Reflection & Questions

Called to the Vocation of Peacemaking

From Fr. Thomas Merton:
We know that Christ came into the world as the Prince of Peace. We know that Christ Himself is our peace (Ephesians 2:14). As Pope John XXIII pointed out in his first encyclical, *Ad Petri Cathedram*, Christians are obliged to strive for peace with all the means at the disposal, and yet, as John continues, this peace is by no means a matter of passive acquiescence in injustice, since that does not produce peace. The Christian struggle for peace depends first of all upon a free response of man to “God’s Call to the service of justice for all.”

Christ did not come to bring peace to the world as a kind of “spiritual tranquilizer.” He brought to His disciples a vocation and a task—to struggle in the world of violence to establish His peace not only in their own hearts but in society itself.

From Dorothy Day:
Can Christians dare to make the way of Christ and His cross their own? Frankly, we are calling for Saints to bear witness to the Peace of Christ. There must be a disarmament of the heart so we can find our true vocation as children of God and thus as peacemakers.

We must choose sides, not between nations, but between the world’s way and Christ’s way. The world hates; God loves. We believe or we do not believe, and we are now given our opportunity to bear witness to our faith and what it proclaims about love and peace. This is not a sentimental perspective, but a very difficult and real challenge for Christians.

From Fr. Henri Nouwen:
Nobody can be a Christian without being a peacemaker. The issue is not that we have the occasional obligation to give some of our attention to war prevention or that we should be willing to give some of our free time to activities in the service of peace. What we are called to is a life of peacemaking in which all that we do, say, or think is part of our concern to bring peace into this world. Just as Jesus’ command to love one another cannot be seen as a part-time obligation, so too Jesus’ call to peacemaking is unconditional, unlimited, and uncompromising. Peacemaking is a full-time vocation that includes each member of God’s people.

From Sr. Helen Prejean:
We are human beings together. And if Jesus and the Mystical Body of Christ mean anything, it is that all are networked together. If we are going to survive, we have to learn that. Death and violence have always led to more death and violence. Peacemaking is the call we must respond to if we are to have respect for all life.
Reflection & Questions

Called to the Vocation of Peacemaking (continued)

Discussion Questions:

Thomas Merton says Christ did come to bring a peace that is a “spiritual tranquilizer.” He quotes Pope John XXIII who declares that peace cannot be a “passive acquiescence to injustice.”

What are they warning against? Why do they feel the need to call attention to misconceptions about peace?

Both Dorothy Day and Henri Nouwen speak about the demands of the vocation of peace for all Christians. Discuss the demands of this Christian vocation. Why are they so difficult and the challenge to be Saints so daunting?

Sr. Helen Prejean speaks of surviving together or not at all. What aspects of today’s world is she referring to? What basic tenets of Christianity does she call upon in her challenge to us?

Prayer For Vocations to Peacemaking

Dear God,
the harvest is plenty and the laborers are few.
Your people long for peace,
they thirst for justice.
Send into our midst women and men
whose hearts can embrace the entire world.
Send into our midst young and old,
from all your beloved cultures and races,
Who offer their arms to lift up the lowly and oppressed.
Send into our midst new peacemakers
Who will walk with the powerless,
as well as those in power
To proclaim your teaching and
To witness against hate, greed, fear and strife.
Create us anew as your peacemakers, O God,
And send us your peace.

From Pax Christi