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## PRAYERS

### **Sisters of Mercy's Critical Concerns Through the Lens of Nonviolence**

The Sisters of Mercy were founded out of a deep concern for persons who are poor. Today, that commitment is focused in five “critical concerns” that we address through prayer; attention to personal, communal and institutional choices; education; advocacy with legislators and other government leaders; and corporate engagement.

These Critical Concerns are focused on nonviolence, immigration, women, care of earth, and racism.

We believe these areas of critical concern are all interconnected and what affects one also affects the others as part of the web of life's connections. At one time we may have a more concentrated focus on one but a closer look allows us to see how each hinges on the other and forms a whole.

The prayers and reflection pieces to follow view Mercy's Critical Concerns using the lens of nonviolence.

We invite everyone to use these resources and to share with others.



## Personal Nonviolence



### ***Opening Prayer***

**Leader:** O God of Compassion and Peace bless us with an awareness of your presence with us as we gather together in this space.

**All:** O Compassionate, peaceful God, we are grateful for your presence and ask to be open and receptive to your call to be nonviolent.

**Reading:** Isaiah 11:6-9 *The Wolf and the Lamb*

The wolf will dwell with the lamb,  
and the leopard will lie down with the young goat;  
the calf and the lion cub will graze together,  
and a little child will lead them.  
The cow will feed with the bear;  
their young will lie down together.  
The lion will eat hay like the ox,  
The baby will play next to the den of the cobra,  
and the toddler will dance over the viper's nest.  
There will be no harm, no destruction  
anywhere in my holy mountain,  
for as water fills the sea,  
so the land will be filled with the knowledge of Yahweh.

### **Reflection:**

This reading presents almost an unbelievable, unreal picture of a possibility. Could it ever happen that the wolf and lamb would share the same space without aggression?  
Would a toddler dance over a viper's nest?

What do you think is the meaning of this reading from Isaiah?

Does this passage hold any message for me? If so, what might it be?

### **Sharing:**

Each one is invited to share whatever she/he wishes about the concept or idea of nonviolence. You may want to share your own growing consciousness of nonviolence in your life and personal interactions.

**Possible Actions:**

Spend some time exploring the lives of those who have embraced nonviolence as a lifestyle, for example: Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr. Sojourner Truth, Dorothy Day, Dorothy Stang, Women Martyrs of El Salvador, Oscar Romero.

Think about the language you use every day. Are there words or phrases that have violent overtones. (“I could kill her...” going ballistic, using bullet points in a presentation instead of focus points, etc?) Consider other ways of expressing these thoughts using nonviolent language.

Make a commitment to learn more about the theology and practice of nonviolence.

Determine to be nonviolent with yourself by not putting yourself down, by taking time for your own personal space and time for relaxation.

Consider the many issues of our world that are all embedded in violence: human trafficking, gun violence, extractive industries, domestic abuse, and war. Make a commitment to learn about one of these issues and engage in action (letter writing, phone call to legislators, petitions, editorials, demonstrations, lobby visit) to raise awareness and work to bring about change.

**Closing Prayer:**

O God, of Mercy and Compassion, open our heart to your grace. We ask You to:

Bless us with courage to embrace nonviolence in our everyday lives

Bless us with vision to seek alternatives when violence appears as the only solution

Encourage us to look deeply at our own complicity that allows violence to continue in our own hearts and in our world

Bless us with insight to see the roots of violence inherent in Mercy's Critical Concerns

Bless us with the tenacity to stay committed to the struggle to shape a more peaceful, nonviolent world for all your people

O good and gracious God, source of all life,  
all creation is charged with your Divine Energy.  
Grant us the strength and courage, we pray,  
for a radical transformation of own lives and a  
deeper realization of your Kin-dom among us. Amen