

Causes of violence are as complex and diverse as its manifestations. Not so infrequently, violence stems from unhealthy upbringings and dangerous indoctrinations. Today, in the face of growing violence in society, it is necessary that families become effective schools of civilization and make every effort to nurture the value of non-violence.

Non-violence is the concrete application in one's life of the golden rule: 'Do to others as you would like others do unto you'. It entails that we respect and treat the other, including the 'different other', as a person endowed with inherent human dignity and inalienable rights. Avoidance of harm to anyone in any way is, therefore, a corollary to our way of being and living as humans.

Unfortunately, refusal by some to accept the 'other' in general and the 'different other' in particular, mostly due to fear, ignorance, mistrust or sense of superiority, has generated an atmosphere of widespread intolerance and violence. This situation can be overcome "by countering it with more love, with more goodness." (Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus, 18 February, 2008).

This 'more' requires a grace from above, so also a place to cultivate love and goodness. Family is a prime place where a counter culture of peace and nonviolence can find a fertile soil. It is here the children, led by the example of parents and elders, according to Pope Francis, "learn to communicate and to show concern for one another, and in which frictions and even conflicts have to be resolved not by force but by dialogue, respect, concern for the good of the other, mercy and forgiveness" (cf. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, 2016, nos.90-130). Only with persons of non-violence as members, can families greatly contribute to making non-violence truly a way of life in the society.

Both our religions give primacy to a life of love and non-violence. Jesus taught his followers to love even their enemies (cf. Lk 6:27) and by His eminent example of life inspired them to do likewise. Thus, for us Christians, "nonviolence is not merely a tactical behaviour but a person's way of being" (Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus, 18 February, 2008) based on love and truth. 'Ahimsa' for you Jains is the sheet-anchor of your religion - 'Ahimsa paramo dharmah' (non-violence is the supreme virtue or religion).

As believers rooted in our own religious convictions and as persons with shared values and with the sense of co-responsibility for the human family, may we, joining other believers and people of good will, do all that we can, individually and collectively, to shape families into 'nurseries' of non-violence to build a humanity that cares for our common home and all its inhabitants! Wish you all a happy feast of Mahavir Janma Kalyanak!

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