



# Where Justice and Truth Meet

November 2020

***“Through our contemplation, transform us to listen deeply to one another and to the brokenness of the world.”***  
– A Prayer for the Life of the World

## Called to Create a Transformative Vision

The brokenness of the world is painfully evident: George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and others; Black Lives Matter; violence in our streets; fear of violence surrounding national elections; LGBTQ+ issues; a global pandemic; fires, floods, hurricanes, drought...

It is no coincidence that these circumstances that disrupt our lives have touched the whole world.

*Together*—these circumstances taken *together* and we as human



*family together*—we are invited to recognize that God is calling us to something different. God calls us through the signs of our times to look at things in a new way; to change how we relate to one another, to creation and even to ourselves. What is God asking us to change and why? What does this mean for our relationships, our lifestyles, and our ways of seeing, thinking and responding to all around us?

Pope Francis' writes in his most recent encyclical, [Fratelli Tutti](#), published last month:

*For all our hyper-connectivity, we witness a fragmentation that [makes] it more difficult to resolve problems that affect us all. Anyone who thinks that the only lesson to be learned was the need to improve what we were already doing, or to refine existing systems and regulations, is denying reality.* (FT #6)

Francis goes on to elaborate a transformative vision of *Nonviolence* and *Just Peace* at the heart of our relationships on the personal, interpersonal, national and international levels as well as in our relationships with Earth and all creation.

Our Springfield Dominican [Prayer for the Life of the World](#), discerned to guide our vision, mission and ministry over the next several years, is inspired by the same Spirit.

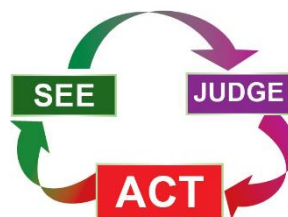
- \* *“Draw us into communion with You and all creation...”*
- \* *Free our hearts to recognize and attend to Christ in hidden and unexpected places...*
- \* *We renounce our participation in the sin of racism and reject the societal barriers created by the misuse of power. Through our contemplation, transform us to listen deeply to one another and to the brokenness of the world...”*

How do we transform our understanding—and our living? Francis invites us to contemplate the familiar parable of the Good Samaritan, one who sees and responds to the one who is assaulted on the street and abandoned on the wayside. (FT #56ff)

He goes on to remind us that

*[e]ach day offers us a new opportunity, a new possibility. We should not expect everything from those who govern us, for that would be childish. We have the space we need for co-responsibility in creating and putting into place new processes and changes. Let us take an active part in renewing and supporting our troubled societies.* (FT #77)

We invite you to pause and reflect: where do you SEE violence today? Our perception influences how we JUDGE a violent act. Our personal recognition of how we JUDGE is a necessary step in order to ACT nonviolently.



**SEE:** Let us start by recognizing the reality of violence in ourselves, our community/family as well as society in general. Some questions to ponder individually and with others include:

1. "What violence do you see in everyday life - in families, community, neighborhood, or church? In our country? In interpersonal relationships?"
2. Where is our community impacted by the violence of hunger and poverty?
3. What are the impacts of the ecological violence around us?"

(*Making Active Nonviolence Our way of Life in the Church and the World*, Catholic Nonviolence Initiative, a project of Pax Christi International)

**JUDGE:** Take some time to ponder the parable of the Good Samaritan. ([Luke 10:25-37](#)) You may want to also read Pope Francis' reflections on the parable in *Fratelli Tutti*. ([FT #56-76](#))

*Just Peace* is an ecumenical school of thought and set of practices for building peace at all stages of acute conflict—before, during, and after. *Just Peace* is not merely the absence of violence but the presence of social, economic, and political conditions that sustain peace and human flourishing and prevent conflicts from turning violent or returning to violence. *Just Peace* principles and moral criteria guide actions that can assist institutional change and provide a framework for judging ethical responsibility.

**ACT:** Fostering Love and Community

Reflecting the Gospel call to *Just Peace* in your own life, how might you

- live into a new vision of *Just Peace* in your interpersonal relationships?
- actively foster peace in your family, community of faith, and neighborhood?
- encourage just peace on a national and international level actively as a citizen?
- promote *Just Peace* by the choices you make for ecological living?

*Instead of loving what you think is peace, love other [people] and love God above all. And instead of hating the people you think are war makers, hate the appetites and the disorder in your own soul, which are the causes of war. If you love peace, then hate injustice, hate tyranny, hate greed – but hate these things in yourself, not in another.*

Thomas Merton, *Seeds of Contemplation*

To nourish your reflection, we recommend an Advent 2020 reflection guide from our sisters at Maryknoll: [Building a Culture of Peace](#).

[First Week: Disarmament of the Heart](#)  
[Second Week: Healing Our Soul Sickness](#)  
[Third Week: Ecological Conversion](#)  
[Fourth Week: Openness of Heart](#)

## Dominican Month for Peace 2020: Ukraine

The [Dominican Month for Peace](#) is an annual event of the global Dominican Family to stand in solidarity with Dominicans promoting peace in a world torn by many forms of violence and war.

In 2017 we focused on Dominicans promoting the national peace accord in Colombia. In 2018 we supported our brothers and sisters struggling for democracy and peace through credible elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo. And in 2019, we focused on India and the plight of indigenous peoples, women's rights, and enslaved children.

Now, in 2020, we focus on [Ukraine](#) and recognize the reestablished Dominican Order after the removal and slaughter of Dominicans and lay leaders in the Communist era. Ukrainians continue to struggle for remaining independent despite a war with separatists and Russian occupation in the East.

Even in the midst of the escalation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the war with Russia and separatists continues since April, 2014. Dominicans are very involved in several projects that promote peace and accompaniment of victims of the conflict. Our spiritual and financial support this season focuses on the [St. Martin de Porres Center in Fastiv](#), which, for many years, has been caring for socially disadvantaged children: orphans, street children, sick children and children from disadvantaged families. Since the start of hostilities in Eastern Ukraine, the Center has opened its doors to children whose childhood has been poisoned by war. It has adopted more than 220 children from the combat zone, and offered them psychological and spiritual support and the opportunity to recover in a safe environment.

[Click for a 3-minute video from the children at St. Martin de Porres Center in Fastiv.](#)

