

What is your immediate image that comes to mind when you read or hear the word violence?

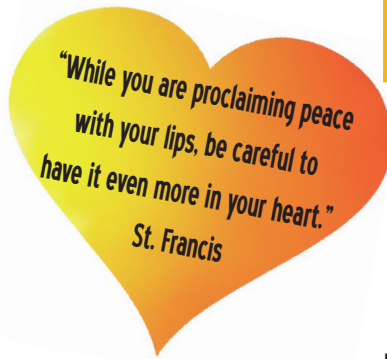
If you are like me, my immediate thought is the violence spread across the world. Violence takes many shapes and forms. We know the violence of war, human trafficking, poverty, pollution, ravaging the earth, and murder. The list could go on and on. These examples are truly violent and denigrate the very life of a person and creation. Ordinarily they are not something we encounter personally in our daily lives.

The definition of violence according to the dictionary:

- A great destructive force or energy
- To harm or weaken or to make something less effective
- The use of physical force to harm someone, to damage property

If we are honest, we have to admit that violence is sometimes very much a part of our daily lives. It erupts in language. How do we harm another, other than through physical damage? Perhaps we just murmur a few derogatory words about a brother or sister, no harm meant. Words can sting and leave a lasting wound in another. Are we careless in our choice of words that are born of violence? “Let’s battle it out.” “What a stupid thing to say.” Perhaps we want to “crush” the opposing team as our favorite team plays a game. How easy it for to watch a movie or hear a song that is violent in nature and not give it a second thought?

The Campaign for Nonviolence Week – September 15-23, 2018, is a reminder for each of us to examine the ways violence enters in our lives through language, movies, music and our own disrespect for the integrity of another.



Book Review

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up! Walk forth!” The Beatitudes are not so much a passive reward for endurance, but a challenge to live dynamically the Gospel call to justice and peace.

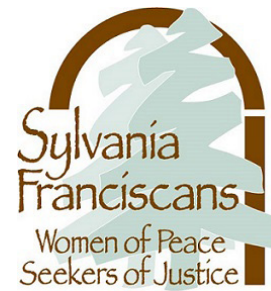
Dear’s latest book, *They Will Inherit the Earth*, takes

a deeper look at the third Beatitude, “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the Earth.” In it, he explores the connection, so often repeated in *Laudato Si’*, between our Earth and her creatures, people and God. The call to be peacemaker implies a relationship with the world around us, a deep appreciation for its beauty and its gifts and an understanding of our intrinsic relationship. Chapter 14, *Mother Earth Rules*, offers a set of guidelines for living in solidarity with our Earth, ranging from cultivating wonder to taking public action.

Our work, Dear contends, is to appreciate Mother Earth and her creatures, to live nonviolently in peace with all on our planet and to celebrate the beauty of creation. Every day should be Earth Day.

“These meditations are a call to action, a summons to take up the Beatitudes as a blueprint for life and the Sermon on the Mount as a methodology for living peace, seeking justice in this world, and practicing nonviolence”. John Dear, *The Beatitudes of Peace*.

Simplicity - “To be serenely present to each reality, however small it may be. . .”



JPIC Focus News

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Practicing Simplicity

By Sister Antoinette Dudek

When we develop the spiritual discipline of simplicity both internally and externally, we also gain certain abilities and lose other destructive needs:

- We begin to speak in simple truths that are easy for us to live by and others to understand.
- We lose the destructive need to constantly top or be better than others.
- We lose a need for temporal things. While we may like the newest gadget or tool, we won’t necessarily sacrifice everything to get it immediately, until we are ready to do so.
- We start giving to others out of a place of joy and willingness in our hearts. We become hospitable and kind.
- We develop a sense of gratitude for everything we do have.

There are certain tools that we can use to quiet our inner voices. For some of us, meditation is a great way to get away from the world and focus. Prayer is another that allows us to have a conversation with God and get some semblance of clarity. Fasting is another method of narrowing down our focus.

Think of developing spiritual discipline as a way to clean house, but this time it’s cleaning house in your own head. Start by polishing your own beliefs by getting rid of the things that clutter and cloud your judgment. If you’re confused, go to the source – your Bible, perhaps-and read up on what’s bothering you. Or you may wish to take some time in solitude to really reflect on things without outside influences. Simplicity means making things clearer, cleaner, easier to understand. This is a discipline that also means becoming more convinced of your core values.

“Simplicity in its essence demands neither a vow of poverty nor a life of rural homesteading. As an ethic of self-conscious material moderation, it can be practiced in cities and suburbs, townhouses and condominiums. It requires neither a log cabin nor a hairshirt, but a deliberate ordering of priorities so as to distinguish between the necessary and superfluous, useful and wasteful, beautiful and vulgar.” *David Shi, Historian and Simplicity Scholar*



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Issue: Death Penalty Action

In their "Catholic Campaign to End the Use of the Death Penalty," announced March 2006, the Bishops asked us to pray for the victims of crime and their families, those who have been wrongly convicted and those awaiting execution. The following prisoners are on death row, awaiting execution soon. Please keep them in prayer, as well as their families, their victims and the victims' families. Also, please continue to pray for healing in our country that the spirit of peace and reconciliation, rather than violence and revenge, may prevail.

September 2018

- 12 Ruben Gutierrez, TX
- 26 Troy Clark, TX
- 27 Daniel Acker, TX

October 2018

- 10 Juan Segundo, TX
- 11 Edmund Zagorski, TN
- 24 Kwame Rockwell, TX

November 2018

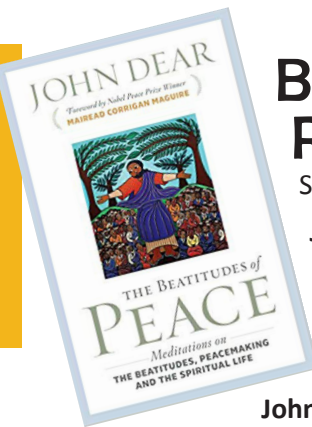
- 7 Emanuel Kemp, TX

Note: After the July 25th execution of Robert Van Hook in Ohio, Governor John Kasich suspended executions for the rest of 2018, granting a reprieve to delay the execution of Cleveland Jackson and commuting the death sentence of Raymond Tibbetts to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Executions in 2018: 14

Executions since the ban was lifted in 1976: 1,479

Sources for information: Death Penalty Information Center (www.deathpenaltyinfo.org). Numbers are accurate as of July 25, 2018.



Book Review

Sharon Havelak, OSF

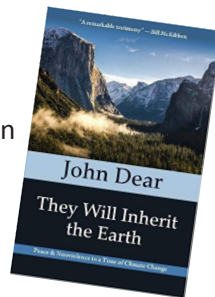
John Dear, The Beatitudes of Peace: Meditations on the Beatitudes, Peacemaking and the Spiritual Life, 2016.

John Dear, They Will Inherit the Earth: Peace and Nonviolence in a Time of Climate Change, 2018.

Intrigued by a lecture/book promotion given by Fr. John Dear this past April, I decided to use two of his books as the meat of my retreat this summer. I had heard Fr. Dear speak before and found him very compelling, but his words on the Beatitudes and their relationship to our care for our Earth was intriguing and merited further study and reflection.

The Beatitudes are the opening words of the Sermon on the Mount and form the cornerstone of Jesus' teaching on nonviolence. While beautiful, they seem rather abstract and other-worldly. In his *Beatitudes of Peace*, Dear teases out the wider implications of the Beatitudes and how others are living them out. The discussion is framed by a chapter on the anti-Beatitudes, a look at the ingrained systemic violence that forms the cultural norm for most of the world, on the one hand, and the ending chapter that offers a new interpretation of the Beatitudes.

A French Scripture scholar has challenged the traditional translation. Instead of "Blessed," a more accurate translation of the original Aramaic would be "Arise! Stand



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US Gun Violence Statistics: 2018

Total Incidents of Gun Violence in the US:	32,699
Total Deaths by Gun Violence in the US:	8,161
Total Injuries by Gun Violence in the US:	15,812
Children (0-11) injured or killed:	389
Teens (12-17) injured or killed:	1,612
Mass Shootings:	189
Accidental Shootings:	965
<u>Officer Involved Shootings</u>	
Suspect Shot/Killed:	1,244
Officer Shot/Killed:	163

Source of information: Gun Violence Archive, www.gunviolencearchive.org. Numbers are accurate as of July 25, 2018

The Cost of War

What has the United States spent on war since 2001?

Care for War on Terror Veterans:	\$ 293,314,583,519 (every hour: \$2.28 million)
Homeland Security:	\$ 840,101,042,329 (every hour: \$7.99 million)
Interest on War Debt	\$ 605,784,167,503 (every hour: \$10.05 million)
Military Costs of War	\$2,841,020,105,152 (every hour: \$11.76 million)
Total Cost of War	\$4,580,221,968,553 (every hour: \$32.08 million)

What if we spent this money to help people struggling in our own country? For the Total Cost of War since 2001, taxpayers in the United States are paying \$4.53 trillion. Here's what those tax dollars could have paid for instead:

- 139.46 million scholarships for University Students for 4 years, or
- 199.14 million students receiving Pell Grants for 4 years

US Military Deaths: 6,953 (Iraq: 4,541 Afghanistan: 2,412)
Iraqi civilians killed: 181,798 – 203,986

Sources for information: The National Priorities Project (www.nationalpriorities.org/costofwar), the Iraq Coalition Causality Count (<http://icausalities.org/>) and Iraq Body Count (www.iraqbodycount.org). Numbers are accurate as of July 25, 2018.



Upcoming Events:

- September 1 World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation
- September 1 – October 4 Season of Creation
- September 16 – 22 Campaign Nonviolence Week
- September 21 International Day of Peace

