Nonviolence and Social Analysis in Mission

*What is nonviolence?*

**A SPIRITUALITY**
Reconciliation, courage, empathy, solidarity, and humility rooted in the life of the God of peace and nonviolence.

**A UNIVERSAL ETHIC**
Peace centered on nonviolence. Prioritizing nonviolence in personal and societal decision-making. Harmony and right relationships among humans and with the whole earth community.

**NONVIOLENCE**
The power of love in action resisting and disarming violence, healing relationships, fostering reconciliation, justice, and peace through nonviolent means.

**A WAY OF LIFE**
Formation, practices, and community for the nonviolent life, including respect, constructive communication, inclusivity, participation, and interconnectedness.

**A METHOD FOR CHANGE**
Spectrum of effective nonviolent cross-cutting approaches for preventing or ending violence, transforming conflict, protecting human and earth communities, and building a more just and peaceful world.

Rooted in gospel values – the sanctity of life, the dignity of the person, truth and reconciliation – a commitment to nonviolence requires that we identify all forms of violence, including **direct violence, structural violence,** and **violence against creation.**

Broader and more holistic than pacifism, or the refusal to use violence, gospel nonviolence seeks to stop, reduce, and prevent violence by building just peace.

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Nonviolence in Pope Francis’ integral vision of Catholic Social Teaching

Drawing on the model of St. Francis of Assisi, Francis highlights the interconnection of **peacebuilding, justice for the poor,** and **care for our common home.**

A commitment to gospel nonviolence is the unifying key to this integral understanding of Catholic Social Teaching.
Analysis for Nonviolence:

An ample understanding of nonviolence integrates: peacebuilding, social justice, and care for our common home, and seeks to resist direct violence, structural violence, and violence against creation. In order to translate this understanding of nonviolence into cohesive strategies for action, Pax Christi International’s Catholic Nonviolence Initiative employs the concept of Just Peace: an ethical framework for considering how a whole array of nonviolent actions function together as parts of a greater whole. A Just Peace ethic is a set of practical norms that enable society to reduce violence and build and sustain peace. Eli McCarthy, Maryann Cusimano Love, and other thinkers have developed different ways of organizing these norms. The Maryknoll Lay Missioners, in outlining their own commitment to nonviolence, have identified three basic ways nonviolence is employed. The three function together as a kind of cycle of nonviolence:

Social analysis focused on living gospel nonviolence requires a dynamic relationship between these two cycles: We engage each stage in the pastoral circle - SEE, JUDGE, and ACT – with an eye toward identifying one or more of the three areas in the cycle of nonviolence – PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, and HEALING & RECONCILIATION. This focus on nonviolence will lead us to questions such as:

- Where can we identify a risk of violence?
- Where do we see incidents of:
  - direct violence?
  - structural violence?
- What are the impacts of that violence? (Who needs healing? What relationships need reconciliation?)

These questions will, in turn, help us identify strategies for effective nonviolent action.