

Pax Christi Reflection June 2nd 2014

We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today.
We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now.
In this unfolding conundrum of life and history
there is such a thing as being too late.
Procrastination is still the thief of time ...
We must move past indecisions to action ... Now let us begin.
Now let us re-dedicate ourselves to the long and bitter –
and beautiful – struggle for a new world.
This is the calling of the children of God,
and our brothers and sisters wait eagerly for our response.
Shall we say the odds are too great?
Shall we say the struggle is too hard?
...Or will there be another message,
of longing, of hope, of solidarity with their yearnings,
of commitment to the cause, whatever the cost?
The choice is ours, and though we might prefer it otherwise
we must choose in this crucial moment in human history

Martin Luther King Jnr 1967 'A time to Break silence'

The Decalogue for a Spirituality of Nonviolence by Rosemary Lynch OSF and Alain Richard OFM

Active nonviolence calls us

1. To learn to recognise and respect 'the sacred' [that of God as the Quakers say] in every person, including in ourselves, and in every piece of Creation. The acts of the nonviolent person help to free this 'Divine' in the opponent from obscurity or captivity.
2. To accept oneself deeply, 'who I am' with all my gifts and richness, with all my limitations, errors, failings and weaknesses, and to realise that I am accepted by God. To live in the truth of ourselves, without excessive pride, with fewer delusions and false expectations.
3. To recognise that what I resent, and perhaps even detest, in another, comes from my difficulty in admitting that this same reality lives also in me. To recognise and renounce my own violence, which becomes evident when I begin to monitor my words, gestures, reactions.
4. To renounce dualism, the 'we-they' mentality [Manicheism]. This divides us into 'good people/bad people' and allows us to demonise the adversary. It is the root of authoritarian and exclusivist behaviour. It generates racism and makes possible conflicts and wars.
5. To face fear and to deal with it not mainly with courage but with love.
6. To understand and accept that the *New Creation*, the building up of the *Beloved Community* is always carried forward with others. It is never a 'solo act'. This requires patience and the ability to pardon.
7. To see ourselves as a part of the whole creation to which we foster a relationship of love, not of mastery, remembering that the destruction of our planet is a profoundly spiritual problem, not simply a scientific or technological one. *We are one.*
8. To be ready to suffer, perhaps even with joy, if we believe this will help liberate the *Divine* in others. This includes the acceptance of our place and moment in history with its trauma, with its ambiguities.
9. To be capable of celebration, of joy, when the presence of God has been accepted; and when it has not been, to help discover and recognise this fact

10. To slow down, to be patient, planting the seeds of love and forgiveness in our own hearts and in the hearts of those around us. Slowly we will grow in love, compassion and the capacity to forgive.

Gandhi's Nonviolence principles

1. All life is one.
2. We each have a piece of the truth and the un-truth.
3. Human beings are more than the evil they sometimes commit.
4. The means must be consistent with the ends.
5. We are called to celebrate both our differences *and* our fundamental unity with others.
6. We reaffirm our unity with others when we transform "us" versus "them" thinking and doing.
7. Our oneness calls us to want, and to work for, the well-being of all.
8. The nonviolent journey is a process of becoming increasingly free from fear.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

"Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act."

Martin Luther King Jnr – another quote from the Time to Break Silence speech'

"Even when pressed by the demands of inner truth, men do not easily assume the task of opposing their government's policy, especially in time of war. Nor does the human spirit move without great difficulty against all the apathy of conformist thought within one's own bosom and in the surrounding world."

We pray together as we go forward on the journey of Nonviolence

- may we have the openness deep within us to recognise the humanity of all people
- may we learn from one another the ways of being fully alive
- may we be at peace with ourselves and with those around us
- may we have the courage to transform those parts of ourselves and our world that separate and create enmity
- may we be able to recognise and take steps to stop the cycle of violence
- in our homes,
- in our workplaces,
- in our neighbourhoods,
- in our country, in our world
- may we open to our deepest yearning for a world alive with justice and truth,
- to dream of a society where all are treated with respect,
- **and may we have strength, vision and courage to take steps to bring it about.**

Amen

Invitation to share with each other what has been happening for us in the last month