

CATHOLICS
CONFRONT
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*In war-torn Central African Republic, Archbishop Nzapalainga collaborates with Muslim and Evangelical leaders to organize interfaith prayer gatherings, promote peace schools, and advocate for peace. The Archbishop invited Imam Layama and his family to live with him when it became too dangerous for them at home: bit.ly/CARpeace
Photo credits 1: Philip Laubner/CRS; 2: Kim Pozniak/CRS*



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WORLD DAY OF PEACE 2017

NON-VIOLENCE: A STYLE OF POLITICS FOR PEACE

Perhaps the best known Catholic contribution to responding to violent conflict is the just war tradition, which was developed in order to reduce recourse to war and to limit its humanitarian consequences. But there is a second tradition as well.

Lesser known is our Catholic commitment to active non-violence and building a just peace. Gospel non-violence is not passive. Rather, it entails active strategies such as peacebuilding, conflict transformation, restorative justice, and unarmed civilian protection. Seeking a just peace means preventing conflict by addressing its causes, building relationships, and facilitating healing and restoration.

In his Message for the 50th World Day of Peace, celebrated on Jan. 1, 2017, Pope Francis urges families, faith communities, government leaders, and the international community to practice non-violence and work to build a just peace.

As we seek to respond to this call, we can be inspired by numerous contemporary examples, including Catholic Relief Services' peace and conflict resolution training in Central African Republic (bit.ly/car-crs) and the work of Catholics in the U.S. to build peace in their local communities (bit.ly/peaceCCHD).

Working together, we can be vehicles of Gospel non-violence and a just peace.

Pope Francis' message, "Non-Violence: A Style of Politics for Peace," is the most recent in a long history of messages for the World Day of Peace beginning with Pope Paul VI in 1968.

Visit the USCCB website for a link to the 2017 World Day of Peace message and supplemental resources: bit.ly/jan-1-peace-day

YOU CAN BE A PEACEMAKER.

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In West Baltimore, St. Peter Claver parish seeks to build peace. Through peace walks with Bishop Madden, conversations about violence and racial justice, and documenting police misconduct, St. Peter Claver is living the Gospel call to build peace: bit.ly/petercl



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WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. **Pray.** Use the Prayer for Peace in Our Communities (below) with your family, school, faith community, or in other settings.
2. **Learn.** Read the U.S. Catholic bishops' *The Harvest of Justice is Sown in Peace* (bit.ly/harvestofjustice) especially the section on "Nonviolence: New Importance." *How can Gospel nonviolence challenge each of us personally, and as a nation?*

Learn about how faith communities are working for peace around the United States (bit.ly/peaceCCHD) and world (bit.ly/CRSpace). *How might the Holy Spirit be calling your community to respond?*

Look for reflections on Pope Francis' World Day of Peace message on ToGoForth.org.

3. **Act.** Join tens of thousands of others to advocate for policies that build peace at home and around the world. For current action alerts, visit ConfrontGlobalPoverty.org and USCCB Action Center (Votervoice.net/USCCB/home).

PRAYER FOR PEACE IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Let us pray . . . O Lord our God, in your mercy and kindness, no thought of ours is left unnoticed, no desire or concern ignored.

You have proven that blessings abound when we fall on our knees in prayer, and so we turn to you in our hour of need.

Surrounded by violence and cries for justice, we hear your voice telling us what is required . . . "Only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Mi 6:8).

Fill us with your mercy so that we, in turn, may be merciful to others. Strip away pride, suspicion, and racism so that we may seek peace and justice in our communities.

Strengthen our hearts so that they beat only to the rhythm of your holy will. Flood our path with your light as we walk humbly toward a future filled with encounter and unity.

Be with us, O Lord, in our efforts, for only by the prompting of your grace can we progress toward virtue.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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