

The courageous nonviolence of Jesus (2)

“Jesus himself lived in violent times...But Christ’s message in this regard offers a radically positive approach.” Pope Francis, World Peace Day Message, 2017

Read through these passages.

- What do they say to you about the way Jesus engages with his community/his times?
- What approaches can you see Jesus taking in these passages in facing injustice or exclusion or violence?

Matthew 12: 13-21

¹³ Then he said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He stretched it out and his hand was restored, as sound as the other one.¹⁴ At this the Pharisees went out and began to plot against him, discussing how to destroy him.¹⁵ Jesus knew this and withdrew from the district. Many followed him and he cured them all¹⁶ but warned them not to make him known.¹⁷ This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: ¹⁸ Look! My servant whom I have chosen, my beloved, in whom my soul delights, I will send my Spirit upon him, and he will present judgement to the nations; ¹⁹ he will not brawl or cry out, his voice is not heard in the streets,²⁰ he will not break the crushed reed, or snuff out the faltering wick,²¹ until he has made judgement victorious; in him the nations will put their hope.

Luke 10: 25-34

²⁵ And now a lawyer stood up and, to test him, asked, 'Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?'

²⁶ He said to him, 'What is written in the Law? What is your reading of it?' ²⁷ He replied, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself.'

²⁸ Jesus said to him, 'You have answered right, do this and life is yours.' ²⁹ But the man was anxious to justify himself and said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' ³⁰ In answer Jesus said, 'A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of bandits; they stripped him, beat him and then made off, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now a priest happened to be travelling down the same road, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² In the same way a Levite who came to the place saw him, and passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan traveller who came on him was moved with compassion when he saw him. ³⁴ He went up to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. He then lifted him onto his own mount and took him to an inn and looked after him.'

Mark 14: 3-6

He was at Bethany in the house of Simon, a man who had suffered from a virulent skin-disease; he was at table when a woman came in with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the ointment on his head.

⁴ Some who were there said to one another indignantly, 'Why this waste of ointment? ⁵ Ointment like this could have been sold for over three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor'; and they were angry with her. ⁶ But Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. Why are you upsetting her? What she has done for me is a good work.'

Mark 7: 1-10

The Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered round him, ² and they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with unclean hands, that is, without washing them.

³ For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, keep the tradition of the elders and never eat without washing their arms as far as the elbow; ⁴ and on returning from the market place they never eat without first sprinkling themselves. There are also many other observances which have been handed down to them to keep, concerning the washing of cups and pots and bronze dishes.

⁵ So the Pharisees and scribes asked him, 'Why do your disciples not respect the tradition of the elders but eat their food with unclean hands?' ⁶ He answered, 'How rightly Isaiah prophesied about you hypocrites in the passage of scripture: This people honours me only with lip-service, while their hearts are far from me. ⁷ Their reverence of me is worthless; the lessons they teach are nothing but human commandments.

⁸ You put aside the commandment of God to observe human traditions.' ⁹ And he said to them, 'How ingeniously you get round the commandment of God in order to preserve your own tradition!

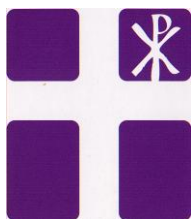
¹⁰ For Moses said: Honour your father and your mother, and, anyone who curses father or mother must be put to death.

Matthew 26: 49-55

So he went up to Jesus at once and said, 'Greetings, Rabbi,' and kissed him. ⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, 'My friend, do what you are here for.' Then they came forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. ⁵¹ And suddenly, one of the followers of Jesus grasped his sword and drew it; he struck the high priest's servant and cut off his ear.

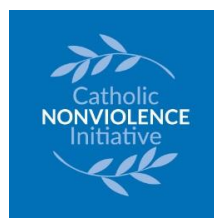
⁵² Jesus then said, 'Put your sword back, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.' ⁵³ Or do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, who would promptly send more than twelve legions of angels to my defence?

⁵⁴ But then, how would the scriptures be fulfilled that say this is the way it must be?' ⁵⁵ It was at this time that Jesus said to the crowds, 'Am I a bandit, that you had to set out to capture me with swords and clubs? I sat teaching in the Temple day after day and you never laid a hand on me.'



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