

# *Living a Nonviolent Life*



*Marianites of Holy Cross  
Decade of Days  
January 20-29, 2018*



Marianites of Holy Cross † 21388 Smith Road † Covington, LA 70435

January, 2018

Greetings,

As we share the Decade of Days Reflections with our sisters and brothers around the globe, we pray that in simple yet significant ways each person who uses the reflections will be graced with a deep desire for transformation in the day to day – no easy order and yet it is what the Gospel calls each of us to live.

In October, 2017 the four General Councils of the Family of Holy Cross gathered for a week of meetings during which we signed the Statement on Nonviolence and Just Peace to collaboratively take specific actions to reject violence in its multiple forms.

The Holy Cross International Justice Office has been influential in providing meaningful materials on this and numerous justice issues. Thanks for the challenge!

Each year from January 20-29, we, Marianites pray for direction in our daily lives with particular emphasis on our direction in ministry. We have come to know these days as the Decade of Days. Sr. Mary David Hecker, MSC coined the phrase many years ago. Blessings, Sr. David!

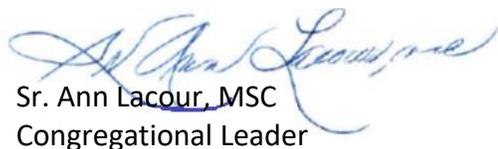
In light of the joint statement, the Leadership Team felt it important that the theme of this year's Decade of Days be that of Nonviolence. We invited Sr. Cheryl Porte, MSC to create this year's reflections. Cheryl has created prayerful reflections that can open us to contemplation and action. These are GIFT, Cheryl!

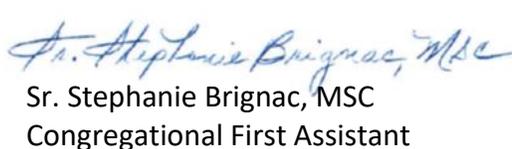
We called on our sisters, the Sisters of Holy Cross, to assist with translation into French. Merci, Sr. Thérèse Martin, CSC!

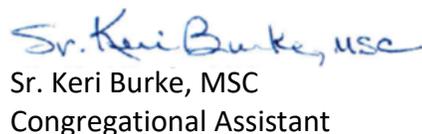
May these reflections be a source of hope for our world!

Please join with us from January 20 -29, 2018 that we might be united in prayer and Spirit as members of one family striving to live nonviolent lives.

Peace,

  
Sr. Ann Lacour, MSC  
Congregational Leader

  
Sr. Stephanie Brignac, MSC  
Congregational First Assistant

  
Sr. Keri Burke, MSC  
Congregational Assistant

  
Sr. Renee Daigle, MSC  
Congregational Assistant

## **Family of Holy Cross Statement on Nonviolence and Just Peace**

*Do not believe in violence; do not support violence.  
It is not the Christian way. It is not the way of the Catholic Church.  
Believe in peace and forgiveness and love; for they are of Christ.  
Saint John Paul II, "Apostolic Journey to Ireland, Holy Mass in Drogheda." 29 September 1979*

*To be true followers of Jesus today also includes embracing his teaching about nonviolence.  
<sup>1</sup>Pope Francis, "Nonviolence: A Style of Politics for Peace." 1 January 2017*

Violence is rampant in our global society, embedded in social, economic, and cultural systems; and expressed in myriad forms such as marginalization and oppression, military conflict and terrorism, climate change and environmental degradation, inequality and scarcity, and interpersonal aggression.

Yet, just as fire does not extinguish fire, we recognize that "violence is not the cure for our broken world."<sup>1</sup> Rather, by words and example, Jesus taught us to respond to violence with love and forgiveness.

Therefore, we

Marianites of Holy Cross,  
Priests and Brothers of Holy Cross,  
Sisters of Holy Cross, and  
Sisters of the Holy Cross

affirm that

- Nonviolence is at the heart of the message of Jesus.
- Nonviolence is intrinsic to right relationships with all creation, and
- Nonviolent systemic change requires contemplative, innovative responses to social problems and conflicts.

Accordingly, we reject violence in its multiple forms.

We support actions and policies that

- Promote nonviolent means of conflict resolution,
- Disallow discrimination of any kind,
- Generate an equitable economic system for all,
- Foster a culture of global solidarity and Just Peace, and
- Protect Earth and Life in all its diversity.

We oppose actions and policies that legitimate

- Violent responses to conflicts, particularly war and terrorism,
- Denial of human and civil rights,
- Economic and military policies that exacerbate poverty and inequality,
- Degradation of natural resources and ecosystems, and
- Violent and disrespectful political discourse.

We acknowledge that the nonviolent way of Jesus challenges us to

- Examine the quality of our interpersonal relationships,
- Own the complexity inherent in our struggle to live without violence,
- Engage in profound interior transformation,
- Counter a culture of individualism, greed, exclusion, and exploitation,
- Embrace interdependence, diversity, and commitment to the common good, and
- Lead by unifying.

Marianites of Holy Cross,  
Priests and Brothers of Holy Cross,  
Sisters of Holy Cross, and  
Sisters of the Holy Cross



## ***LIVING A NONVIOLENT LIFE***

### **INTRODUCTION**

As we celebrate the Decade of Days, remembering the anniversaries of the deaths of Father Basil Moreau and Mother Mary of the Seven Dolors, we are reminded of a very important reality: We are part of the family of Holy Cross, four international and multicultural congregations that share a vision of interdependence as a way of life, and a spiritual heritage that calls us to be the compassionate presence of Jesus in today's world.

Consequently, we will focus our reflections for the Decade of Days on the joint Statement on Nonviolence and Just Peace recently issued by the four Holy Cross Congregations to collaboratively take specific actions to reject violence in its multiple forms. More specifically, we will consider what it means to "Live a Nonviolent Life" by meditating on nonviolence toward ourselves, nonviolence toward others, and nonviolence toward all of creation. Most importantly, we will be challenged to give an ***active response*** as a result of our reflections because we are now faced with urgency -- the fact that tomorrow is today. We must move past reflection to action.

These reflections are geared toward individual contemplation, but our insights, inspirations, and commitments to action can be shared in a community gathering. This offers opportunity to embrace our interdependence, diversity, and commitment to the common good. Stating our commitments strengthens them and can inspire others to act.

Finally, these reflections open with a prayer to the God of peace and close with a communal prayer service based on Jesus' teachings of peace and nonviolence -- the **Beatitudes**.

## Prayer for a Nonviolent Life

Lord, God of peace,

You are a God who brings forth good things from the dark times of life.  
From that which is violent, evil and ugly, you create the good and the beautiful.

We thank you, Lord, for being nonviolent, for gently calling us to your wisdom and way.  
Help us to do your will of a Just Peace and to choose to live a nonviolent life.

Help us to be nonviolent to ourselves. God of love, give us the grace to love and accept ourselves, to cultivate inner peace and to dwell in your peace.

Help us to practice loving nonviolence toward others, to see everyone as your creation, your child. Help us to practice nonviolent means of conflict resolution, disallow discrimination of any kind, and to not indulge in disrespectful and violent discourse. Open our hearts to love.

Make us, Lord, understand that all of your creation is one and that we must protect the earth and life in all its diversity. Make us instruments of your peace that we may foster a culture of global solidarity and Just Peace.

Loving God, you have chosen us to be ministers of your mission to spread a reign of peace.

Give us the courage to be a people of nonviolence and compassion. Set us on fire with zeal for your mission, sensitize our spirits to your word, and strengthen our hearts to do your will. We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus the Christ, and in the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen!



## JANUARY 20th

**Reality:** A nonviolent life is at the heart of the message of Jesus.

**Teachings:**

**Matthew 5:9** - "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God."

**Matthew 5:38-39, 43-44** – "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'

But I tell you not to resist an evil person. When someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other to him as well. ...You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, pray for those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you."

"In whatever interior dispositions you may be and in whatever life situation you may find yourself, look at your Model and apply yourself to imitating him; be assured that in doing so you will be perfect and you will have a sure guarantee of your salvation; because, says the Apostle, our movement toward glory depends on our resemblance to Jesus Christ. Walk then in his footsteps and may all your sentiments be conformed to the heart of your divine Master." (Moreau, Sermon)

**Reflection:** Jesus' teachings and practices are very clear when we honestly read the four Gospel accounts. Christ's followers are to demonstrate love for others—and one major way we are to demonstrate that love is through a life of peace and nonviolence. Jesus wants us to be noted for our peacemaking! The Kingdom of God, the focus of Christ's message, is all about how Jesus will bring peace to the world.

- What areas of my life most clearly reflect Jesus' example of nonviolence and peacemaking? What areas of my life least reflect Jesus' example of nonviolence and peacemaking?
- What challenges me in my mission to incarnate the love and compassion, the peace and nonviolence of Jesus in today's world?

**Active Response:**

In order to model Jesus in a nonviolent life, I will:



JANUARY 21st

**Reality:** Living a nonviolent life is a process of becoming.

**Teachings:**

**Luke 8:14-15** -- "The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity. "But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance."

**Colossians 2:6-7**-- "And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness."

"In love and justice we recognize the dignity of all persons and encourage each to develop his/her potential for goodness and growth. We share our values and do not seek to impose them while at the same time we are open to developing new values within ourselves." (Constitution 6)

"As Marianites of Holy Cross we commit ourselves to live the gospel in the service of God and his people. We accept the way of the pilgrim who lives on this earth with things unfinished and we participate actively in the building of a Kingdom which will be fully realized only in the world to come." (Constitution 4)

**Reflection:** A nonviolent life challenges us to own the complexity inherent in our struggle to live without violence. There is not always a clear distinction between nonviolence and violence, between nonviolent people and violent people. It's not that easy to take sides. We can never be sure that we are completely on the side of nonviolence or that the other person is completely on the side of violence. Nonviolence is a direction, not a separating line, and the development of a nonviolent life is a life long journey.

- What is my understanding of violence? Do I recognize types of violence other than physical violence? Do I believe there are times when violence is necessary?
- What is nonviolence? Does it mean submission? How do I stand up for myself nonviolently?
- How would Jesus, my Model, answer these questions?

**Active Response:**

In order to move in the direction of living a nonviolent life, I will:



## JANUARY 22nd

**Reality:** Living a nonviolent life challenges us to engage in a profound interior transformation.

**Teachings:**

**Wisdom 9:9-11** – “Now with you is Wisdom, who knows your works . . . Send her forth from your holy heavens and from your glorious throne dispatch her that she may be with me and work with me, that I may know what is your pleasure. For she knows and understands all things, and will guide me discreetly in my affairs and safeguard me by her glory.”

**John 17:20-23** – “I do not pray for them alone, I pray for those who will believe in me through their word, that all may be one as you, Father, are in me and I am in you; I pray that they may be one in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me that they may be one as we are one – I living in them – you living in me – that their unity may be complete. So shall the world know that you sent me, and that you love them as you love me.”

“Still more, you must become identified with your model, not only becoming a faithful copy, but in some way becoming another Christ, fulfilling that prayer he addressed to his Father on behalf of his disciples when he asked that they might all be one with him as he is one in them. Is this possible? Yes.” (Moreau, Sermons)

**Reflection:** A nonviolent life is not just a political, economic, cultural or sociological phenomenon. It is deeply personal and demands the integration of the whole person: mind, heart, body and spirit. It calls us to accept ourselves with all our gifts and limitations, and calls up resources of strength and courage we did not know we had. It is rooted in the belief that the Spirit of God is present within each of us, calling us to be the best we can be, making alternatives to cruelty and injustice possible.

- How do I see myself? Do I recognize my own strengths? My weaknesses?
- Do I ever put myself down, hurt myself, nurture anger and resentment? How can I move from this inner violence to inner peace?
- How have I experienced the love of God? How is that love inviting me to become more nonviolent, more peaceful, more loving?

**Active Response:**

I will become more peaceful and more nonviolent everyday by:



## JANUARY 23rd

**Reality:** Living a nonviolent life challenges us to choose love over hate.

**Teachings:**

**1 Corinthians 13:4-7:** “Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, it is not pompous, it is not inflated. It is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

**John 15:12:** “This is my commandment: Love one another as I love you.”

**2 Corinthians 13:11** – “Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.”

“Where charity and union of hearts do not exist, God cannot dwell, for God is the prince of peace. Where tumult, murmuring, criticism, independence, and pride are found, God cannot be found.” (Mother Mary of The Seven Dolours, Letter to Community, 1865)

**Reflection:** As followers of Jesus, love is an active choice we make in response to conflict. We are not enemies of those who have opposing views and values from ours. To live a nonviolent life calls us to have conversations with our opponents in order to understand them and what they believe – not to convince them to think and act as we think and act. We are challenged to develop inclusive solutions to conflict; to consider the needs of all involved. We have respect for one another; we have no enemies.

- How do I respond to conflict? How do I see those who disagree with me? What challenges my desire to be nonviolent the most?

**Active Response:**

I will choose love. I will become more nonviolent in my interpersonal relationships by:



## JANUARY 24th

**Reality:** Living a nonviolent life demands forgiveness.

### **Teachings:**

**John 8:3-11** – “Then the Scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle. They said to him, ‘Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?’ They said this to test him, so that they could have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger. But when they continued asking him, he straightened up and said to them, ‘Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.’ Again he bent down and wrote on the ground. And in response they went away one by one, beginning with the elders. So he was left alone with the woman before him. Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, ‘Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you? She replied, ‘No one, Sir.’ Then Jesus said, ‘Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin anymore.’”

**Matthew 6:14-15:** “If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.”

**Luke 23:34** – “Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.’”

“The grace of healing cannot be applied to those who preserve enmity against their neighbor without desire of being reconciled, who do not make restitution when possible . . . who remain in voluntary ignorance of their greatest duties, who have no contrition and no purpose of amendment.” (Moreau, Sermons)

**Reflection:** A life of nonviolence calls for a certain response to hurt and fear. Those who embark on nonviolence as a way of life come to grips with their hurts and fears; we name them, recognize them, let them go. We forgive others and are not afraid of self-evaluation to recognize where we need to be forgiven. Why? We believe in truth and justice. The humility of the truth -- that we are all wounded human beings -- disarms our opponents. The justice called for by Jesus is not punishment, vengeance or retaliation, but the restoring of right relationships. The end result of nonviolence is redemption and reconciliation.

- What am I afraid of and how can I let go of my fears and move toward forgiveness, love and peace?
- What makes me angry, resentful, or violent? Who or what is it that I will not forgive? Why not?
- How can I reach out to those I have hurt and move toward reconciliation?

### **Active Response:**

In order to live a more nonviolent life I will cultivate forgiveness, reconciliation by:



## JANUARY 25th

**Reality:** A nonviolent life embraces diversity and disallows discrimination.

### **Teachings:**

**Philippians 2:1-4** --“If our life in Christ means anything to you, if love can persuade at all, or the Spirit that we have in common, or any tenderness and sympathy, then be united in your convictions and united in your love, with a common purpose and a common mind. There must be no competition among you, no conceit; but everybody is to be self- effacing. Always consider the other person to be better than yourself, so that nobody thinks of his/her own interests first, but everybody thinks of other people’s interests instead.”

**Romans 12:4-5** – “For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another.”

“I implore you to pay no attention to nationality. We are all one in the big family of Christ. We have come together in community voluntarily, to work for the glory of God and to sanctify ourselves and our neighbor. No, no, let there be no division, let all nations be one in the judgement and esteem of each other. ... Let us look at the qualities and reject all ambition, all prejudice. Thus we will keep a family spirit that will produce happiness.” (Mother Mary of The Seven Dolors, Letter to Community, 1897)

**Reflection:** Violence distances us; nonviolence brings us closer together. The goal of a nonviolent life is unity. This does not mean suppressing our differences. Part of the power of nonviolence, in fact, means celebrating our differences, but it also upholds our deep connectedness. We are brothers and sisters no matter how different we may be in religion, race, nationality, social/economic status, world view – unity in diversity.

- Unity in Diversity – Easy to say but hard to achieve. Do I liberate or oppress the culture of those I serve? Do I show favoritism to the detriment of justice toward all?
- In my personal life, how do I relate to those with whom I live? With other community members? Do I put energy into gossip, judging others, criticizing, blaming, or complaining? Or do I identify the real issues and address them?

### **Active Response:**

I will improve my practice of interpersonal nonviolence by:



## JANUARY 26th

**Reality:** Living a nonviolent life is acting out of truth that frees and engages a force that is greater than any other.

**Teachings:**

**Isaiah 42:6-7:** “I, the Lord, have called you for the victory of justice, I have grasped you by the hand; I formed you and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations.”

**Matthew 5:14-16** – “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hilltop cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of all, so that, seeing your good work, they may give praise to your Father in heaven.”

**John 18:37** – “For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”

“Faith involves forming our judgements in conformity to the principles of the gospel, and directing our actions according to its practical counsels. We are speaking of a profound conviction that goes deep into the heart and penetrates us with truth. This kind of faith makes us accept both with our hearts and with our minds the principles of Jesus Christ, even those most opposed to human nature.” (Moreau, Sermons)

**Reflection:** Nonviolence relies on the truth that we are all created in the image and likeness of God, loved by God and called by God to reveal that truth. Anytime we are in a conflict situation we are to speak our understanding from that truth. When we listen to another, we must listen for the Spirit of truth in the other. There is a reason others understand differently; try to get it. Truth is revealed over time and so we must remain constantly open to revising our understanding. It can lead to new hope and transformation.

- Do I truly understand, believe, or experience that I have been chosen by God to bring justice and **truth** to others? Do I accept that others, even those with whom I don't agree, have been chosen by God and also speak part of God's truth?
- How does the truth of a life of nonviolence, following the way of Jesus, set me free?

**Active Response:**

I will testify to the truth of living a nonviolent life by:



## JANUARY 27th

**Reality:** By living a nonviolent life we willingly accept the consequences of our choices and believe suffering can educate and transform.

### **Teachings:**

**Matthew 5:10-12** --“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

**Romans 5:3-5** – “More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”

“In following the example of Mother Mary of the Severn Dolours, our first superior general, we unite ourselves with Mary who stood at the foot of the cross and we imitate her in her union with her crucified son. We participate in the redemptive mission of Christ by accepting the crosses in our own lives and by demonstrating a true spirit of compassion for all those who suffer. “ (Constitution 3)

***Ave Crux, Spes Unica***, “Hail cross, our only hope.” (Motto of Holy Cross)

**Reflection:** One of the worst evils on earth is involuntary suffering: suffering that is imposed and forced on people. This involuntary suffering can be physical, psychological, or economic. At the same time, one of the most powerful things on earth is a voluntary willingness to face suffering for the establishment of peace, for justice, and for the well-being of all. It is the practice of compassion, entering into the suffering of another, that leads us to join together to voluntarily face the consequences of opposing unjust and imposed suffering. We have hope in suffering; we believe that peace and justice will eventually win.

- How has following Jesus brought the cross into my own life? How has it changed me?
- How do I respond to other’s suffering, especially that caused by the violence of injustice? Am I compassionate or merely sympathetic?
- How do I witness to the cross as a sign of hope?

### **Active Response:**

I will strive to become more compassionate to those that suffer from injustice and violence, and I will:



## JANUARY 28th

**Reality:** We are one. Living a nonviolent life witnesses to the unity of all creation and life.

### **Teachings:**

**Job 12:7-10** – “But ask the beasts, and they will teach you; the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you; or the bushes of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind.”

**Romans 8:19-21** – “For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.”

“This offers to individual believers and to the community a precious opportunity to renew our personal participation in this vocation as custodians of Creation, raising to God our thanks for the marvelous works that He has entrusted to our care, invoking His help for the protection of creation and his mercy for the sins committed against the world in which we live.” (Pope Francis, Vatican Radio, 10/08/2015)

“Union, then, is a powerful lever with which we could move, direct, and sanctify the whole world. “ (Basil Moreau, C.L., 14)

### **Reflection:**

Nonviolence is the law of the universe -- it's the nature of the Creator. We need to realize that we are all one, that we are physically united to creation and her creatures. We believe the entire universe is on the side of peace and justice. So as we try to be nonviolent to ourselves and to everyone we meet, we also strive to be nonviolent to creation itself and to all creatures on earth. If we keep on doing violence to creation, we will destroy ourselves in the process.

- How do we support violence toward creation and her creatures?
- Where do we need to change our habits and living situations so that we do no harm to creation and her creatures?

### **Active Response:**

I will express and strengthen my unity with all of creation by:



## JANUARY 29th

**Reality:**        **The power of living a nonviolent life comes from taking responsibility.**

### **Teachings:**

**Isaiah 1:17** --“Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause.”

**Jeremiah 22:3** --“Thus says the Lord: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor those who have been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place.”

**Hebrews 12:14** – “Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.”

**James 1:22-25** --“But be **doers** of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a **doer who acts**, he will be blessed in his **doing**.”

“In love and justice we recognize the dignity of all persons and encourage each to develop his/her potential for goodness and growth. We share our values and do not seek to impose them while at the same time we are open to developing new values within ourselves. In our commitment to the advancement of people and the creation of a worthy society, we strive to promote the justice of Christ. We do this according to the possibilities of religious consecration, of our particular congregational charism, and in communion with the bishops of the Church.” (Constitution 6)

**Reflection:** Nonviolence calls us to actively nurture good and not to cooperate with evil; noncooperation with evil is just as much a duty as cooperation with good. We take active responsibility for our own lives and our share of responsibility for the systems in which we live, even to facing our own evil. Active responsibility is the key. If we just reflect on it, talk about it but do not actively respond, we are continuing the cycle of violence.

- How have I experienced active nonviolence in my life?
- When I see an injustice, what makes me not act? What would push me into action?
- Do I believe God can work through me?

### **Active Response:**

Inspired by Father Moreau and Mother Mary of the Seven Dolors, I will continue the mission of Jesus to bring about a world of nonviolence and a just peace by:



## CALL TO LIVE A LIFE OF NONVIOLENCE

**LEADER:** In the presence of God whose word has called the earth into being,  
**ALL:** We live in awe.  
**LEADER:** In the presence of God whose arms have held children, whose eyes have sparkled with love and laughter,  
**ALL:** We live in trust.  
**LEADER:** In the presence of God whose breath has stirred within us and caused our hearts to thirst for peace,  
**ALL:** We live in need.  
**LEADER:** Before you, Giver of Justice, we come in faith, in search of love and truth and wholeness,  
**ALL:** Be with us, hear us, we pray.

**ALL:** Loving God, you have chosen us to be ministers of your mission to build a Kingdom of Peace on this earth. Give us the courage to be a people of justice and compassion. Set us on fire with zeal for your mission, sensitize our spirits to your word, and strengthen our hearts to do your will. We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus the Christ, and in the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen!

### (HYMN of CHOICE)

#### **READING:**

*The Beatitudes are for people who have their hearts set on having the Reign of God's Peace come about. Beatitudes are a way of life designed for those who want their lives to be nonviolent. Beatitude people are searching people. They have this working with God on their minds, and they can't rest until the world is right and just and equitable for all. They urge us out of the comfortable and the ordinary. They invite us to risk in our daily living and meet the holy in the unsettling questions of the day. They tell us that God is forever in our midst if we bless the world with nonviolence and a just peace. The Beatitudes are values that come straight from the mind of Christ. Translated into simple language, Jesus could have said something like this:*

\*Blessed are those who are convinced of their basic dependency on God, whose lives are emptied of all that doesn't matter, those for whom the riches of this world just aren't that important.

**ALL: The Reign of heaven is theirs.**

\*Blessed are those who know that all they are is gift from God, and so they can be content with their greatness and their smallness, knowing themselves and being true to themselves.

**ALL: For they shall have the earth for their heritage.**

\*Blessed are those who wear compassion like a garment, those who have learned how to find themselves by losing themselves in another's sorrow.

**ALL: For they too shall receive comfort.**

\*Blessed are those who are hungry for goodness, those who never get enough of God and truth and righteousness.

**ALL: For they shall be satisfied.**

\*Blessed are the merciful, those who remember how much has been forgiven them, and are able to extend this forgiveness into the lives of others.

**ALL: For they too shall receive God's mercy.**

\*Blessed are those whose hearts are free and simple, those who have smashed all false images and are seeking honestly for truth.

**ALL: For they shall see God.**

\*Blessed are the creators of peace, those who build roads that unite rather than walls that divide, those who bless the world with the healing power of their presence.

**ALL: For they shall be called children of God.**

\*Blessed are those whose love has been tried, like gold, in the furnace and found to be precious, genuine, and lasting, those who have lived their belief out loud, no matter what the cost or pain.

**ALL: For there is the Kingdom of Heaven.**

(From *Seasons of Your Heart* By Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB)

**(SILENT REFLECTION)**

**TE DEUM**

You are God, we praise you; you are the Lord, we acclaim you;  
You are the eternal Father; all creation worships you.  
To you all angels, all the power of heaven sing in endless praise:  
Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

The glorious company of apostles praise you,  
the noble companionship of prophets praise you.  
The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.

Throughout the world the Church acclaim you Father of majesty unbounded,  
Your true and only Son, worthy of all worship,  
And the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.  
You, Christ, are the king of glory, eternal Son of the Father.  
When you became flesh to set our spirits free,  
you did not despise the Virgin's womb.

You overcame the sting of death and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.  
You are seated at God's right hand in glory.  
We believe that you will come to be our judge.

Come, then, Lord, and sustain your people bought by the price of your own blood,  
And bring us with your saints to everlasting glory.

**LEADER:** Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance.

**ALL:** Govern and uphold them now and always.

**LEADER:** Day by Day we bless you.

**ALL:** We praise your name forever.

**LEADER:** Lord, keep us from all injustice and violence.

**ALL:** Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy on us.

**LEADER:** Lord, show us your mercy and love;

**ALL:** For we put our trust in you.

**LEADER:** In you, Lord, we trust,

**ALL:** May we never be confused.

### (INTENTIONS)

### OUR FATHER

### CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord, Our God, time and again throughout history you have blessed your servants and sent them on mission to speak your word to the poor, to heal the sick, to free captives—always renewing the face of the earth. We pray that you bless us again, Lord. Make us a sign of peace and of healing, a sign of justice and of tenderness. We pray that by this blessing our hands and hearts might be strengthened for the work that lies ahead, that we might be compassionate to human need, nonviolent in our response to one another, and faithful to the commitments we have made.  
Amen!

