

FROM VIOLENCE TO NON-VIOLENCE



PRAYER SERVICE - JULY, 2016

(The focus contains a globe and lighted candle. Each person brings a recent headline that focuses on injustice and violence.)

Call to Worship: As School Sisters of Notre Dame, our call “to confront injustice credibly requires that we ourselves act justly. We strive to live simply, to value human labor rightly, and to respect the dignity of every person, witnessing that living these values is a possibility for humanity.” (YAS, C17) As we prepare for the International Day of Peace on September 21, let us reflect on how participating in violence limits our ability to act justly in our world.

Reflective Reading of Recent Headlines: *(Each person reads her headline and then places it on the focus table.)*

Orlando Gunman Attacks Gay Nightclub, Leaving 50 Dead

(New York Times, June 13, 2016)

Kenya: Photos of Police Violence Spark International Outrage

(SCNow Morning News, May 17, 2016)

Protests Turn Violent Outside Trump New Mexico Event

(FoxNews, May 25, 2016)

Colorado Rockies Shortstop Jose Reyes Banned Through May Under Major League Baseball's Domestic Violence Policy

(Associated Press, May 14, 2016)

Father is Charged with Voluntary Manslaughter

(Charlotte Observer, May 26, 2016)

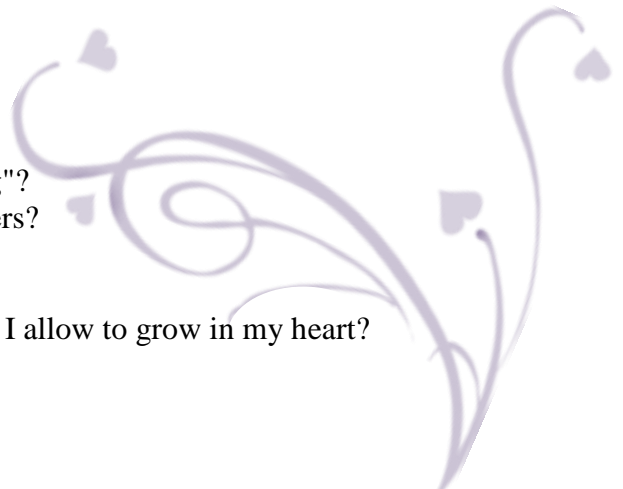
Reader 1: Violence...we are confronted with violence every day in myriad ways. Violence has become a way of life. We see it in the news, in television shows, in our music. We experience it in the workplace, when we are shopping, and on our streets. Surrounded by it, we grow numb to its brutality. It is destroying the lives and dreams of millions.

Thankfully, when violence overwhelms us, we can go home for a short respite. But can we? Don't we also find forms of violence in our communities? Violence is born of competition, and the need to win at all costs. Violence obscures a superior stance, one that is opposed to searching together for the truth. It affects all of us.

When was the last time I

- answered with anger rather than patience?
- judged the actions of another?
- refused to listen or cut off dialogue with another?
- attacked the personhood of another through "teasing"?
- refused to welcome visitors or my brothers and sisters?
- criticized another?

How do my thoughts and actions portray the inner violence I allow to grow in my heart?



Pause for Reflection

Psalm 51*

Have mercy on me, O Gracious One, according to your steadfast love;
According to your abundant kindness, forgive me where my thoughts and deeds have hurt others.
Lead me in the paths of justice; guide my steps on the paths of peace!
Teach me that I may know my weaknesses, the shortcomings that bind me,

the unloving ways that separates me, that keep me from recognizing Your Life in me;
For I keep company with fear and dwell in the house of ignorance.
Yet, I was brought forth in love and love is my birthright.

You have placed your truth in my inner being; therefore, teach me wisdom of heart.
Forgive all that binds me in fear, that I might radiate love;
cleanse me that your light might shine in me.
Fill me with gladness; help me to transform weakness into strength.
Look not on my past mistakes but on the aspirations of my heart...

Enfold me in the arms of Love and fill me with your Holy Spirit.
Restore in me the joy of your saving grace, and encourage me with a new spirit...
Deliver me from the addictions of society,
O Healer of souls, keep me from temptation that I may tell of your justice and mercy...Glory be...

Reading from the US Catholic Bishops Pastoral Message: “Confronting a Culture of Violence: A Catholic Framework for Action”

Reader 2: “We can turn away from violence; we can build communities of greater peace. It begins with a clear conviction: respect for life. Respect for life is not just a slogan or a program; it is a fundamental moral principle flowing from our teaching on the dignity of the human person. It is an approach to life that values people over things. Respect for life must guide the choices we make as individuals and as a society: what we do and won't do, what we value and consume, whom we admire and whose example we follow, what we support and what we oppose. Respect for human life is the starting point for confronting a culture of violence.”

Reader 3: “Believers themselves must constantly feel challenged to live in a way consonant with their faith and not to contradict it by their actions. They need to be encouraged to be ever open to God’s grace and to draw constantly from their deepest convictions about love, justice and peace. If a mistaken understanding of our own principles has at times led us to justify mistreating nature, to exercise tyranny over creation, to engage in war, injustice and acts of violence, we believers should acknowledge that by so doing we were not faithful to the treasures of wisdom which we have been called to protect and preserve.” (*Laudato Si’* #200)

- **Pause for Reflection and Sharing:** When did you come face to face with violence within yourself? With violence directed toward another? How did that experience influence you?

Closing Song: “Make Me a Channel of Your Peace” or “Let There Be Peace on Earth”

*From *Psalms for Praying: An Invitation to Wholeness* by Nan Merrill ©2007.

