

Eucharist of Gospel Nonviolence

September 10, 2021

Brothers and Sisters in Peacemaking,



During the June 2021 Assembly for the Association of United States Catholic Priests (AUSCP), Gospel Nonviolence was chosen as one of three priorities for the coming three years. We, the members of the Gospel Nonviolence Working Group, welcome this mandate and commit ourselves to continue implementing *'Artisans of Peace'*, both as way of life and as a prophetic confrontation with the multiple forms of violence in our world through the transforming power of Gospel Nonviolence.

The Working Group encourages AUSCP to join Pax Christi USA, Pace e Bene, and other peace groups in the weeks of **Nonviolent Action, September 18—October 2**. The Leadership Team of AUSCP has not yet had a chance to deliberate on supporting this Eucharistic Prayer, so we want to make it clear that, for now, this action comes only from the Working Group on Gospel Nonviolence. We also request that the Leadership Team forward this Eucharistic Prayer to the USCCB and the Vatican for their review and blessing.

Our original intention was to write a paper asking the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) to include the theme of active, Gospel nonviolence in their current three-year study of the Eucharist. However, given the growing urgency of violence and war in our world, we have chosen to act more directly. For a further understanding of our discernment, please read the rationale that introduces this Eucharist of Gospel Nonviolence.

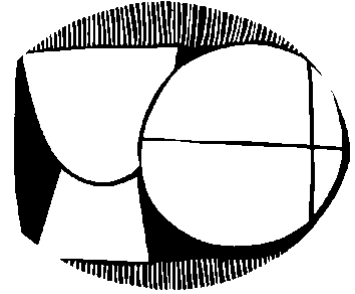
We invite our brother priests, our fellow Catholics, and all peace-loving people to join us in prayer and action. Attached you will find the following resources for prayer and action:

1. Rationale for the Eucharist of Gospel Nonviolence
2. Prayers for the Eucharist of Gospel Nonviolence
3. Possible Scripture Readings
4. Intercessory Prayers
5. Suggested Scripture Readings for Eucharist of Gospel Nonviolence
6. Eucharistic Prayer for Gospel Nonviolence—Option I
7. Eucharistic Prayer for Gospel Nonviolence—Option II
8. Other Resources for Prayer and Reflection:
 - Sample Homily for Gospel Nonviolence (with invited congregational survey/response).
 - Mysteries of the Rosary for Peace and of Nonviolent Love
 - Prayer for a Nonviolent Heart

In the peace of the Risen Christ,

Gospel Nonviolent Working Group, AUSCP

Rationale for the Eucharist of Gospel Nonviolence



After prayer and discernment, we, the core members of the Working Group on Gospel Nonviolence for the Association of United States Catholic Priests (AUSCP), have chosen a pathway of action. We have prepared a Eucharist of Gospel Nonviolence that we are inviting our brother priests and their parish communities to pray during the weeks of Nonviolent Action, September 18-October 2, 2021. In doing so, we will join Pax Christi, Pace e Bene, and other peace groups in prayer and action on behalf of active Gospel Nonviolence. Our action flows from our ongoing commitment to implement an integral approach to peacemaking as articulated in '*Artisans of Peace.*'

In the ancient tradition of the Church, the prayer of the community gathered at the Eucharistic table became the creative source of believing and living. In other words, prayer creates vision, which creates a way of life. Or, to use the ancient terminology, *lex orandi* shapes *lex credendi*, which, in turn, forms *lex vivendi*.

What is the origin of this ancient pattern? The Church's tradition is grounded in the prayer, preaching, and practice of Jesus himself. If we study Paul's early account of the Eucharist (I Cor: 23-27) or read the *Didache* (a striking example of one of the earliest Eucharistic Prayers), there is a clear connection to the all-inclusive, forgiving, nonviolent love of Jesus, the suffering servant of Abba.

In what way is Jesus and his ministry the source of these early Eucharistic Prayers? The answer is both simple and historically complex.

At his baptism (described in all the Synoptic gospels), Jesus' encounter with God as '*Abba,*' the God who radically affirmed him as *agapetos* (which, in deep translation, means the '*Beloved Son whose life overflows with love*') became the grounding experience of his prayer, his parables, and his practice of inclusive love and mercy. In his experience of unconditional love, Jesus realized that this same overflowing love becomes accessible to the entire human community. This conviction is clearly embodied in his teaching about forgiving enemies, putting away swords, his new commandment of inclusive love, confronting systems of domination, and his final embrace of his state-sponsored execution on the cross. His life, ministry, and death are a profound commitment to active nonviolent, transforming love. His resurrection is, in turn, his vindication by the same God of life who, through the power of the Spirit, creates the Body of Christ, the Church, as the presence of the Risen Christ in history.

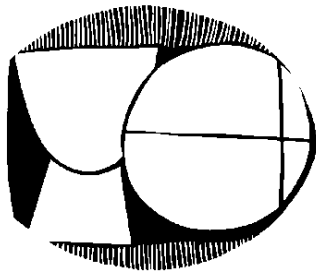
Over the centuries, however, the communal prayer, the compassionate vision, and the nonviolent praxis of Jesus were gradually adapted to and replaced by the prayer, vision, and

praxis of 'Christendom'—the 'empire' with its justification of peace through victory rather than peace through active nonviolent love and justice.

In our contemporary liturgy, the nonviolent Christ of the gospels is barely visible. In many ways, our community prayer is shaped more by prayers for peace through victory than peace through the power of nonviolent love. There are significant historical reasons for this, including the fact that most bishops, priests, and laity in the United States are still shaped by a theology of 'redemptive violence' or peace through military strength, rather than the creative nonviolence of the Gospel.

Ironically, the teaching of all recent popes, but especially Pope Francis, is challenging the Church to choose peace through active nonviolence instead of peace through military victory.

This Eucharist of Gospel Nonviolence is an effort to reclaim the *lex orandi*, the *lex credendi*, and the *lex vivendi* that flows from the prayer, preaching, and praxis of the historical Jesus and the risen Christ. It seeks to embody his life of inclusive loving, forgiving enemies, resisting systems of violence, confronting the instruments of war, and the pursuit of active non-violence in the communal prayer of the Church.



Prayers for the Eucharist of Gospel Nonviolence

Opening Prayer

God of life, you continue to create your universe with wondrous beauty and rich diversity. Send your Spirit of unity more deeply into our lives, so that we will not turn our diversity into division, or our fear into hatred. May your Risen Son, the Servant of Nonviolent Love, breath his peace into our minds and hearts. We ask this in his name, who lives forever and ever. Amen.

Prayer over the Gifts

Creator God, through this bread and wine, we unite our lives to the offering of your faithful servant, Jesus. May his body, broken in nonviolent love, and his blood, poured out in healing forgiveness, rekindle our commitment to the work of justice and the pathway to peace. We ask this through Christ Our Lord.

Prayer After Communion

Loving and generous God, you have gathered us at this table of your remembrance. We thank you for nourishing your pilgrim community with the Bread of Peace and the Cup of Blessing. May this sacred food sustain our commitment to overcome fear with trust, injury with pardon, and hatred with nonviolent love. We ask this through the Risen Christ who lives forever. Amen.

Scripture Readings for Eucharist of Gospel Nonviolence

You may use the readings assigned for the day.

Or, if you prefer, choose from the Catholic Lectionary (Masses for Various Needs and Occasions), specifically in

Masses for Peace and Justice, Nos. 887-891.

Intercessory Prayers for Gospel Nonviolence



Introductory Note: *The following reflect a variety of prayers of petition for nonviolence. Many of them are from the USCCB, and several are composed by Father Charles McCarthy. We offer these only as possible examples. Feel free to choose among them or to compose your own.*

For an end to all forms of violence whether perpetrated by harsh words, racist hatred, silent prejudice, systemic injustice, weapons of war, or cold indifference. May our homes, our nation, and countries around the world become communities of peace, let us pray to the Lord.

For a growing appreciation of the Eucharist as the Sacrament of Nonviolence, that a witness to the Gospel of Life begin with a steadfast refusal to be party to war on the unborn that is abortion and also the abortion of all stages of life that is war, let us pray to the Lord.

For our faith community, that we may celebrate and welcome the diverse faces of Christ in our worship, our ministries, and our leaders, and that we may act together to confront all forms of violence, let us pray to the Lord.

For our political and religious leaders, that they will strive to overcome systemic injustice by working for fair education, adequate housing, equal opportunities for employment, and abolishing nuclear weapons, let us pray to the Lord.

For our parish, that we may cultivate hospitality, extend welcome, and encourage the participation of people of all cultures, ethnicities and ways of life, let us pray to the Lord.

For the courage to have difficult conversations about racism, homophobia, misogyny, militarism, and other systemic structures of violence. And for a better appreciation of how our words and actions – or even our silence – can impact our communities, let us pray to the Lord.

For solidarity in our global human family, that we may work together to protect those who are most vulnerable and most in need, let us pray to the Lord.

For our Holy Father, Pope Francis, that we may hear and respond to his call for Gospel nonviolence in our church, in our culture, and in our world, let us pray to the Lord.

For those countless millions of Christian men and women who killed and were killed, who maimed and were maimed in war over the last 1700 years, and who were denied knowledge of the Nonviolent Jesus of the Gospel and His Way of Nonviolent Love of friends and enemies by their bishops, priests, and ministers. Let us pray to the Lord.

For those hundreds of millions of mothers, fathers, and children, born and unborn, murdered and maimed in soul, spirit, and body over the centuries by Christian Just-Warists, let us pray to the Lord.

For the over 30,000 US military victims of PTSD/suicide since 9/11/2001 and their families, that they may rest in peace as we lament their unspeakable losses, let us pray to the Lord.

Eucharist Prayer of Gospel Nonviolence

Option I

[Based on the Eucharistic Prayer of Reconciliation II]

Preface:

Loving Father, we praise you and thank you through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is your faithful servant, our brother, and brings peace to our broken world through his self-emptying love.

Through Christ's passion and death, our swords are transformed into plowshares, our animosity into reconciliation, our alienation into community, and our hatred into forgiveness toward our enemies.

Your Spirit changes our hearts: enemies begin to speak to one another, those who were estranged join hands in friendship, and nations seek the way of peace together.

The Spirit of the nonviolent Christ is at work when understanding puts an end to strife, when hatred is overcome by compassion, and vengeance gives way to forgiveness.

For the gift of this transforming love, we never cease to thank and praise you. We join with all the choirs of heaven and with all the earth to proclaim your glory:

Holy, Holy, etc.

Eucharistic Prayer

God of love and compassion, we praise you through your Son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus, the Risen One, is the Word that brings liberation from injustice and violence,
the hand you stretch out to the poor and the oppressed,
the way that leads to peace.

God, our Father, because of fear, hatred, and ever-recurring wars, we have wandered far from your love, but through your Son you have brought us back to you and to one another.

To overcome the reign of violence, he embraced the cross as the pathway to peace.

Therefore, we celebrate the promise of healing that the Nonviolent Christ has won for us.

Epiclesis

We ask you to sanctify these gifts by the power of your Spirit, as we now fulfill your Son's command.

While he was at supper on the night before he died for us, he took bread in his hands and gave you thanks and praise.

He broke the bread, gave it to his disciples and said:

Take this, all of you, and eat it; this is my body which will be given up for you.

At the end of the meal, he took the cup.

Again, he praised you for your goodness, gave the cup to his disciples and said:

Take this, all of you, and drink from it; this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.

Memorial Acclamation:

Priest: Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All: Lord, by your cross and resurrection, you have set us free. You are the Savior of the World.

Anamnesis, Offering, and Intercessions

God of Love, your Son has entrusted to us this new Passover meal, this pledge of his love. We celebrate that he saved us through nonviolent love, thereby freeing us from the world's slavery to violence and war.

We entrust our lives to Jesus' new commandment to love one another, without violence, as he has loved us. We remember how this Passover meal gave him the strength to endure his passion and execution, as he laid down his life for us in nonviolent love.

We rejoice in His resurrection and offer to you the gift you have given us, the Bread of life and the Cup of eternal salvation.

Therefore, we ask you, Father, to accept us, together with your Son. Fill us with his Spirit through our sharing in this meal. May he take away all that divides us.

May his Holy Spirit keep us always in communion with Francis, our Pope, _____, our bishop, together with all our brothers and sisters. Loving Father, make your Church throughout the world a sign of unity and an instrument of your peace.

You have gathered us here around the table of your Son, in fellowship with the Virgin Mary, mother of God, Joseph her spouse, and all the martyrs and saints. In that new creation where the fullness of your peace will be revealed, gather people of every race, religion, language, and way of life to share in the one eternal banquet with Jesus Christ the Lord.

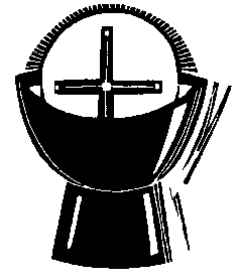
Doxology

Through Christ with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever.

Amen!

Eucharist Prayer of Gospel Nonviolence

Option II



Preface

God our Father and Mother, loving Source and Destiny of all life, we praise you and thank you through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The nonviolent Christ is your faithful servant, our brother, who brings peace to our broken world through his new commandment of love and his confrontation with the powers of evil and injustice.

Through Christ's self-emptying love, our swords are transformed into plowshares, our hostility into reconciliation, our alienation into community, and our hatred into forgiveness of our enemies.

Your Spirit changes our hearts: enemies begin to speak to one another, those who were estranged join hands in friendship, and nations seek the way of peace together.

The Spirit of the nonviolent Christ is at work when understanding puts an end to strife, when hatred is overcome by mercy, and revenge gives way to forgiveness.

For the gift of this transforming love, we never cease to thank and praise you. We join with all the choirs of heaven and all the earth as we sing forever to your glory:

Holy, Holy, etc.

Eucharistic Prayer

Blessed are you, compassionate and faithful God.
We do well always and everywhere to give you thanks.
You have no need of our praise, yet our desire to thank you is itself your gift to us.

With loving tenderness, you have gathered your people and filled us with a longing for peace that would last and for justice that would never fail. Through countless generations, your people hungered for the bread of freedom. From them, you raised up Jesus, the Living Bread, in whom ancient hungers were satisfied.

Jesus is the Word that brings liberation from injustice and violence, the hand you stretch out to the sick, the poor, and the oppressed, the way that leads to peace.

On the night before he went forth to his life-giving death, rejecting violence, loving his enemies, and praying for his persecutors, Jesus gave his disciples a new commandment:
'Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.'

With a love stronger than death, Jesus opened his arms wide and surrendered his Spirit in suffering service.

Epiclesis

Loving God, send your Holy Spirit to heal our lives and to make holy these gifts of bread and wine, that they may become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

While he was at supper on the night before he died for us, he took bread in his hands and gave you thanks and praise.

He broke the bread, gave it to his disciples and said:
Take this, all of you, and eat it; this is my body which will be given up for you.

At the end of the meal, he took the cup.
Again, he praised you for your goodness, gave the cup to his disciples and said:

Take this, all of you, and drink from it; this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.

Memorial Acclamation:

Priest: Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All: Lord, by your cross and resurrection, you have set us free.

You are the Savior of the World.

Anamnesis, Offering, and Intercessions

Loving God, with gratitude we call to mind the passion of your Son, Jesus. We remember his suffering at the hands of a broken humanity filled with the spirit of violence and enmity. We remember that He endured his passion with a love free of retaliation, revenge, and retribution. We recall his execution on the cross, but we also recall that He died loving his enemies and praying for his persecutors.

We celebrate that you raised him on the third day as your vindication of His love for all his brothers and sisters in the human community and for all of creation.

Therefore, with grateful hearts we offer to you the gift that you have given us, the Bread of life and the Cup of salvation.

We ask you, Father, to accept us, together with your Son.

Fill us with his Spirit through our sharing in this meal.

May his Spirit of peace take away all that divides us.

And may this same Holy Spirit keep us always in communion with Francis, our Pope, _____, our bishop, together with all our brothers and sisters, living and deceased.

Loving Father, make your Church throughout the world a sign of unity and an instrument of your peace.

You have gathered us here around the table of your Son, in fellowship with the Virgin Mary, mother of God, Joseph her spouse, and all the martyrs and saints. In that new creation, where the fullness of your peace will be revealed, gather people of every race, language, religion, and way of life to share in the one eternal banquet with Jesus Christ the Lord.

Doxology

Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, forever and ever.

Amen!

Additional Resources for Prayer and Action



Sample Homily on Gospel Nonviolence

[For use in a parish weekend Mass setting, inviting an active response]

It's during Holy Week that we hear about Jesus' arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. Saint Matthew's version, reads this way:

"Then stepping forward they laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. And behold, one of those who accompanied Jesus put his hand to his sword, drew it, and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword back into its sheath, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot call upon my Father and he will not provide me at this moment with more than twelve legions of angels?' " Matthew 26:50-53.

Saint John the Evangelist's version, John 18:11, identifies the swordsman as Saint Peter:

"Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its scabbard. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father gave me?" John 18:11

St Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits in the 16th century, had been wounded as a soldier. After his recovery and conversion, he is pictured laying his sword on the altar as a sign that he is giving up that career to follow the nonviolent Jesus. **St Martin of Tours** who lived during the Roman Empire times did something similar: As he was retiring, he said he could no longer submit to the authority of his former officer, telling him, "I am the soldier of Christ: it is not lawful for me to fight."

Even today it happens that a person who once entered the military has an epiphany, an awakening that leads him to leave the military, which he sometimes does quietly, sometimes publicly, by renouncing his former employment as having been a mistake. It can be because he discovers the nonviolent Jesus or simply because he has learned a thing or two, he wasn't aware of when younger.

We've been made aware as Americans, especially after World War I and all wars since, that many are the former soldiers who are psychologically and spiritually wounded by their war experience. It has a name: PDS, *Post Deployment Syndrome*. Also: PTSD, *Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*. Doesn't Jesus know that when he orders Peter to put up his sword? His words are hauntingly true: "...for all who take up the sword will perish by the sword." The number of suicides by former soldiers is because they PERISH by despair brought on by what they've seen or done in war.

Next week we'll consider two 20th century Catholics who renounce the sword because they came to understand that it wasn't Jesus' way. This week, I invite you to consider the case of an American who, over the last ten years or so, matured into an understanding that did not come from our Christian Faith but from a personally shattering experience that led him to Federal Court in July of 2021 where he wrote the judge the letter you can find as a bulletin insert this weekend. I ask you to put yourself in the judge's and juries' shoes in making your decision: Innocent or guilty?

I invite you to write down your decision and get it back to me before next Friday, in time for me to be able to quote from it. If you want your name withheld, make that clear as well. It's unlikely even among ourselves, as Mass-going Catholics, that there's going to be agreement. But we do need to listen to each other. After all, here we are at Mass, praying together, communing together on the Body and Blood of Jesus, as we remember his life, passion and death and resurrection and as we await his return in glory.

Important Note: *The Presider/Pastor is encouraged to publish the letter of Daniel Hale in the parish bulletin with the invitation to parishioners to respond as indicated above, either by email, regular mail, or in person. Here is the link to that letter:*

<https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2021/07/26/lett-j26.html>.

You can also find the letter in its complete version of this Eucharist for Gospel Nonviolence on the AUSCP website in the Gospel Nonviolence section.

The Mysteries of the Rosary for Peace

O Prince of Peace, Nonviolent Christ, grant that I may follow You faithfully as a pilgrim of peace in every area of life. Through the reconciling power of Your Mercy, May our world witness the miracle of Your love and peace anew.

1. Peace in our hearts:

Lord you ask me, "Where do the conflicts and disputes among you originate? Is it not our inner cravings that make war within your members?" (James 4:1) Forgive me for not being at home in my own house. I am so easily affected by fear and mistrust. I am anxious and upset about many things. Open my heart to Your peace. My heart is restless until I find my rest in You. "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me!" Thank you, Jesus, for saying to me, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you." (John 14:27).

2. Peace in our families:

Forgive me, O God, for not being at home when I am with my family and close friends. I have sought a separate peace which excludes them from my heart. I have not entrusted to them my needs, fears, and hopes. But You are my peace. You have broken down the dividing wall of hostility to reconcile us. (Ephesians 2:14)

3. Peace in our Church:

You, Lord, call me beyond my comfortable circle of friends to value others who are so different from me! Help me to really believe in the larger Body of Christ that we are ... "that there may be no dissension in the Body, but that all members may be concerned for one another." (1 Cor 12:25) Disarm my heart so that I may learn to respect others and to reconcile myself to their differences, in church and community.

4. Peace in our cities and nation:

"Coming within sight of the city, He wept over it and said: 'If only you had known the path to peace this day; but you have completely lost it from view...because you failed to recognize the time of your visitation'." (Luke 10:41 & 44) Jesus, You weep today over our cities and our nation. We fail to recognize the invitation of Your Spirit or the presence of Your Kingdom. By clinging to the material comforts of our nation, we are ravaged by our own social sins: corporate greed; racism; sexism; alcoholism; militarism; and homelessness. We would heed Your call, to co-create with You in the work of redemption, to build the "City of God." Give us contrition to confess our failure. Give us courage to risk beginning again.

5. Peace in our global village:

O Jesus, You have revealed that every inch of earth is the dwelling place of Your Spirit. The earth is the motherland of all Our Father's children. But we have only paid You lip service in this. Our nations are greedy and hoard our mother's gifts. In fear and in the name of "national security" we have chosen bombs instead of bread for Your helpless little ones who starve to death. Help us see the light of "common security" as you weave the web of life anew and invite us to interdependence. As pilgrims of peace, help us surrender our fears to You and to each other that we might create new ways to live together in peace. Then may we be one Body, one people, one family, one Spirit in Christ. Amen

Mysteries of the Rosary for Nonviolent Love

Jesus bids us to follow his example and move out to actively care for others by refusing to let people be used as things. His compassionate presence to persons calls us pilgrims out of passive piety into decisive action.

1. **The teaching of nonviolence** (Luke 4:17-21): Jesus is living as God's "Beloved One." Confident in the anointing that has freed him to genuinely love every person, he embodies the redeeming compassion of Isaiah's mysterious suffering servant.

2. **The practice of nonviolent tactics** (Luke 4:22-30): As Jesus encounters the closed-mindedness of a fickle congregation he peaks their indignation, only to disarm their anger somehow in his person-to-person contact.

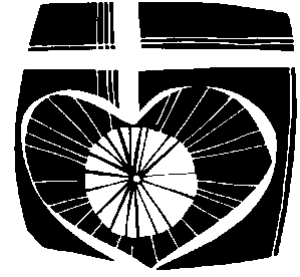
3. **Speaking truth to power** (Luke 11:39-54, Mt. 23:2-6): Jesus points out the violence of the powerful who manipulate and oppress others. He deals simply and directly with the scribes and pharisees even while they try to entrap him.

4. **Nonviolent direct action** (Matthew 21:12-13; John 2:14-17): The heart of God is on fire in love with the dignity of every person. Jesus will not let what is most sacred be abused. His active caring is expressed in holy anger and a direct rejection of evil as he drives the moneychangers from the temple.

5. **Loving your enemies** (Luke 23:34): Because Jesus saw beyond the cycle of violence to the helplessness of each person caught in it, he prayed for his executioners, "Father, forgive them. they know not what they do." Violence ends where love begins.

Prayer For a NONVIOLENT HEART

Recognizing the violence in our own hearts, yet trusting in the goodness and mercy of God, we ask you, O Nonviolent One, to help us practice today what you taught us in the Sermon on the Mount: to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us that we might be daughters and sons of our Creator in heaven.



We ask that today we might carry out in our lives the love and example you gave us:

- by striving for peace within ourselves and seeking to be peacemakers in our daily lives;
- by refusing to retaliate in the face of provocation and violence;
- by persevering in nonviolence of tongue and heart;
- by living conscientiously and simply so that we do not deprive others of the means to live;
- by actively resisting evil and working nonviolently to abolish war and the causes of war from our own hearts and from the face of the earth.

O God, we trust in Your sustaining love and believe that just as You gave us the grace and desire to offer this, so You will also bestow abundant grace to fulfill this prayer. Amen.
