

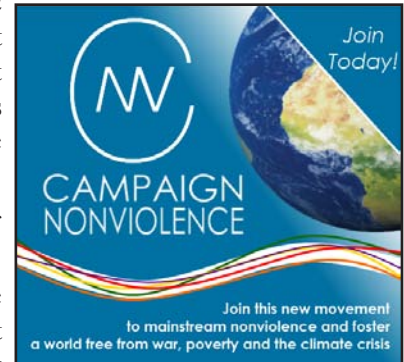


Campaign Nonviolence: Be the Merciful Presence of God

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This year, our National Fraternity has chosen the theme “*Be the merciful presence of God.*” In his Sermon on the Mount, our Lord Jesus exhorted that those who are merciful are blessed and highly favored. He went on to say that the merciful will also be shown mercy. Mercy begets mercy; just as love begets love. But the task is the same for fear and violence. It too begets more of the same.

Each one of us has the capacity to create a culture of violence or a realm of peace. It is merely a decision away. Peace is not the absence of war or conflict. Peace is a way of being in the midst of war and conflict. We must exact justice when an injustice happens. We are not called to fight fire with fire, because that only causes a bigger fire! We must quench fire with water, just as we must quench violence with the loving hand of compassion and mercy.



Being a merciful presence means we are to mindfully BE peace and mindfully DO love. As Franciscans, we are called to “go from gospel to life and life to gospel” (OFS Rule, Art. 4), as witnesses and instruments of the Church’s mission, proclaiming Christ by our life and words (Art. 6). Our life, our words and our deeds must radiate love and mercy at all times — not just when it is convenient or reciprocated. In the spirit of the Beatitudes (Art 11), we are called to be the merciful presence of God. When we extend mercy, mercy will be shown to us.

Your National Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission invites you to actively participate in creating a culture of compassion and mercy by practicing intentional acts of nonviolence. **Campaign Nonviolence** is a new movement that takes a stand against the widespread violence and injustice we face in our world today by promoting and activating the power of nonviolence in our lives, our communities and our world.

As Franciscans, we are called to be people of nonviolence working to transform our world of violence into a culture where people everywhere practice nonviolence toward themselves, one another, and the earth and its inhabitants. To support this long-term goal, Campaign Nonviolence is launching a movement integrating education, action and networking for nonviolent change. Please visit the Campaign Nonviolence website (www.campaignnonviolence.org), sign the pledge, and give your support to creating a culture of compassion and mercy. By practicing acts of nonviolence, we become the merciful presence of God in the world.

Prayer of Merciful Presence

Good and gracious Lord, grant me the strength and the courage

To be the merciful presence of Your love;

That I may show unfailing love to all those I meet
And overcome the darkness of indifference.

Grant me the strength and the courage
To be the merciful presence of Your peace;
That I may be peace to all those I meet
And overcome the darkness of violence.

Grant me the strength and the courage
To be the merciful presence of Your light;
That I may be light to those who walk in the darkness
of doubt and fear.

Lord, grant me the strength and the courage
To be the merciful presence of Your Son;
That I may bring the love, the peace and the light of
Jesus to a world in need.

Dear Lord, I humbly pray. So be it. Amen.