Integrating Gospel Nonviolence into the Life and Mission of the Church
A broken world: While the last century knew the devastation of two deadly World Wars, the threat of nuclear war and a great number of other conflicts, today, sadly, we find ourselves engaged in a horrifying world war fought piecemeal....we know that this “piecemeal” violence, of different kinds and levels, causes great suffering: wars in different countries and continents; terrorism, organized crime, and unforeseen acts of violence; the abuses suffered by migrants and victims of human trafficking; and the devastation of the environment.

Pope Francis, January 2017
Loving your enemy is the magna carta of Gospel nonviolence.

(Benedict XVI)
Nonviolence is ...

- not passive and does not escape from conflict, but actively and powerfully engages and transforms conflict.
- not the same as pacifism.
Maria Stephan

Based upon her research of 323 civil uprisings in the world between 1900-2006, Maria Stephan of the U.S Institute of Peace, shared with the Nonviolence and Just Peace Conference in Rome, "Not only are there alternatives to violence and war. There are very effective alternatives to violence and war."
Diversity of Nonviolent Strategies

- Restorative justice practices in schools and courts
- Trauma Healing
- Atrocity prevention mechanisms
- Unarmed Civilian Protection
- Diplomacy Prevention and Protection
- Anti-corruption efforts
- Rebuilding confidence in political processes
- Police and judiciary reform
Perpetual War Does Not Protect Vulnerable Communities
Nonviolence
Nonviolence has “two faces:”

• **resistance** to direct and structural violence (social and ecological injustice)

and

• **creation** of a more just and compassionate world.
Opting Out of War: Strategies to Prevent Violent Conflict

Mary B. Anderson and Marshall Wallace
This is what nonviolence looks like.

Nika Dizon of Pax Christi-Miriam College in the Philippines, speaks truth to power, calling on the Philippine government to hold fast to the Bangsamoro Basic Law granting Muslims in Mindanao greater autonomy. Students like Nika demand their leaders remain committed to the decades-old agreement and forge a path of peace for the victims of historical injustice. Pax Christi Pilipinas and the 120 member organisations of Pax Christi International are challenging leaders to choose peace and employ active nonviolence to overcome conflict.

Pax Christi International. What nonviolence looks like.

Learn more
Prevention and Protection

U.S. Examples

• Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act
  • Atrocities Prevention Board
• Complex Crisis Fund – rapid response funding to prevent violent conflict
• Bureau for Conflict Stabilization
• Restorative Justice Model

U.N. Examples

• Sustaining Peace -
• Privilege nonviolence in Responsibility to Protect
• Shift from military peacekeeping model to just policing model
• Unarmed civilian protection
• Sustainable development, respect for rule of law & human rights
Catholic Theology on War and Peace

Just War Frame Nonviolence And Just Peace
Nonviolence and Just Peace:
Contributing to the Catholic Understanding of and Commitment to Nonviolence

Rome, April 11-13, 2016
Sister Nazik Matty, Iraq

• “Just war” is killing us. There is no just war!
• War is the mother of ignorance, isolation, poverty.
• I have seen war my entire life. When the great powers tell us to move, we move.
Nuns and priests joined the guerrillas because of the just war paradigm ... our military, a Catholic military, is trapped also based on the just war paradigm. Paramilitaries prayed to the Virgin Mary before going to kill people because of the just war theory. This is awful.
Bishop John Baptist Adama, Uganda

War is a lie because it destroys what it seeks to defend.
An appeal to the Catholic Church
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).
Appeal to the Catholic Church to Re-Commit to the Centrality of Gospel Nonviolence
Call on the Church to...

Continue developing CST, encyclical
Integrate Gospel nonviolence
Promote practices & strategies
Initiate global conversation
No longer use just war theory
Lift up prophetic voices

“be a living witness”
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.
Non-Violence: A Style of Politics for Peace

This is the title of the Message for the 50th World Day of Peace, the fourth of Pope Francis.
Catholic Nonviolence Initiative
Affirming the vision and practice of active nonviolence at the heart of the Catholic Church.
A project of Pax Christi International.
This is what **nonviolence** looks like.

A remote battlefield. Two opponents. A battle for victory. Despite their hard-fought game, both sides have already won. In Haiti, Pax Christi Port-au-Prince is fostering a new generation in the strategies of nonviolence through the use of sports programs. Children learn about respect, cooperation, consensus-building and fair play, values which cultivate the promise of nonviolence. Pax Christi Port-au-Prince— and the 120 member organisations of Pax Christi International across the world—are creating cultures of peace by promoting active nonviolence.

**Pax Christi International. What nonviolence looks like.**

www.paxchristi.net
www.paxchristi.net
www.nonviolencejustpeace.net