

RESOURCES ON ACTIVE NONVIOLENCE

Nonviolent Resistance & Civil Disobedience

EVENTS/CAMPAIGNS:

- [Catholic Nonviolence Days of Action](#) Sept. 21 – Oct. 2
- [Campaign Nonviolence Days of Action](#) Sept. 21 – Oct. 2
- [World Week for Peace](#) in Palestine and Israel, Sept. 16-23
- [Season of Creation](#), Sept. 1 – Oct. 4
- [October 1: Nonviolence Training – Bystander Intervention Skills](#) (Meta Peace Team and Pax Christi USA)

“A basic fact about nonviolent resistance is that it is based on the conviction that the universe is on the side of justice.”

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

BOOKS:

- [Beautiful Trouble](#) assembled by Andrew Boyd
- [The Path of Most Resistance: A Step-by-Step Guide to Planning Nonviolent Campaigns](#) by Ivan Marovic
- [Why Civil Resistance Works](#) by Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan
- [How We Win: A Guide to Nonviolent Direct Action Campaigning](#) by George Lakey
- [Jesus Christ, Peacemaker: A New Theology of Peace](#) by Terrence J. Rynne

FILMS:

- [John Lewis: Good Trouble](#): The life of civil rights activist and United States congressman John Lewis.
- [A Force More Powerful](#): A book, film, and TV series exploring various nonviolent resistance campaigns worldwide, including in India, South Africa, and Poland.
- [The Interrupters](#): Violence prevention work of Cease Fire Chicago
- [Bringing Down a Dictator](#): A documentary chronicling the student-led movement that led to the ouster of Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic.
- [The Power of Active Nonviolence](#): Brief video from the Catholic Institute for Nonviolence, outlining how nonviolence is not only central to the Gospel but also a proven, transformative method for achieving peace, justice, and reconciliation.
- [The Two Hands of Nonviolence](#): This brief video explains the metaphor of the “Two Hands of Nonviolence” based on Gandhi’s two branches of satyagraha: nonviolent resistance and constructive programs.

ORGANIZATIONS:

[Albert Einstein Institution](#)

Founded in 1983 by pioneering nonviolence scholar and activist Gene Sharp, Albert Einstein Institution promotes the study and strategic use of nonviolent action in conflict. They conduct research on nonviolent action, produce nonviolent action resources, and

provide training to nonviolent activists worldwide. Through their work, they are committed to defending democratic freedoms and institutions, opposing oppression, dictatorship, and genocide, and reducing reliance on violence as an instrument of policy.

[Catholic Nonviolence Initiative](#)

Catholic Nonviolence Initiative is a global movement dedicated to promoting active nonviolence as a core principle of the Gospel. They believe that nonviolence is central to the teachings of Jesus and vital to the mission of the Catholic Church.

[Center for Applied NonViolent Actions and Strategies \(CANVAS\)](#)

Founded in 2005 to advocate for the use of nonviolent resistance in the promotion of human rights and democracy, CANVAS is a network of international trainers and consultants with expertise in building and running successful non-violent movements.

[The Commons Social Change Library](#)

The Commons offers 1500+ educational resources in a range of formats. Topics include campaign strategy, community organizing, working effectively in groups, justice and diversity, creative activism, and much more.

[Global Nonviolent Action Database](#)

Global Nonviolent Action Database offers free access to hundreds of case studies on nonviolent action campaigns from across the globe. A project of Swarthmore College, the database was created and maintained with academic rigor. There is an interactive map, and each case study is meticulously documented with sources cited. Case studies date back to ancient Egypt and are a great resource for teachers, trainers, researchers, writers, activists, and others interested in the study of nonviolent action.

[International Center on Nonviolent Conflict](#)

International Center on Nonviolent Conflict (ICNC) provides education, resources, and strategic guidance on nonviolent action to promote human rights, democratic self-rule, and justice worldwide. Their main focus is education, producing and sharing resources on civil resistance, conducting research, and leading educational programming on nonviolent conflict. They serve as a hub for nonviolence activists, scholars, educators, nongovernmental organizations, media professionals, and members of the policy community. They host a great resource library with hundreds of free downloadable reports and resources on nonviolent conflict.

[The King Center](#)

Established in 1968 by Mrs. Coretta Scott King, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change (The King Center) serves as a global destination and resource center promoting nonviolent social change. The center empowers individuals to create a just, humane, equitable, and peaceful world by applying Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s nonviolent philosophy and methodology of nonviolence. They do this through offering high-

impact trainings and immersive programs that empower individuals and organizations to drive transformational outcomes and reshape culture through the power of nonviolence.

[Metta Center for Nonviolence](#)

The Metta Center for Nonviolence is an educational platform that offers a wealth of resources on nonviolence. Their website hosts their nonviolence podcast and also shares videos, books, events, courses, and other content to promote nonviolence as a constructive force for social change. With an overall aim to cultivate the power of nonviolence for long-term transformation of oneself and the world, I find their resources, approach, and style very accessible for those new to nonviolence.

[Nonviolent Action Lab \(Harvard University\)](#)

The Nonviolent Action Lab is an innovation hub for research on advancing democracy worldwide through civil resistance. The Lab produces and disseminates up-to-date knowledge on nonviolent action, including its effectiveness, global trends in success and failure, and trends in political violence and state repression, as well as analyses of these trends.

[Nonviolent Peaceforce](#)

The mission of the Nonviolent Peaceforce is to protect civilians in violent conflicts through unarmed strategies, build peace side-by-side with local communities, and advocate for the wider adoption of these approaches to safeguard human lives and dignity. NP envisions a worldwide culture of peace in which conflicts within and between communities and countries are managed through nonviolent means.

[Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service/Campaign Nonviolence](#)

Pace e Bene has been leading nonviolence trainings and publishing books on nonviolence since its founding in 1989. Their flagship program, called Campaign Nonviolence, carries out a range of activities to build a culture of nonviolence to end war, poverty, racism, and environmental destruction. Key activities of Campaign Nonviolence include their nonviolence training hub, a yearly nonviolent campaign called “Nonviolence Action Days,” and a project to build nonviolent cities.

[Pax Christi International](#)

Pax Christi International is the global Catholic peace movement dedicated to promoting Gospel nonviolence, justice, and reconciliation rooted in Catholic social teaching. For decades, Pax Christi International has been calling for a deep reflection on the failure of war and violence and for investment in effective nonviolent tools for reconciliation to nurture the just peace essential to alleviating intense human suffering.

[Pax Christi USA](#)

Grounded in the Gospel and Catholic social teaching, Pax Christi USA is a membership organization that rejects war, preparation for war, every form of violence and domination, and personal and systemic racism.

Waging Nonviolence

Waging Nonviolence is a media organization that provides original reporting and expert analysis of social movements worldwide. They share stories from the forefront of nonviolent movements worldwide, provide unique perspectives, insight, and ideas for nonviolent activists fighting for justice and peace. They shed light on overlooked movements in the Global South, fostering cross-cultural knowledge exchange and skill-sharing.

THE SPIRITUALITY OF NONVIOLENCE:

Active Nonviolence

Active nonviolence is a creative power for good available to everyone. It is grounded in the sacredness of all life and respect for every person. When drawn upon, active nonviolence interrupts the cycle of violence by refusing to inflict harm and by actively seeking out ways to promote the common good and justice. It is not passive.

“My optimism rests on my belief in the infinite possibilities of the individual to develop nonviolence.”

- Gandhi

The positive energy of active nonviolence is accessible in the everyday lives of individuals, as well as in organized ways of working for change. It recognizes we are all interconnected, respects the dignity of every person, and believes that everyone can be transformed.

Active nonviolence is all-encompassing: It is a spirituality, a way of life, and a strategy for social change. Gandhi called it *satyagraha*: “Soul Force” or “Truth Force.” Martin Luther King, Jr. knew it as the way of unconditional love, a transformative power, the means to create the Beloved Community.

Active Nonviolence as a Strategy for Social Change

Active nonviolence can be a powerful force for social change. We are most familiar with the examples of Gandhi’s Salt March and the marches and sit-ins of the civil rights movement. More recently, demonstrations, protests, and civil disobedience have captured our attention in the student-led efforts to prevent gun violence and in movements for immigrant rights, climate action, and Black Lives Matter.

Empirical research has shown that nonviolent resistance is twice as effective in the long term as violent methods.¹

¹ <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2019/02/why-nonviolent-resistance-beats-violent-force-in-effecting-social-political-change/#:~:text=CHENOWETH:%20The%20finding%20is%20that,cure%2Dall%20for%20political%20strife.>

“Nonviolence doesn’t mean we have to passively accept injustice. We have to fight for our rights, we have to oppose injustice.”

- His Holiness, The Dalai Lama

Research and on-the-ground development of methods continue to unfold in areas such as restorative justice, mediation, unarmed civil defense and accompaniment, and trauma healing. What we are learning about evolution, quantum physics, and the brain adds other dimensions to our understanding of active nonviolence, as pointed out in “[Nonviolence and](#)

[the New Story of Human Nature](#),” an article by Michael Nagler.

Active Nonviolence as a Way of Life

Active nonviolence involves both our inner self and our outer self. It is manifested in how we treat ourselves, others, and Earth. It is embodied through such acts as respect, attentive listening, kindness, compassion, reconciliation, forgiveness, and works of justice.

"Nonviolence is not a garment to be put on and off at will. Its seat is in the heart, and it must be an inseparable part of our being."

- Gandhi

Active nonviolence is sometimes referred to as the “Third Way.” Parts of our brains are wired to automatically respond in two ways: fight or flight, by being passive or using violence. Active nonviolence opens up a third way of responding based on respect for the humanity of another, the sacredness of everything. [Martin Luther King, Jr.’s principles of nonviolence](#) continue to guide people in this Third Way. Many use these principles when facing difficult situations to discern how to act. The Institute for Peace and Justice in St. Louis has developed a [pledge of nonviolence](#) for families, schools, workplaces, and other situations, which illustrates how this can become a way of life.

Spirituality of Active Nonviolence

Nonviolence is the way of Christ, epitomized in the Sermon on the Mount and culminating in the command to love our enemies. (Mt.5:43-48) As Christians, we are called to recognize the centrality of nonviolence to the vision and mission of Jesus. The Gospels show us that the nonviolence of Jesus is a positive force for healing, restoring community, and asserting human dignity. It challenges culture and the status quo, confronts injustice and the powerful. It accepts suffering as a consequence but doesn’t inflict suffering.

All of the major faith traditions teach the way of nonviolence and have, at their core, respect for the other, compassion, forgiveness, and love.

Spiritual practices such as contemplation, meditation, centering prayer, and mindfulness enable us to get in touch with our Soul Force and open us to the interconnectedness of all.

Because we live in a violent culture, the path of being actively nonviolent is a lifelong journey; one of ongoing conversion.

“We do not need guns and bombs to bring peace. We need love and compassion.”

- Mother Teresa

NONVIOLENCE IN THE NEWS:

The 6 Superpowers That Faith Communities Bring to Nonviolent Struggle

Nonviolence author Maria J. Stephan states that faith communities bring six key strengths to nonviolent struggle: moral authority and prophetic voices; established networks for organizing, training, and communication; unifying symbols, rituals, and music; capacity for mutual aid and sanctuary; bridge-building across divisions; and organized noncooperation. They draw on spiritual power and hope to resist repression while helping sustain movements. These “superpowers” have played crucial roles in global nonviolent campaigns in amplifying participation, strengthening discipline, and defending human dignity.

Inside Ukraine’s First Nationwide Protests Since Russia’s Invasion

Ukraine recently saw its first nationwide protests since the Russian invasion, sparked by a law that weakened key anti-corruption bodies. Thousands, many of them young people, rallied peacefully across cities despite martial law. Protesters drew on Ukraine’s three-decade history of democracy movements, demanding government accountability rather than a radical change of leadership. President Zelenskyy responded by reversing the contentious law, reflecting the strength of democratic norms amid wartime constraints.

Stories like this, as well as opportunities to take action on justice issues, are available by subscribing to the weekly Action Alert Digest from the Franciscan Peace Center. Click [HERE](#) for more information.



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