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Prayer for nonviolent life on the eve of March on Washington's 50th anniversary

John Dear | Aug. 27, 2013 On the Road to Peace

Next week, my new book, *The Nonviolent Life [1]*, will be published by Pace e Bene Press. In it, I propose that the life of nonviolence involves three dimensions: practicing nonviolence toward yourself; practicing nonviolence toward all others, all creatures and all creation; and practicing nonviolence by joining the growing global grass-roots movement of nonviolence. The challenge is to engage in all three dimensions simultaneously.

Everyone practices one or maybe two of these dimensions, but it's rare to find someone who consciously integrates all three aspects of nonviolence. That's the challenge of what Gandhi called "the nonviolence of the strong." That's what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton and the peacemaking saints of history did and what we are called to do, as well.

This week, as we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington and Dr. King's "I have a dream" speech, I thought I'd share the book's opening prayer. It asks for the grace to integrate every aspect of nonviolence in our lives so we can fulfill our vocations to be the beloved sons and daughters of the God of peace, peacemakers sent into the world of violence and war.

The Nonviolent Life can be ordered now from paceebene.org [1].

Prayer for a Nonviolent Life

God of peace, thank you for being gentle, loving, compassionate, and nonviolent! You are so nonviolent that you do not force yourself upon us, but gently call us to your wisdom and way of nonviolence. You give us the freedom to do as we will. Help us to do your will of peace, to choose your way of nonviolence. Help us to live a nonviolent life, to become your holy people of nonviolence, to welcome your reign of peace and nonviolence here on earth.

Help me to be nonviolent to myself. Give me the grace to let go of violence, to love and accept myself, to treat myself nonviolently, to cultivate inner peace, and to dwell in your peace. Send your Holy Spirit of peace upon me that I might live in relationship with you as your beloved child, that I might know your love and healing peace, love you in return and honor you by taking care of myself and being nonviolent to myself for the rest of my life.

Help me to practice loving nonviolence toward everyone I know and meet, that I might love my neighbor as myself, and never hurt anyone ever again. Help me to be nonviolent to all creatures and all creation, that I may spread your peace far and wide to all sentient beings, to your beautiful creation. Give me a heart as wide as the world that I might love everyone around the world, even those targeted as "enemies" by my nation. Open my heart to love every human being as my sister and brother, that I might practice your universal nonviolent love from now on.

Help me to serve your reign of peace by joining the global grassroots movement of nonviolence. Make me an

instrument of your peace, that I might do my part to help abolish war, poverty, hunger, racism, sexism, executions, nuclear weapons, systemic injustice and environmental destruction, and welcome your nonviolent reign of peace with justice here on earth. Bless this grassroots movement of nonviolence with your wisdom, your determination, and your persistent action that we might see "justice roll down like waters" and welcome new breakthroughs of justice and peace every day.

As I follow the nonviolent Jesus on the path of peace and love, help me to claim my true identity as your beloved son/daughter, that I might always live in your peace and love, and serve your reign of peace and love, now and forever.

Thank you. Amen.

[John Dear's new book, *The Nonviolent Life*, will be published next week. Preorder it here [1]. John will undertake a speaking tour of Scotland next month and next year will tour the United States speaking about the life of nonviolence. To see John's speaking schedule or to invite him to speak in your church or school, go to John Dear's website [2] or contact the Francsican-based peace group Pace e Bene [3]. John's book *Lazarus, Come Forth!* [4] and other recent books, including *Daniel Berrigan: Essential Writings* [5], *Put Down Your Sword* [6] and *A Persistent Peace* [7], are available from Amazon.com.]

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Links:
[1] http://paceebene.org/store/item/nonviolent-life
[2] http://www.johndear.org/
[3] http://paceebene.org/
[4] http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1570759367/ref=pd_lpo_k2_dp_sr_1?pf_rd_p=486539851&pf_rd_s=lpo-top-stripe-1&pf_rd_t=201&pf_rd_i=1584200405&pf_rd_m=ATVPDKIKX0DER&pf_rd_r=1GYTD8AM60P
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[8] http://ncronline.org/email-alert-signup