



For a non-violent culture

APRIL

“We pray for the spread of peace and non violence, by decreasing the use of weapons by States and citizens”



PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

MESSAGE FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE
FIFTIETH WORLD DAY OF PEACE⁵

Francis

8 December 2016

On this occasion, I would like to reflect on *nonviolence* as a style of politics for peace. I ask God to help all of us to cultivate nonviolence in our most personal thoughts and values. May charity and nonviolence govern how we treat each other as individuals, within society and in international life. When victims of violence are able to resist the temptation to retaliate, they become the most credible promoters of nonviolent peacemaking. In the most local and ordinary situations and in the international order, may nonviolence become the hallmark of our decisions, our relationships and our actions, and indeed of political life in all its forms.

A broken world

2. 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*. It is not easy to know if our world is presently more or less violent than in the past, or to know whether modern means of communications and greater mobility have made us more aware of violence, or, on the other hand, increasingly inured to it.

In any case, 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. Where does this

⁵ See full message:

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20161208_messaggio-l-giornata-mondiale-pace-2017.html

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lead? Can violence achieve any goal of lasting value? Or does it merely lead to retaliation and a cycle of deadly conflicts that benefit only a few “warlords”?

Violence is not the cure for our broken world. Countering violence with violence leads at best to forced migrations and enormous suffering, because vast amounts of resources are diverted to military ends and away from the everyday needs of young people, families experiencing hardship, the elderly, the infirm and the great majority of people in our world. At worst, it can lead to the death, physical and spiritual, of many people, if not of all.

More powerful than violence

4. Nonviolence is sometimes taken to mean surrender, lack of involvement and passivity, but this is not the case. When Mother Teresa received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, she clearly stated her own message of active nonviolence: “We in our family don’t need bombs and guns, to destroy to bring peace – just get together, love one another... And we will be able to overcome all the evil that is in the world”.^[7] For the force of arms is deceptive. “While weapons traffickers do their work, there are poor peacemakers who give their lives to help one person, then another and another and another”; for such peacemakers, Mother Teresa is “a symbol, an icon of our times”.

- 2 October 2022 - The International Day of Non-Violence

January 2020

<https://thepopevideo.org/promotion-of-world-peace/>

June 2017

<https://thepopevideo.org/eliminate-arms-trade/>