



Call to Justice: “JusticeGram” of the Salvatorian Family USA

Peacebuilding as Gospel Call

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world today on many fronts. It would be wonderful if peace was really on our minds as much as war. Hopefully, this JusticeGram will give peace some equal time.

In thinking about peace, strangely enough, violence came to mind. What creates/perpetuates violence? It happens in sometimes very subtle ways: a denigrating word to someone, a getting even mentality, believing in my assumptions about another, jumping to conclusions, seeing only a partial picture, making another the “enemy” when their ideas differ from mine, not taking the time to uncover the facts or the truth.

A group interested in peace building came up with an acronym - ASK – to highlight what needs to go into peacemaking. It includes shaping **attitudes**, building **skills** and developing **knowledge**. Since our world is in such need of peace right now, it is our hope to make us more conscious of what needs to make peace happen.

Attitudes: First mentioned was equality – a deep belief that ALL people are equally re-

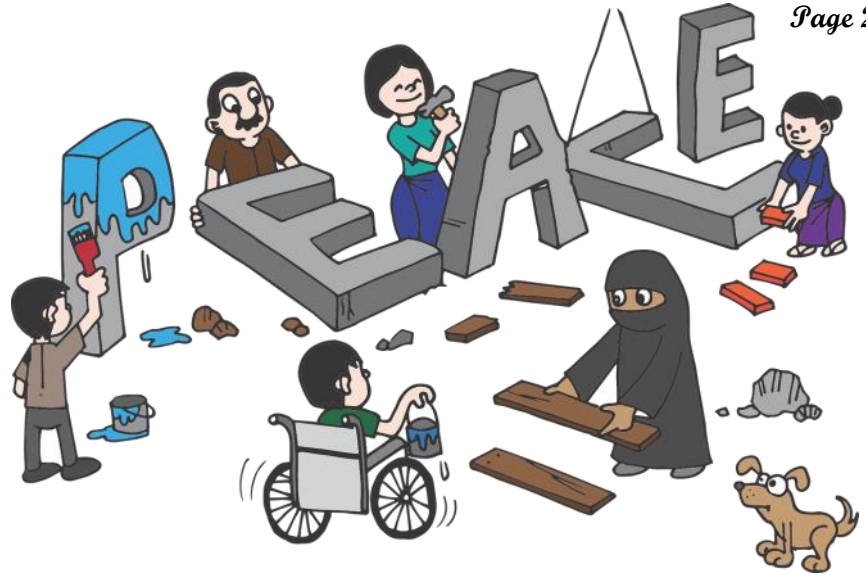
“Peace be with you” rolls easily off our tongues at every liturgy right before communion. It reflects Jesus’ wish to his disciples after the resurrection – “Peace to you”! As we listen to the daily news right now, it is so needed in our

“What is essential is our ability to be present to what’s really going on within– to the unique feelings and needs a person is experiencing at that very moment.”

Marshall Rosenberg
Psychologist and Founder of Non– Violent
Communication.

spected and valued. The challenge of diversity calls us to step back to understand and respect persons whose views are different from our own. Let go of stereotypes. Empathy is a non-judgmental attitude and a willingness to listen to the other. The element of non-violence looks at the root causes of conflict. It is a reality that violence begets violence – in opposition to peace making. The last attitude is social responsibility – a sense of duty for improving the world.

With this backdrop, it is necessary to foster



skills for creating peace. These include communication and active listening, sensitivity and open mindedness, anti discrimination where we actively challenge stereotypes and prejudices, and reflection to become aware of the gaps between what I believe and what I do. The goal here is to put what we become aware of into action.

Knowledge is the third part of the peace making process. It includes factual knowledge, including self knowledge of my own biases, personal capabilities, strengths and weaknesses. It also includes taking the time to learn some best practices and lessons to have in my “tool kit” for ready use.

There are so many resources available to help explore peacemaking for all of us to pursue. They are a google away.

Wouldn't it be great if we had to take a “peacemaking” test – like we do to obtain a driver's license?

Let Us Pray:

- ◇ For courage to build bridges of understanding among all people.
- ◇ For our global, national and local leaders and all those who work to create public policy- that all may be willing to listen radically and work together to support peace and the common good,
- ◇ For victims of war and violence, for the millions of refugees, and for all who believe that aggression or violence are the only means to justice and peace,
- ◇ For children and teens who suffer from acts of violence, oppression, and climate change,
- ◇ For all who yearn for peace and need the courage and wisdom to do something about it.

Skills for Creating Peace

Radical Attentive Listening

Based on David B. Couterier, OFM Cap at <https://www.sbu.edu/news/news-items/2019/03/30/St-Bonaventure-professor-s-book-details-how-Franciscans-can-best-respond-to-the-abuse-crisis>

Listening, radical, attentive listening, is a critical skill for peacebuilding. It is not merely paying attention to another. It is listening below the surface of biases, prejudices, conventions, and customs. It means offering someone the space to express themselves, without judgement or interruption.

Radically listening takes what you know about listening and goes one step further. It means dismantling the filters you typically have on when you listen to someone—from questioning to judging—and it means offering a space to let someone express their story wholly, without interruption. It's trusting someone and letting them own their knowledge and experience.

Research shows that it's worth it for many reasons. A 2018 study revealed that when we take time to listen in an empathetic way, the speakers are impacted in a positive manner—and the listener walks away with a more holistic understanding of the situation, not just a one-sided view

No 'Buts' About It

One tenet of radical listening is the elimination of the word "but." It's easy to inter-

How to "Do" Radical Listening

- ◆ Resist the urge to interrupt
- ◆ Concentrate on the other person
- ◆ You do not have to like or agree with what they say
- ◆ Try repeating back to them what they have said (repeating back improves conflict resolution by 50%!)



ject with a "but" to insert our opinion when we're in conversation with someone. Instead, resist the urge to interrupt until that person is done speaking.

No Judgment Zone

Radical listening is only successful if you do the work to check yourself. When you're listening to others, make sure you're making a conscious effort to put a pause on those filters. We too quickly think of a response: "But someone else told me..." or "For me, it's not the case..." Try your best to remove any judgement or expectations.

Ask Questions

Radically listening to someone doesn't mean that you have to remain completely silent and consume a conversation like, well, a podcast. It also means engaging in a deeper way.

Take time to think of thoughtful follow-up questions, and also ask questions to make sure you're understanding someone's perspective correctly (that's called "reflective listening"). Your responses should make the person feel heard.

- When we radically listen to women, we have a better understanding of how to support policies that provide health care and other resources to women.
- When we radically listen to those differently-abled than us, we have a better understanding of how to fight for disability rights.
- When we radically listen to transgender persons of color, who are disproportionately affected by violence, we're able to better fight for the protection of LGBTQ rights.
- When we radically listen to our brothers and sisters in community, we are living our call to witness to God's goodness and kindness and we are better able to live and promote quality of Saviorian life.

Radical Listening requires a conscious effort to "pause" or "dismantle" your own filters and your own need to:

- ◇ Surrender and submit to others,
- ◇ Control or dominate the opponent,
- ◇ Justify and defend yourself or your view,
- ◇ Impress others, gain social status,
- ◇ Avoid feeling humiliated or embarrassed,
- ◇ Keep things simple, neat or tidy,
- ◇ Escape or avoid discomfort or blame,
- ◇ Hide failure, resist others, stand strong,
- ◇ Find answers, have the answer, or be the expert.

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Learn More

- ◇ Prayers for Peace. <http://tinyurl.com/JesuitPeacePrayers>
- ◇ Pope Francis, *Prayer for Peace* <https://www.usccb.org/prayers/pope-francis-prayer-peace>
- ◇ Pope Francis: Encyclical Letter Fratelli Tutti– On Fraternity and Social Friendship https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html