic capacity under conditions of repression, including research on Chile's movement against the Pinochet dictatorship.

3:30

BREAK

3:45

Nonviolent Practice Presentation: Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP)

Amira Musallam

Amira Musallam is a Palestinian Christian peace activist and co-founder and Head of Mission of Unarmed Civilian Protection in Palestine (UCPiP). She leads trained protective-presence teams working alongside Palestinian communities in the West Bank, using accompaniment, de-escalation, documentation, and rapid-response networks to reduce harm and strengthen civilian protection. Her work builds on years of experience in Palestinian civil society, project management, advocacy, and community-based nonviolent action.

Mel Duncan

Mel Duncan is a co-founder of Nonviolent Peaceforce and a longtime advocate and practitioner of unarmed civilian protection. He helped develop Nonviolent Peaceforce as an international organization that works with communities affected by violent conflict to protect civilians and prevent violence without weapons. His work has included advancing unarmed civilian protection with policymakers and at the United Nations, documenting good practices, and supporting the development of protective presence initiatives in conflict-affected settings, including Palestine.

4:30

Session 3. Implementing a Commitment to Gospel Nonviolence — Engaging Everyday, Structural and Cultural Violence

Julie Lawler

Julie Lawler is a Maryknoll Lay Missioner serving in Cambodia, where she works with the Deaf Development Programme in Phnom Penh. Her ministry supports deaf young people through education, community building, employment preparation, and greater social inclusion. As Maryknoll Lay Missioners has deepened its organizational commitment to active nonviolence, Lawler has reflected on how prevention can be practiced within deaf ministry by naming structural and interpersonal forms of violence and strengthening conditions for dignity, belonging, and nonviolent living.

Heidi Cerneka

Heidi Cerneka is a Maryknoll Lay Missioner and immigration attorney whose ministry focuses on migration, women, and human trafficking. Based at the U.S.-Mexico border, she works with Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center in El Paso and also collaborates with Instituto Terra, Trabalho e Cidadania in São Paulo, Brazil. After more than two decades accompanying incarcerated women, her current work combines direct legal advocacy, prevention, education, and policy engagement to address trafficking, forced crime, migration, and the systemic violence experienced by people in vulnerable situations.

Dan Moriarty

Dan Moriarty is Senior Program Officer for Peace and Nonviolence at the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns. A former Maryknoll Lay Missioner in Bolivia, he worked with Aymara youth and in prison ministry before later directing Maryknoll's mission immersion program in Cochabamba. He holds a master's degree in international peace studies from the University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute. His current work connects Maryknoll's global mission experience with advocacy, Catholic social teaching, and the development of nonviolent approaches to peace, justice, and care for creation.

5:30

Reflection on the First Day — Small Groups

By language, using a facilitated process integrating spirituality: What did we hear today? How is nonviolence a force for reducing violence and war? What key ideas, themes, practices, and knowledge are new or important to remember?

6:30

Ritual / Evening Prayer

7:15

BREAK AND DINNER

8:30

Evening Meeting of Institute Associates

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Catholic Peace Ethics: Realizing a Nonviolent Paradigm in an Increasingly Violent World

8:30

Opening Prayer / Reflection

8:45

Plenary Presentation: Recovering the Doctrine of Gospel Nonviolence: Jesus, the Sermon on the Mount, and Pope Leo's teaching that "The power with which Christ rose is entirely nonviolent."

Rev. John Dear

John Dear is a Catholic priest, author, retreat leader, and longtime practitioner of Gospel nonviolence. Ordained in 1993 and now a priest of the Diocese of Monterey, California, he has spent decades teaching, writing, organizing, and engaging in nonviolent civil disobedience against war and nuclear weapons. He directs the Beatitudes Center for the Nonviolent Jesus and has written extensively on the nonviolence of Jesus, the Sermon on the Mount, peacemaking, and Christian discipleship.

9:15

Session 4. Nonviolence Protecting the Land, Water, and Culture

Daoud Nassar

Daoud Nassar is Director of Tent of Nations, his Palestinian family's educational and ecological farm southwest of Bethlehem in the West Bank. The Nassar family has worked the land for more than a century and has spent decades seeking to protect it amid legal disputes, settlement expansion, access restrictions, and repeated damage to the farm. Through creative nonviolent resistance, environmental stewardship, education, hospitality, and community programs, Tent of Nations works to transform frustration and despair into constructive action grounded in faith, justice, and hope.

Sr. Maamalifar Poreku

Sr. Maamalifar M. Poreku is a Ghanaian Missionary Sister of Our Lady of Africa with extensive experience in justice, peace, education, and integral ecology. She serves as Executive Co-Secretary of the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission of the international unions of women's and men's religious superiors and coordinates Sowing Hope for the Planet. Her work connects Catholic social teaching with environmental advocacy and institutional action, including efforts encouraging faith-based organizations to align financial and investment decisions with care for creation and solidarity with communities affected by extractive industries.

Eliane Lakam

Eliane Lakam is Global Policy & Partnerships Specialist at Taproot Earth, where she works with partners, institutions, and climate policy processes around the world to advance global climate reparations. Her commitment to climate justice is rooted in childhood experiences on the African continent, where she witnessed the unequal effects of environmental harm on communities. Her work brings together global policy, partnerships, reparative justice, and a vision of shared responsibility for people and the Earth.

Divina Gekong

Divina Gekonge, PhD, is a lecturer in Peace and Conflict Studies at St. Paul's University in Nairobi, Kenya, and a peacebuilding educator and trainer. His work includes training religious sisters and other community leaders in active nonviolence and peacebuilding across East Africa. His research challenges heavily militarized approaches to security and explores alternatives grounded in positive peace, social justice, inclusive governance, and equitable development, with attention to conflict and security dynamics across the African continent.

10:30

BREAK

10:45

Plenary: Heralding a Paradigm Shift toward Nonviolence

Carlos Eduardo Martínez Hincapié

Carlos Eduardo Martínez Hincapié is a Colombian educator, researcher, and longtime practitioner of nonviolence. He co-founded Benposta Nación de Muchachos in Colombia and has been active in the Movimiento Ciudadano por la Noviolencia. His work brings together education, social transformation, and the theory and practice of nonviolence, with particular attention to cultural change and the ways communities can develop alternatives to violence.

11:30

Session 5. "Legitimate Defense" and a New Nonviolence Paradigm

Wamuyu Wachira

Sr. Wamũyũ Teresia Wachira, PhD, is a scholar, educator, peace practitioner, and Co-President of Pax Christi International. She serves as Senior Lecturer and Programme Leader in Peace and Conflict Studies at St. Paul's University in Nairobi and has worked extensively on justice, peace, and the integrity of creation in East Africa. Her commitment to peacebuilding grew from encounters with violence against women and girls and has developed into decades of work promoting a culture of peace, nonviolence, and human dignity.

Eli McCarthy

Eli McCarthy, PhD, teaches in Georgetown University's Program on Justice and Peace and works at the intersection of Catholic social teaching, nonviolence, and just peace. He is the author of *Becoming Nonviolent Peacemakers* and editor of *A Just Peace Ethic Primer.* He also co-founded the DC Peace Team, which provides training and practice in areas including nonviolent communication, restorative justice, bystander intervention, and unarmed civilian protection. His work explores how dignity, nonviolent defense, and just peace can shape both pastoral practice and public policy.

Wolfgang Palaver

Wolfgang Palaver, PhD, is Professor Emeritus of Christian Social Thought at the University of Innsbruck and President of Pax Christi Austria. His scholarship has examined religion, violence, politics, peace ethics, and René Girard's mimetic theory, with more recent work engaging Gandhi and nonviolence. Across his academic and ecclesial work, he has explored how Christian social ethics can respond to rivalry, violence, political conflict, and questions of peace and defense.

David Kwon

David Kwon, PhD, is Associate Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at Seattle University. His interdisciplinary work brings together theological ethics, peacebuilding, social work, and questions of human dignity and justice. His scholarship engages Catholic social thought and just peace, including the ethical conditions needed to protect persons and communities without reducing defense to the use of armed force.

1:00

LUNCH

2:00

Presentation: What Would It Mean for Gospel Nonviolence to Move from the Margins to the Center of the Church?

Cardinal Robert McElroy (by video)

Cardinal Robert W. McElroy is Archbishop of Washington and a prominent voice in the U.S. Catholic Church on Catholic social teaching, peace, human dignity, migration, and public life. A scholar of moral theology and political science, he has written extensively on the Church's engagement with social and political questions. His recent public teaching has emphasized solidarity among nations, the dignity of the human person, diplomacy, and the moral dangers of treating military force as a routine instrument of national policy. Cardinal McElroy is a member of the Advisory Council of the Catholic Institute for Nonviolence.

2:30

Session 6. Moving Nonviolence to the Heart of the Catholic Church

Gerald Schlabach

Gerald W. Schlabach, PhD, is Professor Emeritus of Theology at the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota, where his work has focused on Christian social ethics, Catholic social teaching, peace theology, and ecumenism. Raised in the Mennonite tradition and received into the Catholic Church in 2004, he is a co-founder of Bridgefolk, a grassroots Mennonite-Catholic dialogue movement. His scholarship explores the relationship between Christian unity and peacemaking, including in *A Pilgrim People: Becoming a Catholic Peace Church*.

Jeanette Rodriguez

Jeanette Rodriguez, PhD, is Professor of Theology and Religious Studies and Executive Director of the Institute for Catholic Thought and Culture at Seattle University. Her teaching and scholarship bring theology into conversation with culture, spirituality, identity, and lived experience, with particular attention to Latino/a and Latin American communities. Her work explores the spiritual and psychosocial dimensions of faith and human transformation, providing a foundation for reflection on interior disarmament and nonviolence as spiritual discipline.

Anna Blackman

Anna Blackman, PhD, is an Affiliate Lecturer in Catholic Religious Education at the University of Glasgow, where she teaches and researches in Catholic social thought, Christian ethics, political theology, and religious education. Her scholarship has examined the embodied theology of nonviolence within the Catholic Worker movement and the ways Catholic social teaching is practiced within institutions and communities. Her work brings particular attention to formation, pedagogy, prayer, and the spiritual practices through which nonviolence can become a lived Christian ethic.

Pietro Ameglio

Pietro Ameglio, PhD, is a Uruguayan-born educator, researcher, and nonviolent activist based in Mexico. For decades he has promoted active nonviolence, civil resistance, human rights, peace education, and anti-militarism across Mexico and Latin America. He helped found SERPAJ-Mexico and has accompanied movements of victims and families of disappeared persons, as well as broader struggles for peace with justice and dignity. His work combines Gandhian nonviolence, popular education, research, and direct engagement in social movements.

3:30

BREAK

3:45

Session 7. Moving Nonviolence to the Heart of the Catholic Church — Panel 2

Michael Duffey

Michael K. Duffey, PhD, is Associate Professor Emeritus of Theology at Marquette University, where he also directed the interdisciplinary Peace Studies program. A theological ethicist, his work has focused on justice and peace, human rights, reconciliation, and Catholic and Protestant approaches to ethics. He is the author of *Peacemaking Christians: The Future of Just War, Pacifism, and Nonviolence,* and *Sowing Justice, Reaping Peace,* and was a co-founder of Marquette University's Center for Peacemaking.

Jean Baptiste Talla

Jean-Baptiste Talla is a Justice and Peace (J&P) and Peacebuilding Technical Advisor for Catholic Relief Services, focusing on nonviolence projects, social cohesion, anti-genocide and peace-building initiatives in Africa, including the Central African Republic and the Great Lakes region. Since 2016, he has participated in Catholic Nonviolence Initiative conferences and roundtables and as a fellow with the University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies.

Margie Pfeil

Margaret Pfeil, PhD, is a Teaching Professor of Theology and Co-Director of the Catholic Social Tradition Minor at the University of Notre Dame. A theological ethicist, she teaches and writes on Catholic social teaching, nonviolence, integral ecology, spirituality, and racial justice. She is also a co-founder and resident of the St. Peter Claver Catholic Worker community in South Bend and is active in Mennonite-Catholic ecumenical dialogue. Her work joins contemplative practice, ecological ethics, and nonviolent commitment with community life and social action.

Christopher Cox

Christopher Cox is Research Coordinator at the Center for Peacemaking, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI USA,

Scaria Kalloor, OFM Cap

Scaria Kalloor, OFM Cap is Director of the JPIC Commission of the Capuchin Franciscan Order, a professor of Systematic Theology, and an author. He is Founder of Kannur Cultural Forum, Peace & Harmony Foundation, Assisi Institute for Peace Studies, and the Peoples' Movement for Peace, all in Kerala, India.

4:45

Small Groups on Different Dimensions of Gospel Nonviolence at the Center of Catholic Church Life and Teaching

6:00

Nonviolent Church for a Nonviolent World

6:30

Closing Mass

Archbishop Giovanni Ricchiuti, celebrant.

7:30

DINNER

A Foundation for This Gathering

The 2016 Appeal to the Catholic Church

The 2026 conference builds on a decade of sustained work following the landmark 2016 Nonviolence and Just Peace Conference in Rome. That gathering brought together Catholic leaders, theologians, practitioners, and peacebuilders from around the world and concluded with an Appeal to the Catholic Church to Re-Commit to the Centrality of Gospel Nonviolence.

Ten years later, as we gather around the theme of Unarmed and Disarming Peace, we return to that Appeal as both a foundation and an invitation: to consider what has emerged, what remains unfinished, and what it now means to move Gospel nonviolence from the margins to the center of Catholic life and teaching.

2016 CONFERENCE

Nonviolence and Just Peace

Contributing to the Catholic Understanding of and Commitment to Nonviolence

Rome | April 11–13, 2016

An Appeal to the Catholic Church to Re-Commit to the Centrality of Gospel Nonviolence

to Re-Commit to the Centrality of Gospel Nonviolence

As Christians committed to a more just and peaceful world, we are called to take a clear stand for creative and active nonviolence and against all forms of violence. With this conviction, and in recognition of the Jubilee Year of Mercy declared by Pope Francis, people from many countries gathered at the Nonviolence and Just Peace Conference sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and Pax Christi International on April 11-13, 2016, in Rome.

Our assembly, people of God from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Oceania, included lay people, theologians, members of religious congregations, priests, and bishops. Many of us live in communities experiencing violence and oppression. All of us are practitioners of justice and peace. We are grateful for the message to our conference from Pope Francis: “your thoughts on revitalizing the tools of nonviolence, and of active nonviolence in particular, will be a needed and positive contribution”.

Looking at our world today

We live in a time of tremendous suffering, widespread trauma and fear linked to militarization, economic injustice, climate change, and a myriad of other specific forms of violence. In this context of normalized and systemic violence, those of us who stand in the Christian tradition are called to recognize the centrality of active nonviolence to the vision and message of Jesus; to the life and practice of the Catholic Church; and to our long-term vocation of healing and reconciling both people and the planet.

We rejoice in the rich concrete experiences of people engaged in work for peace around the world, many of whose stories we heard during this conference. Participants shared their experiences of courageous negotiations with armed actors in Uganda and Colombia; working to protect the Article 9, the peace clause in the Japanese Constitution; accompaniment in Palestine; and countrywide peace education in the Philippines. They illuminate the creativity and power of nonviolent practices in many different situations of potential or actual violent conflict. Recent academic research, in fact, has confirmed that nonviolent resistance strategies are twice as effective as violent ones.

The time has come for our Church to be a living witness and to invest far greater human and financial resources in promoting a spirituality and practice of active nonviolence and in forming and training our Catholic communities in effective nonviolent practices. In all of this, Jesus is our inspiration and model.

Jesus and nonviolence

In his own times, rife with structural violence, Jesus proclaimed a new, nonviolent order rooted in the unconditional love of God. Jesus called his disciples to love their enemies (Matthew 5: 44), which includes respecting the image of God in all persons; to offer no violent resistance to one who does evil (Matthew 5: 39); to become peacemakers; to forgive and repent; and to be abundantly merciful (Matthew 5-7). Jesus embodied nonviolence by actively resisting systemic dehumanization, as when he defied the Sabbath laws to heal the man with the withered hand (Mark 3: 1-6); when he confronted the powerful at the Temple and purified it (John 2: 13-22); when he peacefully but determinedly challenged the men accusing a woman of adultery (John 8: 1-11); when on the night before he died he asked Peter to put down his sword (Matthew 26: 52).

Neither passive nor weak, Jesus' nonviolence was the power of love in action. In vision and deed, he is the revelation and embodiment of the Nonviolent God, a truth especially illuminated in the Cross and Resurrection. He calls us to develop the virtue of nonviolent peacemaking.

Clearly, the Word of God, the witness of Jesus, should never be used to justify violence, injustice or war. We confess that the people of God have betrayed this central message of the Gospel many times, participating in wars, persecution, oppression, exploitation, and discrimination.

We believe that there is no "just war". Too often the "just war theory" has been used to endorse rather than prevent or limit war. Suggesting that a "just war" is possible also undermines the moral imperative to develop tools and capacities for nonviolent transformation of conflict.

We need a new framework that is consistent with Gospel nonviolence. A different path is clearly unfolding in recent Catholic social teaching. Pope John XXIII wrote that war is not a suitable way to restore rights; Pope Paul VI linked peace and development, and told the UN "no more war"; Pope John Paul II said that "war belongs to the tragic past, to history"; Pope Benedict XVI said that "loving the enemy is the nucleus of the Christian revolution"; and Pope Francis said "the true strength of the Christian is the power of truth and love, which leads to the renunciation of all violence. Faith and violence are incompatible". He has also urged the "abolition of war".

We propose that the Catholic Church develop and consider shifting to a Just Peace approach based on Gospel nonviolence. A Just Peace approach offers a vision and an ethic to build peace as well as to prevent, defuse, and to heal the damage of violent conflict. This ethic includes a commitment to human dignity and thriving relationships, with specific criteria, virtues, and practices to guide our actions. We recognize that peace requires justice and justice requires peacemaking.

Living Gospel Nonviolence and Just Peace

In that spirit, we commit ourselves to furthering Catholic understanding and practice of active nonviolence on the road to just peace. As would-be disciples of Jesus, challenged and inspired by stories of hope and courage in these days, we call on the Church we love to:

continue developing Catholic social teaching on nonviolence. In particular, we call on Pope Francis to share with the world an encyclical on nonviolence and Just Peace;

integrate Gospel nonviolence explicitly into the life, including the sacramental life, and work of the Church through dioceses, parishes, agencies, schools, universities, seminaries, religious orders, voluntary associations, and others;

promote nonviolent practices and strategies (e.g., nonviolent resistance, restorative justice, trauma healing, unarmed civilian protection, conflict transformation, and peacebuilding strategies);

initiate a global conversation on nonviolence within the Church, with people of other faiths, and with the larger world to respond to the monumental crises of our time with the vision and strategies of nonviolence and Just Peace;

no longer use or teach "just war theory"; continue advocating for the abolition of war and nuclear weapons;
lift up the prophetic voice of the church to challenge unjust world powers and to support and defend those nonviolent activists whose work for peace and justice put their lives at risk.

In every age, the Holy Spirit graces the Church with the wisdom to respond to the challenges of its time. In response to what is a global epidemic of violence, which Pope Francis has labeled a "world war in installments", we are being called to invoke, pray over, teach, and take decisive action. With our communities and organizations, we look forward to continue collaborating with the Holy See and the global Church to advance Gospel nonviolence.

Opening Prayer - September 9

Gathering and Welcome
Moment of Silence

Veni Sancte. Spiritus (x4)

Reading: Psalm 46 (*read in three languages*)
God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we
will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in
the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains
tremble with its tumult.

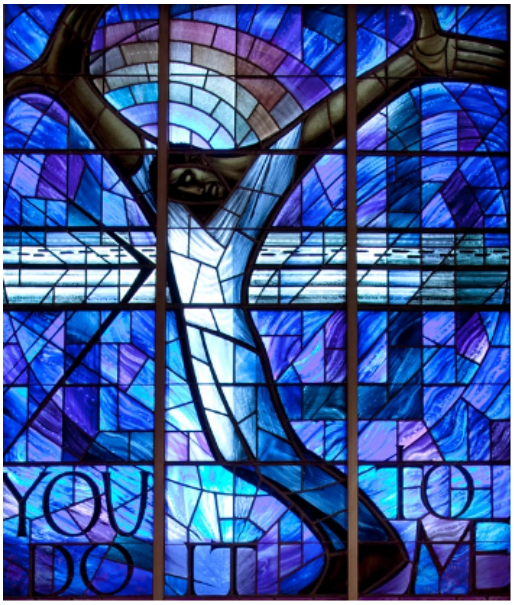
Dieu est pour nous refuge et force, secours dans la détresse, toujours offert.
Nous serons sans crainte si la terre est secouée, si les montagnes s'effondrent au creux de la mer, ses flots peuvent mugir et s'enfler, les montagnes trembler dans la tempête.

Dio è per noi rifugio e forza, aiuto sempre vicino nelle angosce. Perciò non temiamo se trema la terra, se crollano i monti nel fondo del mare. Fremano, si gonfino le sue acque, tremino i monti per i suoi flutti.

Veni Sancte. Spiritus (x4)

Reading: Psalm 46 (*read only in Italian*)
Venite, vedete le opere del Signore; egli ha fatto portenti sulla terra. Farà cessare le guerre sino ai confini della terra, romperà gli archi e spezzerà le lance, brucerà con il fuoco gli scudi. «Fermatevi e sappiate che io sono Dio» eccelso tra la genti, eccelso sulla terra».

Veni Sancte. Spiritus (x4)



Il Signore dell'universo è con noi, nostro rifugio è il Dio di Giacobbe.

Come, behold the works of the Lord; see what desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow. and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. "Be still and know that l am God. I am exalted among the nations. I am exalted in the earth." The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Venez et voyez les actes du Seigneur; comme il couvre de ruines la terre. Il détruit la guerre jusqu'au bout du monde. Il casse les arcs, brise les lances, incendie les chars: « Arrêtez! Sachez que je suis Dieu. Je domine les nations, je domine la terre. » Il est avec nous, le Seigneur de l'universe: citadelle pour nous, le Dieu de Jacob!

Evangile de Jésus-Christ selon saint Luc 24: 36-41 (*read only in French*)
Comme ils en parlaient encore, lui-même fut présent au milieu d'eux, et leur dit: « La paix soit avec vous! « Saisis de frayeur et de crainte, ils croyaient voir un esprit. Jésus leur dit: « Pourquoi êtes-vous bouleversés? Et pourquoi ces pensées qui surgissent dans votre cœur? Voyez mes mains et mes pieds, c'est bien moi ! Touchez-moi, regardez : un esprit n'a pas de chair ni d'os comme vous constatez que j'en ai. » Après cette parole, il leur montra ses mains et ses pieds. Acclamons la Parole de Dieu.

Dal vangelo secondo Luca 24: 36-41
Mentre essi parlavano di queste cose. Gesù in persona apparve in mezzo a loro e disse: "Pace a voi!" Stupiti e spaventati credevano di vedere un fantasma. Ma egli disse: "Perché siete turbati, e perché sorgono dubbi nel vostro cuore? Guardate le mie mani e i miei piedi: sono proprio lo! Toccatemi e guardate; un fantasma non ha carne e ossa come vedete che lo ho.' Dicendo questo, mostro loro le mani e i piedi. Parola del Signore

A reading from the Gospel of Luke 24: 36-41
While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. The Gospel of the Lord

The following prayer was written by renowned nonviolence educator and peacemaker, Hildegard Goss-Mayr, for the 2016 Conference

Conference Prayer (*paragraphs read in different languages)*

Holy Spirit, our source of light and strength.
we thank you for having inspired the call
to peace-makers from all over the world
to meet in the dramatic situation of humanity
to reconsider our responsibility,
to deepen and promote the
liberating and healing nonviolence of Jesus.

Merciful God, our Father and Mother,
you sent your Son Jesus, our Brother,
to reveal through his life and teaching
your divine, self-giving Love
and so incarnate in our world the
power of nonviolence,
able to overcome ALL forms of violence
and to reconcile humanity in justice and peace.

We confess that for centuries our Church,
people of God, has betrayed this
central message of the Gospel many
times and participated in wars, persecution,
oppression, exploitation and discrimination.

Holy Spirit, as we meet as peacemakers,
we count on your light and your strength
to help revive in the Theology of Peace
the nonviolent message of Jesus in which
there is no place for violence and to
offer to all Christians the arms of peacemaking,
pardon and reconciliation.

Holy Spirit, we trust in your light and
strength that this Conference may mark
a new step for our Church, on its way to
becoming a Church of Peace, in the spirit
of our Brother Jesus and so respond
to the cry of humanity for life in dignity and peace.

Prière de la conférence

Saint-Esprit, notre source de lumiere et de force,
nous Vous remercions d'avoir inspiré l'appel aux
artisans de paix de partout dans le monde pour
répondre a la situation dramatique de l'humanité,
pour reconsidérer notre responsabilité,
pour approfondir et promouvoir la nonviolence
libératrice et réparatrice de Jesus.

Dieu miséricordieux, notre Père et notre Mère,
Vous avez envoyé votre Fils Jésus, notre Frère,
pour révéler à travers sa vie et son enseignement
votre Amour divin et votre don de soi
et ainsi incarner dans notre monde la puissance
de la nonviolence, capable de surmonter toutes
les formes de violence et de réconcilier
l'humanité dans la justice et la paix.

Nous confessons que pendant des siècles notre Église,
peuple de Dieu, a trahi à maintes reprises
ce message essential de l'Evangile et
a participé aux guerres, persécution,
oppression, exploitation et discrimination.

Saint-Esprit, alors que nous nous rencontrons
Comme des artisans de paix, nous comptons
sur votre lumière et votre force pour nous aider
à revivifier dans la Théologie de la Paix
le message nonviolent de Jésus dans lequel
ii n'y a pas de place pour la violence et à offrir
à tous les chrétiens les moyens de promotion de la paix,
le pardon et de la réconciliation.

Saint-Esprit, nous faisons confiance à votre lumiére
et votre force afin que cette conférence
puisse marquer une nouvelle étape pour notre Eglise,
sur son chemin pour devenir une Eglise de la Paix,
dans l'esprit de notre frère Jésus et ainsi répondre à

l'appel de l'humanité pour vivre·dans la dignité et la paix.

Preghiera per il convegno

Spirito Santo, che sel nostra fonte di luce e di forza, ti ringraziamo per aver ispirato gli operatori di pace da tutto ii mondo una chiamata a riunirsi in una situazione drammatica di umanità a riconsiderare la nostra responsabilità, per approfondire e promuovere la nonviolenza liberante e di guarigione di Gesù.
Dio misericordioso, nostro Padre e Ma□re, che hai inviato ii tuo Figlio Gesù, nostro fratello, per rivelare ii tuo divine amore attraverso la sua vita e l'insegnamento che si dona e così incarna nel nostro mondo ii potere della nonviolenza, in grado di superare ogni forma di violenza per riconciliare l'umanità nella giustizia e nella pace.

Confessiamo che per secoli la nostra Chiesa, popolo di Dio, tante volte ha tradito ii messaggio centrale del Vangelo e ha partecipato a guerre, persecuzioni, oppressione. lo sfruttamento e discriminazione.

Spirito Santo, concedi che mentre ci raduniamo come operatori di pace, possiamo contare sulla tua luce e la tua forza per contribuire a rilanciare la Teologia della Pace, il messaggio nonviolento di Gesù, in cui non c'è posto per la violenza e per offrire a tutti i cristiani le braccia di pace, ii perdono e la riconciliazione.

Spirito Santo, abbiamo fiducia che nella tua luce e forza questa Conferenza possa segnare una nuova fase per la nostra Chiesa, per diventare una Chiesa della Pace, nello spirito del nostro Fratello Gesù e così rispondere al grido dell'umanita per la vita nella dignità e pace.

Amen.

Evening Prayer – September 9

Leader: *We have opened ourselves to God's mercy, asking God for inspiration in our searching questions, for wisdom and enlightenment on our way to a future of just peace and nonviolence. Let us listen with care to a reading from the Gospel of Luke:*

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke: (*read only in English***)**
"But l say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat, do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.
"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. lf you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. The Gospel of the Lord

Evangile de Jésus-Christ selon saint Luc 6 :27-35
Mais je vous le dis, à vous qui m'écoutez: Aimez vos ennemis, faites du bien à ceux qui vous haïssent, bénissez ceux qui vous maudissent, priez pour ceux qui vous maltraitent. Si quelqu'un te frappe sur une joue, présente-lui aussi l'autre. Si quelqu'un prend ton manteau, ne l'empêche pas de prendre encore ta tunique. Donne à quiconque te demande, et ne réclame pas ton bien à celui qui s'en empare. Ce que vous voulez que les hommes fassent pour vous, faites-le de même pour eux.

Si vous aimez ceux qui vous aiment, quel gré vous en saura-t-on? Les pécheurs aussi aiment ceux qui les aiment. Si vous faites du bien à ceux qui vous font du bien, quel gré vous en saura-t-on? Les pécheurs aussi agissent de même. Et si vous prêtez à ceux de qui vous espérez recevoir, quel gré vous en saura-t-on? Les pécheurs aussi prêtent aux pécheurs, afin de

recevoir la pareille.Mais aimez vos ennemis, faites du bien, et prêtez sans rien espérer. Et votre récompense sera grande, et vous serez fils du Très Haut, car il est bon pour les ingrats et pour les méchants.
Acclamons la Parole de Dieu

Dal Vangelo secondo Luca 6:27-35
Ma a voi che ascoltate, io dico: Amate i vostri nemici; fate del bene a coloro che vi odiano; benedite coloro che vi maledicono, pregate per coloro che vi maltrattano. A chi ti percuote su una guancia, porgi anche l'altra; a chi ti leva il mantello, non rifiutare la tunica. Dà a chiunque ti chiede; e a chi prende del tuo, non richiederlo. Ciò che volete gli uomini facciano a voi, anche voi fatelo a loro.

Se amate quelli che vi amano, che merito ne avrete? Anche i peccatori fanno lo stesso. E se fate del bene a coloro che vi fanno del bene, che merito ne avrete? Anche i peccatori fanno lo stesso. E se prestate a coloro da cui sperate ricevere, che merito ne avrete? Anche i peccatori concedono prestiti ai peccatori per riceverne altrettanto. Amate invece premio sarà grande e sarete figil dell'Altissimo; perché egli è benovolo verso gl'ingrati e i malvagi. Parola del Signore

We invite you to share a word, phrase, insight you have been given from the Scripture and from our sharing today. Please keep that word/phrase with you tonight as you rest and prepare for our conversations tomorrow.

Concluding Prayer from *Magnifica Humanitas* (*read together sequentially in the three languages***)**
Let us commit ourselves to building a "civilization of Love" - a social order in which justice and charity are intertwined and love becomes the guiding principle of economic, political and cultural life. Let us join "a great part of humanity that is striving to remain human and working to build the holy city of coexistence and peace…" (MH 185-186)

Engageons-nous à bâtir une « civilisation de l'amour » – un ordre social où justice et charité sont intimement liées et où l'amour devient le principe directeur de la vie économique, politique et culturelle. Rejoignons « une grande partie de l'humanité qui s'efforce de rester humaine et œuvre à la construction de la ville sainte de la coexistence et de la paix… »

Impegniamoci a costruire una "civiltà dell'amore" – un ordine sociale in cui giustizia e carità si intrecciano e l'amore diventa il principio guida della vita economica, politica e culturale. Uniamoci a "gran parte dell'umanità che si sforza di rimanere umana e lavora per costruire la città santa della convivenza e della pace…"

Morning Prayer – September 10
(excerpted from the Preface of the Eucharistic Prayer for Nonviolence)

Leader:
O God, we give you thanks
We gather together in praise of your glory.
We come from our reflections of these days,
From all our speaking and listening and searching
Into the silence of our faith … to hear your Word:

A Reading from St Paul to the Romans 12: 17-21. (*read in three languages*)
Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. The Word of the Lord

Lecture de la lettre de saint Paul aux Romains 12, 17-21.
Ne rendez à personne le mal pour le mal□, mais recherchez ce qui est noble aux yeux de tous. Si cela est possible, dans la mesure où cela dépend de vous, vivez en paix avec tous.

Bien-aimés, ne vous vengez jamais vous-mêmes, mais laissez place à la colère de Dieu ; car il est écrit : « À moi la vengeance, à moi la rétribution, dit le Seigneur. » Non, « si vos ennemis ont faim, donnez-leur à manger ; s'ils ont soif, donnez-leur à boire ; car en agissant ainsi, vous amasserez des charbons ardents sur leur tête ». Ne vous laissez pas vaincre par le mal, mais surmontez le mal par le bien. La Parole du Seigneur

Lettura dalla Lettera di San Paolo ai Romani 12, 17-21
Non rendete a nessuno male per male□, ma cercate ciò che è nobile agli occhi di tutti. Se è possibile, per quanto dipende da voi, vivete in pace con tutti. Carissimi, non vendicatevi mai, ma lasciate spazio all'ira di Dio; poiché è scritto: «A me la vendetta, io darò la ricompensa, dice il Signore». No, «se i vostri nemici hanno fame, dateli da mangiare; se hanno sete, dateli da bere; perché così facendo accumulerete carboni ardenti sui loro capi». Non lasciatevi vincere dal male, ma vincete il male con il bene. La Parola del Signore

Leader:
Loving Incomprehensible Mystery
We praise and thank you through your Word Incarnate,
Jesus the Christ.
He is your faithful servant our brother
Who brings peace to our broken world
Through his self-emptying nonviolent love.

Reader 1
Through his life, death and resurrection
He transforms
swords into plowshares
animosity into reconciliation
alienation into community
and hatred into forgiveness toward our enemies.

Reader 2
Your powerful Spirit changes hearts
enemies begin to speak to one another
those who were estranged join hands in friendship
nations seek the way of peace together.

Reader 1
Your powerful Spirit of the Nonviolent Christ is at work
When understanding puts an end to strife
When hatred is overcome by compassion
When vengeance gives way to forgiveness.

Reader 2
For the gift of this transforming love
We praise and thank you Source of All Being
as we continue these days of reflection on Nonviolence.

Leader
We make our prayer under the power of your Spirit
In the name of the Nonviolent Christ. Amen.

May the peace of our God, which is beyond all understanding, fill us with hope as we return to our conversations today …

Catholic INSTITUTE for Nonviolence
PAX CHRISTI INTERNATIONAL

A SPIRITUALITY

Reconciliation, courage, empathy, solidarity, accompaniment and humility rooted in the life of the God of peace and nonviolence.

A UNIVERSAL ETHIC

Peace centered on nonviolence. Prioritizing nonviolence in personal and societal decision-making. Harmony and right relationships among humans and with the whole earth community.

NONVIOLENCE

The power of love in action resisting and disarming violence, promoting human dignity, fostering reconciliation, justice, and peace through nonviolent means.

A WAY OF LIFE

Formation, practices, and community for the nonviolent life, including respect, constructive communication, inclusivity, participation, and interconnectedness.

A METHOD FOR CHANGE

Spectrum of effective nonviolent cross-cutting approaches for preventing or ending violence, transforming conflict, protecting human and earth communities, and building a more just and peaceful world.

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