

The first question

My personal, family, work and political circumstances as shaped by the Israeli occupation have motivated me to participate in nonviolence and peace building. During my work at the AEI/Sumud Story House in Bethlehem/Palestine, I have been exposed to different kinds of formal and informal education and participated in several of AEI's nonviolence activities. Examples are interreligious prayers and retreats, singing and acting in front of the Wall, collecting, editing and fixing story posters in the so-called Wall Museum, vigils and marches, encouraging the Bethlehem Sumud Choir, filming and documenting, interviewing peace activists, and holding an annual Sumud Festival.

The second question

Sumud is Arabic for steadfastness. It refers to an active, nonviolent life style in which one neither resigns to the occupation nor become absorbed by hate towards the enemy. *Sumud* is a third way in which one keeps head and dignity high, stays actively connected to the land and the community, and challenges occupation by a peaceful life style with preparedness to suffer. *Sumud* is about being tested as Jesus was tested in Gethsemane and afterwards. It's a concept which gives space to stories and voices of individual women, families and communities. Jesus as well as personalities like Gandhi and King are examples showing the personal leadership of *sumud*.

Sumud implies a solid strategy, living by example. Strategy means that we have to work on educating and liberating people, and especially raising the voice of women. Women have to participate and present their stories, but they should also be decision-makers in their communities. Each woman has her own way to make a difference. This has also a personal and family dimension. It is about raising your children in the spirit of *sumud*, against the occupation, against despair and emigration, against the bare survival. In the case of women's rights, you are trying to build your country in a way that aims at ending the occupation. When I fight what is called "honor killings", it is not only a fight for humanity but also a fight against the occupation because you make your people and community stronger.

The third question

I believe that we have several strategies available to deepen and widen the practice of nonviolence in the worldwide Catholic community. All require our energy:

- Living by example: working with Catholic communities on local and global issues of justice, inequality, discrimination, poverty and peace – and showing the many linkages between the different issues in an increasingly interconnected world. A practice of nonviolence can only be fostered by working together on real world problems.

- To encourage joint working and living by example it is important for the church to increasingly involve lay people in the church organization. Conversely, it is helpful to have more clergy involved in directly dealing with real life problems.

- To approach world problems nonviolently, it is important to work on peace/nonviolence education, including the ability of people to raise their voice in different forms and genres.

- Essential for strengthening nonviolence in the Catholic community is working with women on issues important for protecting her human security and rights. It is also essential to promote women's participation in the society, including her participation in the church.

- We should try to strengthen the dialogical capacity of the Catholic Church with regard to both ecumenical dialogues within the Christian church and dialogues across religious borders. Dialogues between religious communities are important for allowing a broad-based, global nonviolent/peace movement. While there are many institutional and dogmatic obstacles here, we can use the exemplary practice of the present Pope to illustrate the need for inter-religious dialogue and living together.

- It will be important for believers in the Church to make a direct connection between the example of Jesus' life of suffering *sumud* and approaching nonviolently present-day world problems. Symbols referring to Jesus' life of struggling nonviolently for a just peace are meaningful. Showing the life of the Virgin Mary and the life stories of saints in appealing forms and designs can help to illustrate a nonviolent life style. Some spiritual traditions of the church are inspired by nonviolent approaches including indigenous traditions in newly established churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Last but not least, it is extremely important that the church itself gives a good example of nonviolence, including preventing the abuse of children in its own ranks.