

Blessed are the Peacemakers

David Horvath

In the book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer states, “The followers of Jesus have been called to peace. When he called them, they found their peace; for He is their peace. But now they are told that they must not only have peace but make it. And to that end, they renounce all violence and tumult.”

Bonhoeffer suggests that we find our peace in Christ; we have the task of sharing this peace by becoming peacemakers. This task is rooted in Jesus’ teaching the Beatitude, “Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called the children of God.” (Mt 5:9 NABRE) This Beatitude reminds us that, as Pope Francis declares in *Rejoice and Be Glad*, “unity is preferable to conflict.” While it may seem to be stating the obvious, Pope Francis goes on to say, “It is not easy to ‘make’ this evangelical peace, which excludes no one but embraces even those who are a bit odd, troublesome or difficult, demanding, different, beaten down by life or simply uninterested ... We need to be artisans of peace, for building peace is a craft that demands serenity, creativity, sensitivity and skill. Sowing peace all around us: that is holiness.”

“I believe that peace and justice ministries should not be isolated from other expressions of our faith, including preaching, liturgy and action.” — David Horvath

David Horvath is one such artisan. For more than 30 years, David has been involved in the ministry of peacemaking by working in parishes as a program creator at JustFaith Ministries and as an organizer with local and national justice groups. In 2015, David began his work with the Passionists’ Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Office located at the Passionist Earth & Spirit Center in Louisville, Ky.

“The long and rich tradition of Catholic Social

Teaching has been the core for my work for nearly 30 years. I believe that peace and justice ministries should not be isolated from other expressions of our faith, including preaching, liturgy and action,” shares David.

The JPIC Office promotes existing social ministries of the Passionist Family. It advocates on behalf of a variety of social issues that are of concern to the local and international community, as well as to those with whom the Passionists minister. The Office educates the broader community on issues that concern a wounded world and encourages ways to address them with compassion and hope.

“I see the JPIC work we do in the Passionist Family as a way of life that leads to both commitment and activity; not passively but as something we always actively seek as we face and respond to the Passion of Christ in the world today, and to those on the margins who are crucified with injustice,” explains David.

Sowing peace is holiness, and, as such, it is a sacred undertaking. For those who continue to craft peace, they begin to understand that while they may be working on behalf of someone else, the work they do is transforming their hearts and minds. This transformation deepens their experience of and expression of holiness.

“I believe that holiness is closely related to wholeness. We are holy in as much as we challenge ourselves to see in our world the opportunities to face injustice and to respond as best we can, with prayer, solidarity and engagement. I love a song by Carrie Newcomer, “Holy as a Day is Spent,” which says, ‘Holy is the place I stand to give whatever small good I can. And the empty page, and the open book, Redemption everywhere I look.’



David Horvath

“The Passionist charism to ‘keep alive the memory of the Passion of Christ’ demands that we also see Him as a blessed peacemaker in the wholeness of His life, which includes consistent modeling of radical and active nonviolence and peacemaking.

“Peacemaking is a work to be carried forward each day, step by step, without ever growing tired.” — Pope Francis

“Pope Francis has a clear understanding of the importance of not just preaching about ‘peace’ but living peacemaking in our everyday lives. He says, ‘Peacemaking is a work to be carried forward each day, step by step, without ever growing tired.’ Active nonviolence is at the heart of the vision and message of Jesus, the life of the Catholic Church and the long-term vocation of healing and reconciling for both people and the planet. I feel that practicing this Beatitude impacts the expression of understanding and sharing of our Passionist charism,” offers David.



David Horvath develops the newsletter for the JPIC Office in space he uses at the Passionist Earth & Spirit Center in Louisville, Ky.

<https://nonviolencejustpeace.net/organizational-and-individual-endorsements-of-the-appeal/>

Catholic Nonviolence initiative

The Passionist charism not only keeps alive the memory of the Passion of Christ, but also recognizes that active nonviolence characterized Christ’s life. Inspired by the life and love of Christ, Passionists work to alleviate the suffering of those who are Christ Crucified in the world today. Much of that suffering can be alleviated through peacemaking; intentionally working to be nonviolent in word, deed and presence.

The Catholic Nonviolence Initiative was launched at a conference in Rome April 11-13, 2016. This initiative is co-sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and Pax Christi International.

David Horvath, Passionist JPIC Director, offers a challenge to the Passionist Family: “I challenge everyone in the Passionist Family to become active peacemakers and to integrate Gospel nonviolence explicitly into their community lives; seeing our Passionist charism work through dioceses, retreat centers, parishes, agencies, schools, universities, seminaries, religious orders and voluntary associations.”

To learn more about the initiative and to sign the covenant, visit:

<https://nonviolencejustpeace.net/>

The Catholic Nonviolence Initiative has been endorsed by many religious and faith communities, including the Conference of Major Superiors of Men and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. To view the list, visit: