

Sisters of Bon Secours



Just Peace Formation in Nonviolence

June, 2017

Active nonviolence: A way to build lasting peace in South Sudan

Members of the Religious Superiors' Association of South Sudan (RSASS) recently attended a meeting where they reflected on active nonviolence and on Pope Francis' World Day of Peace letter, Nonviolence: A Style of Politics for Peace.

Last year a member of one of these Congregations, Sister Veronika Rackova, SSps was gunned down by soldiers while driving an ambulance in Yei, South Sudan. Her mission was to save lives and her sacrifice an action of active nonviolence. In her memory the Women and Men Religious issued a message of nonviolence to members of their Congregations, to the people of South Sudan and to all people of good will.

In solidarity with RSASS and because of our connection to the people of South Sudan through Friends in Solidarity, this message is addressed to us. Allow it to challenge and inspire you on your own journey toward active nonviolence.



Sister Veronika Rackova, SSps

We have looked at the word of God and at the teaching of the Church. Both shed light and hope on South Sudan. We have seen that nonviolence is at the heart of the Gospel and that Jesus of

Nazareth himself lived in violent times, but his message offers a radically positive approach. Jesus Christ has come into the world to ...fight against violence and to destroy it with the nonviolence of his Kingdom. He died on the cross because of the kind of life he lived, a life of nonviolence and inclusive compassion. He died because of the options he made.

Jesus challenged the unjust and violent legal system and the political/religious establishments of his time, the institutions and structures that produced social exclusion and inflicted much suffering on people. He challenged violence and those who profited from it. He resisted with all his might the temptation to be drawn into violence and retaliation. We have understood in our reflections and prayers that Jesus Christ is not calling us to passivity, but rather to a creative nonviolent response and calls us to cultivate a virtue of nonviolent peacemaking. Indeed, Jesus Christ is our model of peacemaker.

The Gospel and Pope Francis invite us to "dedicate ourselves prayerfully and actively to banishing violence from our hearts, words and deeds, and to becoming nonviolent people and to building communities of nonviolence that care for our common home."

IN RESPONSE,

- We offer our prayers and solidarity to the victims of violence in South Sudan.
- We want to take a clear stand for creative and active nonviolence and against all forms of violence and threats to life and human dignity.
- We have made an action plan to raise awareness of active nonviolence through civic education, media, and workshops.
- We encourage our religious brothers and sisters in our communities to make all effort to build peace through active and creative nonviolence.
- We invite our religious leaders to lift up the vision of nonviolence in their preaching and teaching ministry.
- We urge our political leaders to end the war in South Sudan, to respect human rights and to promote a culture of peace and active nonviolence.
- We continue praying that reconciliation, justice, and lasting peace may prevail in South Sudan.

We commit ourselves to furthering Catholic understanding and practice of active nonviolence on the road to just peace.



Religious Superiors' Association of South Sudan (RSASS)

*How does this statement challenge/inspire you?
How are you dedicating yourself
prayerfully and actively
to becoming a nonviolent person?*