

## REFLECTIONS FOR THE 13<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ~ 26 June 2022

### The Mount ~ The Residence at Littledale

Today we return to ordinary time within the Church's liturgical year. We have had the richness of the Easter season followed by Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, Corpus Christi, and the feast of the Sacred Heart. Now we come back to the ordinariness of our everyday lives, in itself another source of richness and blessing.

In Psalm 16 this morning, named as a healing psalm by the Jewish rabbis, we heard a beautiful description of that "ordinary life," "I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I keep the Lord always before me; because God is at my right hand, I shall not



be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure. You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures for evermore" (Ps 16:7-9, 11). Paul's letter to the Galatians shows us how to find that quiet blessing in our ordinary lives, ". . . through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' Live by the Spirit" (Gal 5:13-16).

In the Gospel reading from Luke, we find another one of those hidden surprises that give us a special insight into living by the Spirit. "When the days drew near for Jesus to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; but they did not receive him, because his face was set towards Jerusalem. When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, 'Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?' But he turned and rebuked them" (Lk 9:51-55).

Veronica Lawson explains the background behind this episode: "Jews and Samaritans shared a common origin story, but their respective histories led to a deeply conflictual relationship. While the Samaritans worshipped the God of Israel, they accepted only the first five books of the Bible as God's word. They were despised by their southern neighbours. Jesus and his Galilean Jewish friends could hardly have expected a gracious welcome in Samaria. They may have been received more warmly had Jesus planned to stay and worship in the temple on Mt. Gerizim, the centre of Samaritan life and worship. The problem for the Samaritans is Jesus' decision to use Samaritan territory simply as a staging post on his journey to Jerusalem, the heart of Jewish life and worship: the Samaritans 'did not receive him because his face was set towards Jerusalem.'"

The disciples, who do not yet understand the meaning of Jesus' passion and soon-to-be death and glory in the miracles that they have seen him carry out, want him to punish the Samaritans for their unjust response. While they gloried in the miracles, they forgot Jesus' words: "Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God" (Matt 5:9), "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mk 12:31), and "Love your enemies, do good



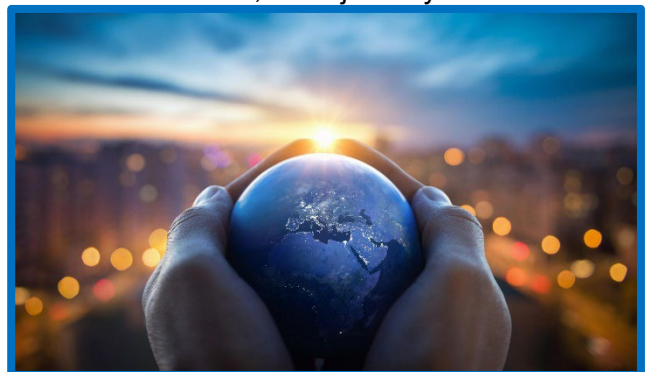
to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also” (Lk 6:27-29).



Today we are becoming more aware of this response understood as nonviolence. While we Roman Catholics have not begun to use that term until recently which helps us look at it with new eyes. However, Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains name nonviolence as a basic tenet of their faith traditions, in Sanskrit, *ahimsa*. As we watch violence continue to torment our world and target the people and Earth most at risk, Pope Francis is calling us to focus more intentionally on nonviolence which he names as “a style of politics for peace.” How do we live nonviolence in our ordinary lives? We live it through contemplation, action, and prophecy.

The **contemplative approach to nonviolence** has been described by the Catholic priest, John Dear, one of the creators of Center, in this way, “we have to dig deeper spiritual roots and that means practicing contemplative nonviolence. We have to take time for quiet meditation with the God of peace every day. . . . It’s hard to change the world; we can barely change ourselves. But God can change us and the world if we allow the God of peace to touch us, disarm us, heal us, and send us out as instruments of God’s peace. . . .”

The **active approach** flows through our everyday lives, as Pope Francis reminds us, “The choice of nonviolence as a style of life is increasingly demanded in the exercise of responsibility at every level, from family education to social and civil commitment, to political activity and international relations. . . . We are called to conversion, transformation, and healing in our lives, our church, and our world, even as we are called to live the spirit of mercy and constructive action for change, always and everywhere. . . . All of us want peace. Many people build it day by day through small gestures and acts; many of them are suffering, yet patiently persevere in their efforts to be peacemakers. May we dedicate ourselves prayerfully and actively to banishing violence from our hearts, words, and deeds, and to becoming nonviolent people and to building nonviolent communities that care for our common home.” There is also the reminder that we must be nonviolent towards ourselves – words so many of us need to hear, “The journey toward interior nonviolence begins with non-cooperating with our own inner violence. From now on, we try not beat ourselves up, put ourselves down, or be violent toward ourselves.”



The prophetic dimension calls us to work with others. Organizations such as *Pax Christi*, the *Beatitudes Center for a Nonviolent Jesus*, *Pace e Bene*, and *Campaign Nonviolence* are leading the way for us in our Catholic faith tradition. From September 21 to October 2, 2022 (from the International Day of Peace to International Day of Nonviolence), we are invited to join people in calling for a culture of peace and nonviolence, acting in solidarity with the efforts to prevent gun violence, halt the climate crisis, stop racist police brutality, eliminate nuclear weapons, divest from fossil fuels and weapons, guarantee food and shelter for all, protect the water, land, and air from destruction and pollution, and more.

This week, I invite all of us to choose one of the following words from the leaders in the nonviolence movement, from our past and today. Let the words you choose seep into your very being, call you to see with contemplative vision, and dare you to become an even more passionate champion for nonviolence around you.

- Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God. ~ Matt 5:9
- Before you speak of peace, you must first have it in your heart. ~ Francis of Assisi
- Holy Spirit, the life that gives life: You are the cause of all movement. You are the breath of all creatures. You are the salve that purifies our souls. You are the ointment that heals our wounds. You are the fire that warms our hearts. You are the light that guides our feet. ~ Hildegard of Bingen



- We are all like localized vibrations of the infinite goodness of God's presence. So love is our very nature. Love is our first, middle, and last name. ~ Thomas Keating
- One is called to live nonviolently even if the change one works for seems impossible. ~ Daniel Berrigan
- There is no deliverance for any people on this earth or for all the people of this earth except through truth and nonviolence in every walk of life without any exceptions. Nonviolence is the first article of my faith. Nonviolence is the last article of my creed. ~ Mahatma Gandhi
- Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon. Indeed, it is a weapon unique in history, which cuts without wounding and ennobles the one who wields it. ~ Martin Luther King
- To me, nonviolence is the all-important virtue to be nourished and studied and cultivated. ~ Dorothy Day
- 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. ~ Pope Francis

We conclude our reflections this morning with a gentle prayer from [Thom Shuman](#) to God, Three-in-One:

Inspiring God, Giver of words:

you speak and chaos is transformed into the starry skies of night;  
you whisper and the wind leaps to caress our cheeks on a summer's evening;  
you smile and all creation rejoices in delight.

Jesus Christ, Uncomfortable Word:

you stand with society's castoffs outside the halls of respectability;  
you break bread with sinners and give them the seats of honor at your Table;  
you walk the darkened hallways of death,  
comforting those who are taking their last steps;  
and you call to us, saying, "Follow me."

Holy Spirit, Word sifter:

by your touch our anger can dissolve into gentleness;  
by your presence our enemies can become lifelong friends;  
by your joy, our envious spirits can become generous hearts.

God in Community, Holy in One, set us free to be your servants.