



Gospel Nonviolence in Perilous Times

“Peace is unarmed and disarming...”
Pope Leo XIV

Violence ...

- Can be direct, structural, cultural ...
- Is instrumental ...
- Is situational, dynamic and mimetic ...
- Is something people have to learn to use ...
- Seeks to present itself as hegemonic ...
- Is enabled by fear and hopelessness ...

Anyone is capable of committing violence.

Nonviolence

...

- a spirituality, a way of life, a spectrum of strategies for systemic change, a universal ethic
- not the same as pacifism
- never passive
- does not try to avoid conflict
- is a multitude of creative approaches to transform conflict, resist direct, structural, cultural, environmental violence and protect the vulnerable
- works for a more just and compassionate world



Witnessing ‘Neighborism’ amid the Siege of Minnesota

As U.S. federal immigration enforcement turned violent, a civic culture of “neighborism” emerged in the Twin Cities.

The Surge also sparked something else – a completely organic grassroots-initiated outpouring of support for Minnesota’s immigrant communities and those protecting them. This support includes rallies, rapid response teams and mutual aid organized by a coalition of churches, schools and businesses. Over 30,000 Minnesotans have trained as legal observers, with artists lending creative vision to the movement. Among these efforts is Leo’s Towing, a small company that returns, free of charge, vehicles abandoned on roadways after drivers are seized by ICE. Another initiative, “Haven Watch Minnesota”, accompanies those released from detention into the extreme cold, often at night, without ID, money, phone or a way home. (*Greg Darr, former Maryknoll Lay Missioner*)



GLOBAL SUMUD FLOTILLA

The Spring 2026 Global Sumud Flotilla is organized around six interlinked targets:

- **Helping to Break the Siege:**
- **Delivering Life-Saving Aid:**
- **Establishing a People's Sea Corridor:**
- **Supporting Reconstruction:**
- **Confronting Complicity: .**
- **Catalyzing Global People-Powered Action:**

Transforming the flotilla into a catalyst for coordinated land and sea mobilizations, amplifying Palestinian voices, and empowering people worldwide to act where governments and institutions have failed.

#ThisIsWhat(Catholic)NonviolenceLooksLike



People Power Nonviolent Revolution, Philippines

The systematic study of nonviolence and experience over the years offers a wealth of methods that can be adapted to the reality of each context.

Recent nonviolence research demonstrates that ...

- Nonviolence is effective - and faster than violence.
(Erica Chenoweth & Maria J. Stephan)
- The effectiveness of nonviolence is related to its high levels of participation.
(Erica Chenoweth & Maria J. Stephan) (Ilker Kalin)
- Cohesion (organizational structure) increases the possibility that a movement will use nonviolence.
(Wendy Pearlman)
- Training in nonviolence increases effectiveness and reduces state violence.
(Consuelo Amat, Jonathan Pinckney, Jawhara Kanu)
- International support can speed up success. (Ilker Kalin)
- Nonviolence is dynamic, imitative, mimetic. Civic courage is contagious (Brian Palmer)
- The Church can play an important role in nonviolent action (Consuelo Amat)



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Biblical Foundations for Nonviolence

The Hebrew Scriptures' main message about warfare is "no more," pointing to the new way, the new community. (Isaiah 61: 1-2, Isaiah 58: 6-7)

Jesus specifically indicated that same passage from the Hebrew scripture as his starting point for mission and ministry, and as his expectation for the people of God.

Life and message of Jesus: In first century Palestine, where direct and structural violence were a way of life (think of the Roman occupation, but also of the way that religious rules and rituals were used to exclude whole groups of people – lepers, women), Jesus proclaimed a new, nonviolent way of life that was rooted in radical inclusion, the beloved community, the unconditional love of God.



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“The power with which Christ rose is entirely nonviolent.”

Pope Leo XIV, Urbi et Orbi Easter Message (2026)

“Pope Leo’s messages and way of operating are teaching us how to build a new world order of nonviolence out of the ashes of the current world disorder.”

Pope Francis biographer, Austen Ivereigh (2026)

The Catholic Church and Nonviolence

What if the 1.3 billion Catholics worldwide had a full understanding of the power and effectiveness of active nonviolence and the connection of nonviolence to the heart of the Gospel?

What if we all knew how to apply nonviolent tools to defuse conflict before it became violent?

What if the Catholic Church committed its channels of communication and diplomacy, its vast spiritual, intellectual and financial resources to promoting active nonviolence?

What if Catholic schools, colleges, universities and seminaries integrated programs on nonviolence and just peace into their curricula, their research and their community outreach efforts?

Nonviolence and Just Peace:

Contributing to the Catholic
Understanding of and
Commitment to Nonviolence

Rome, April 11-13, 2016

PAX
CHRISTI
INTERNATIONAL



PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM
DE IUSTITIA ET PACE



Pax Christi International's Catholic Nonviolence Initiative

Affirming the vision and practice of active
nonviolence at the heart of the Catholic Church

Nonviolence: A style of politics for peace

50th World Day of Peace,
the fourth of Pope Francis



PAPA
FRANCESCO
**FRATELLI
TUTTI**

*Lettera enciclica
sulla fraternità e l'amicizia sociale*



PREFAZIONE
MARIO D'ELPINE

INTRODUZIONE
GIACOMO COSTA





Nonviolence is at the **heart of the Gospel**

Nonviolence is **effective**

The Catholic Church could make a tremendous contribution to a more just and peaceful world by teaching and promoting nonviolence as central to the practice of our faith.



Catholic Institute for Nonviolence

The Catholic Institute for Nonviolence is a project of Pax Christi International's Catholic Nonviolence Initiative.

Its mission is to make nonviolence research, resources and experience, more accessible to Catholic Church leaders, communities and institutions in order to deepen Catholic understanding of and commitment to the practice of Gospel nonviolence.



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Strengthening Capacity for Nonviolent Action Together

- **Synodality** as a nonviolent experience of participation.
- Build **community**.
- Offer **spaces** and design specific times for joint participation in **nonviolent experiences**
- **Learn and train** in nonviolent tools.
- **Share experiences** and testimonies. Nonviolence is imitative, dynamic, contagious.
- **Protect** institutional spaces for peace. Start with the family and school.
- Incorporate nonviolence into formal and informal **education**.
- Create spaces and experiences of **peace in the digital world**.
- **Put your body** on the line. **Accompany** those who are threatened by violence..
- **Disarm** language.
- Celebrate **Catholic Nonviolence Days of Action**



More Examples of Nonviolence Practice

- Nonviolent Communication (NVC)
- Nonviolent Self-Defense
- Active Bystander Intervention & De-escalation
- Restorative Justice in schools, prisons criminal justice systems etc.
- Online/Digital nonviolence
- Trauma Awareness and Healing
- NV Civilian-Based Defense (Denmark, Estonia)
- Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP)
- Trauma healing and trauma-informed social programs
- Diplomacy and dialogue
- Anti-racism efforts and organizing to end white privilege
- Peaceful parenting

And the stories of nonviolent actions in different corners of the world almost every day are found in publications like

- **Waging Nonviolence** <https://wagingnonviolence.org/>
- **Nonviolence News** - Each week, Nonviolence News brings 30-50 stories of “nonviolence in action” to readers, illuminating the scale and scope of how nonviolence is actively shaping our world. <https://nonviolencenews.org>
- **Advancing Nonviolence and Just Peace in the Church and the World** (Pax Christi International) paxchristi.net



Building Bridges for Tomorrow

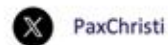
Pax Christi International: <https://paxchristi.net>

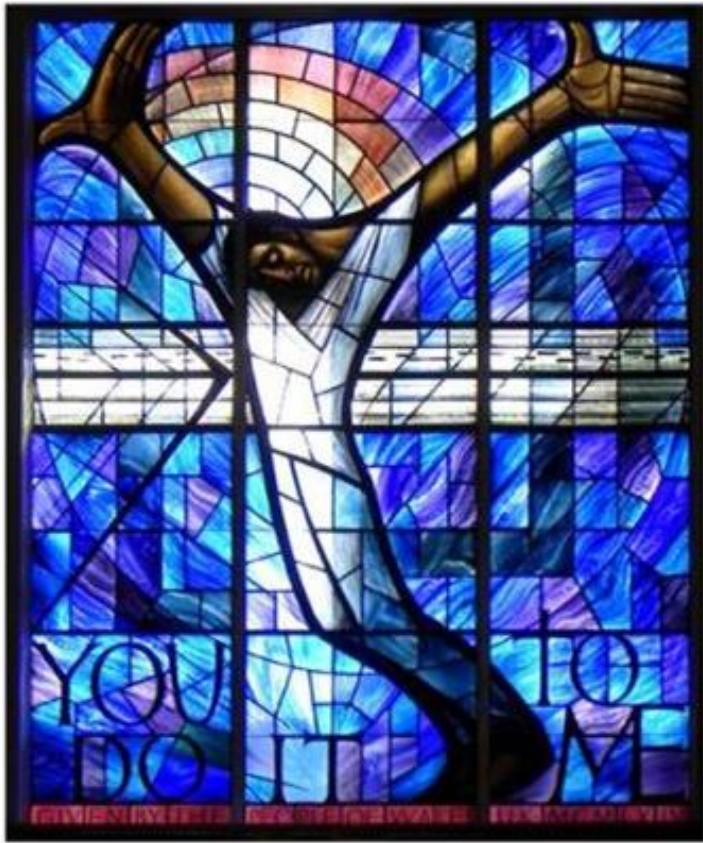
Catholic Nonviolence Initiative:

<https://nonviolencejustpeace.net>

Catholic Institute for Nonviolence:

<https://paxchristi.net/catholic-institute-for-nonviolence/>





In John Petts' window in Birmingham, Alabama, his black Jesus shows the two hands of nonviolence: one stopping oppression, the other reaching out in forgiveness and reconciliation.

Prayer

How I wish that all men and women of good will would look at the Cross if only for a moment.

There, we can see God's reply: violence is not answered with violence, death is not answered with the language of death.

In the silence of the Cross, the uproar of weapons ceases and the language of reconciliation, forgiveness, dialogue and peace is spoken.

Pope Francis