



NJPN Comment

Lent, nonviolence, NonvioLent

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Greetings to those who give up chocolate every year and for whom it never gets easier; greetings to those who try to do something more in Lent; a thumbs-up to those who raise money for a good cause through their efforts; and a nod of solidarity to those who are jaded and can't face anything requiring effort this year.

Pax Christi has a new Lent approach for you to consider: NonvioLent. One of Pax Christi International's key strands of work is the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative. Regular readers may know a little about it. In this era of change, division and crisis, nonviolence as a way of life and a way of relating to each other has much to offer.

Pope Francis, in his World Peace Day message this year, called us to 'set aside every act of violence in thought, word and deed whether against our neighbour or against God's creation'. Pax Christi invites you to make a commitment this Lent to join us in reflecting on and addressing the violence within ourselves and in the ways we relate to others. We will also refresh our understanding of gospel nonviolence as a creative, inclusive approach to challenging and overcoming injustice.

Fr Emmanuel Katongole in Uganda, reflecting on his own experience of growing up under Idi Amin and his successors, says: "Violence does not end violence – it only creates endless cycles of violence. Nonviolence is a calling, not simply because it 'works' but because it is the way of God".

We have set up a Lent blog in which invited Pax Christi members and friends will write about their experience of trying to live nonviolently during Lent. There will be texts and quotes from experienced practitioners of nonviolence too. You can share with others the ups and downs of your own NonvioLent journey by joining our dedicated Facebook group.

As Lent progresses, what might we discover about ourselves? What change in ourselves and those around us might we expect?

Dorothy Day said, "...a pebble cast into a pond causes ripples that spread in all directions; and each one of our thoughts, words and deeds is like that."

Jesus's striking instruction to love our enemies, gives a clue to the way of relating to each other that we are aiming for. As Pax Christi member Carol Burns said, "Nonviolence looks for the way that will be most loving."

You can find our more at
<http://paxchristi.org.uk/product-category/lent-and-easter/>

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