

Prayer for the Beginning of the 40-Day Fast for Nonviolence July 1, 2023

Introduction: “An Invitation to Pray and Fast for the Truth of Gospel Nonviolence” from Fr. Emmanuel Charles McCarthy

*The test of the sincerity of one's prayer is the willingness to work for that for which one prays.
The test of the sincerity of one's work is the willingness to pray for that for which one works.*

...The God of the New Testament, the God who dwells fully in Jesus Christ, the God in whose image and likeness human beings are made, the only true God *is not a warrior God who will lead people in historical victories over enemies*. The Way of Jesus is not the way of violence, retaliation and enmity. The Way of the Jesus of the Gospels is the Way of Nonviolent Love of all. What Jesus taught by word and deed for times of common affairs, as well as for times of crises, is nonviolence, non-retaliation, love of enemy, forgiveness seventy times seven, return of good for evil—mercy. Since God is love and Christ is God, to live in the life of God is to obey Jesus' new commandment to “*love one another as I have loved you.*” This means that the Christian—the human being who says he or she desires to follow Jesus—commits herself or himself wholeheartedly to following Jesus, who did not use violence and who did not threaten the use of violence, but chose instead—even under the threat of lethal violence—to overcome evil with love. Jesus Christ is the truth of God, and Nonviolent Love of friends and enemies is the truth of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, it must be said clearly, and again and again, that violence is not the Christian Way, that violence is not the Gospels' Way, that violence is not the Apostolic Way, that violence is not the Way of Jesus, that violence is not the Way of God. It must be said clearly, and again and again, that this does not mean that only nuclear violence and retaliation are contrary to the Way of Jesus—but all violence and retaliation, even culturally condoned, romanticized and legalized violence and retaliation, are contrary to the Way of Jesus, which is the Way of Eternal Salvation for one and all. Hence, any activity that cannot be conducted without violence or any end that cannot be achieved without violence is an activity or an end that cannot be conducted or achieved by the followers of Jesus Christ. It is also an activity or end that is not needed in God's Plan of Redemption through, with, and in Jesus, the Christ....

Yet, since the fourth century most Christians have not proclaimed that violence is not the Christian Way, that violence is not the Gospels' Way, that violence is not the Apostolic Way, that violence is not the Way of Jesus. In fact, during the last 1700 years, at one time or another, Christians have justified, as consistent with the Way of Jesus, participation in such activities as war, capital punishment, torture, assassination, the burning to death of heretics, witches and homosexuals, colonialism, violent enmity-creating nationalism, violent tribalism, violent revolution, abortion, genocide, wife-beating, child-beating, etc. And they have participated in these horrors, believing they are not engaged in evil, but in faithfully following Jesus....

It is because of this tragic and sorrowful fact that this Forty Day Fast for the Truth of Gospel Nonviolence is undertaken.... It is an entreaty to the Christian Churches, to the Christian Churches' leaders and to the individual Christian to repent and turn to the Christ and learn what God's will is. It is an appeal ... to learn from Jesus, who is God “*made flesh*” and who unambiguously teaches by word and deed the Way of Nonviolent Love of friends and enemies as the Way of God, what the Way of authentic Christian discipleship is....

Opening Prayer: “Prayer For The Forty Day Fast For The Truth Of Gospel Nonviolence”
by Fr. Charles Emmanuel McCarthy

—for the uniting of all churches in proclaiming the truth ^[L]_{SEP} of the nonviolent Jesus of the gospels
and his way of nonviolent love of friends and enemies—

Let us pray.

Abba, in the name of Jesus we ask you to send the Holy Spirit to gather the Churches together,
so that they may Infallibly proclaim that Jesus’ Way of Nonviolent Love of all people—friends
and enemies—is the Way of God and therefore teach that

violence is not the Christian Way,
violence is not the Holy Way,
violence is not the Gospels’ Way,
violence is not the Apostolic Way,
violence is not the Way of Jesus,
violence is not the Way of God;

thereby setting Christians free forever from bondage to the unholy, un-catholic, un-apostolic, un-
Christlike ways of the false gods and theologies of justified violence and enmity.

We plead this grace so that the Nonviolent Lamb may be our Lord in deed, as well as, in
word and sacrament.

We request this gift so that the Christian Community may be—for afflicted humanity—a
faithful witness to Jesus’ Way of overcoming evil.

We implore this healing so that the Church may be an authentic extension in time and space
of the Way of the Lamb of God, of the Way of the Nonviolent Jesus, which is the Way to renew
the face of the earth and to save all people from evil and eternal death. Amen.

Our Lamb has conquered; Him let us follow.

Reading I: “The Declaration of Fraternity of Humankind” by Pope Francis and 30 Noble
Laureates, June 10, 2023

We want to shout to the world in the name of [the human family]: Never again war! It is peace,
justice, equality that guide the fate of all [humanity]. No to fear, no to sexual and domestic
violence! All armed conflicts must come to an end. We say no more nuclear weapons, no more
land mines. No more forced migrations, ethnic cleansing, dictatorships, corruption and slavery.
Let us stop the manipulation of technology and AI, let us put [the human family] before
technological development, so that it may permeate it.

We encourage countries to promote joint efforts in order to create a society of peace, for example
by instituting Ministries of Peace.

We commit ourselves to healing the land stained by the blood of violence and hatred, by social
inequalities and corruption of the heart. Let us counter hatred with love....

Our children, our future can only thrive in a world of peace, justice and equality, to the benefit of
the single human family.

Prayer Response: “Disarm me, God” by Fr. John Dear

Come, put away the sword I still carry somewhere in my heart. Take away the violence that lingers in my soul. Make me an instrument of Your peace. You have a plan for me: fulfill it! In this world of armaments, disarm me and I shall be able to disarm others.

Come, God. There is still a trace of war and madness in my veins. Purify me, O God, and I shall let loose disarmament in the world that will cause people to praise you freely. Purify me of all violence and I shall stand before the powers and principalities without fear and free of those trapped in the structures of fear and violence.

Come, God. Disarm me without my knowing it, and then, show me that you are the Disarming One, nonviolent from the beginning of time until the end of time. Disarming Presence, Unconditional Love, Great Reconciler, Suffering Servant, Patience Personified, Peaceful Mother, come, bearing peace.

Come, God. Disarm this restless heart which wanders off into apathy and selfishness, but which longs to rest in You. Lead this heart into the fire of your Love, where it can be consumed by the Flame of Nonviolence, setting fire to other hearts nearby. Let your unilateral disarmament engage me, win me over, force the scales to fall from my eyes and the weapons to be released from my hands. Push me into the violent hearts of others that I may take on their anger and release them from the chains of hatred and the bonds of violence.

Disarm me, God, and I shall disarm others. Disarm me, God, that I may be one with all humanity, all your sons and daughters. Disarm me, God, and bring me into Your reign, to live forever in peace and love.

Reading II: Isaiah 58:6-9

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of God will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and God will answer; you will cry for help, and God will say: Here am I.

Response: Silent Meditation

Closing Prayer from the Archdiocese of Chicago

All praise be yours, God our Creator, as we wait in joyful hope for the flowering of justice and the fullness of peace. All praise for this day, this season. By our ... fasting and prayer cast out the spirit of war, of fear and mistrust, and make us grow hungry for human kindness, thirsty for solidarity with all the people of your dear earth. May all our prayer, our fasting and our deeds be done in the name of Jesus. Amen.