

Violence is not the Answer

Violence is anything that demeans the image of God in our neighbors

Therefore, war is violence
prejudice is violence
hatred is violence
hunger is violence
poverty is violence
injustice is violence

Crimes against humanity are violence
as is abuse of women, children
and those of a different class, color or creed

Words can do violence
actions can do violence
economic policies can do violence

Turning a blind eye or deaf ear or remaining silent in the face of violence done to others is violence

Violence springs from fear, from arrogance, from greed
and from passions born of rivalry, revenge or racism

Violence dulls the heart of the perpetrator
dims the spirit of the victimized
destroys the fabric of human community

Violence is heightened by religious extremism, by access to weapons, by media that dehumanizes others or desensitizes us

Whether inflicted by governments or religious groups, corporate entities or individuals, liberation fighters or armies of the state, **violence is contrary to the will of God and the way of Christ**

Violence can be overcome
by cultivating love
by practicing faith
by recognizing the image of God in every person
by peaceful resistance
by prayerful persistence
by unremitting insistence on justice

Violence is not the answer to the questions and conflicts and fears that confront us

Only love lived out with justice in human relationships overcomes violence