

The Pascal Mystery ... grace that transforms.

*Love your enemies
... do good to those who hate you.*

Lk 6:27

Love that Transforms

from Sr. Patty Podhaisky, osf

Non-violence is based on the belief that only love can conquer hate, only love can break the cycle of violence. One of the basic principles of non-violent love is the willingness to suffer out of love for another. The story below provides an illustration of such love (*excerpted from the Daily Meditations of CAC, 10/29/22*):

At a 1960 lunch counter sit-in protesting segregation in Arlington, Virginia, Quaker peace activist David Hartsough discovered God's power in the power of nonviolence:

“Love your enemies . . . do good to those who hate you.” (Lk 6:27)

I was meditating on those words when I heard a voice behind me say, “Get out of this store in two seconds, or I’m going to stab this through your heart.” I glanced behind me at a man with the most terrible look of hatred I had ever seen. His eyes blazed, his jaw quivered, and his shaking hand held a switchblade—about half an inch from my heart ...

I turned around and tried my best to smile. Looking him in the eye, I said to him, “Friend, do what you believe is right, and I will still try to love you.” Both his jaw and his hand dropped. Miraculously, he turned away and walked out of the store.

That was the most powerful experience of my twenty years of life. It confirmed my belief in the power of love, the power of goodness, the power of God working through us to overcome hatred and violence. I had a profound sense that nonviolence really works. At that moment, nonviolence became much more than a philosophical idea or a tactic that had once made a difference in Gandhi’s India. It became the way I wanted to relate to other human beings, a way of life, a way of working for change.

My response had touched something in my accuser. He had seen me as an enemy. But through my response, I believe I became a human being to him. The humanity in each of us touched.

May God’s grace lead us to transforming love this Easter.

Your Sisters of St. Francis in Sacred Heart Community

March 31, 2024