

+The ways of God are unchanging: they are one continuous act of Love. Not as if Love flowed from God: Love is God and God is Love. +

In God's overwhelming goodness God wanted to share Love. So God made us, human beings, who are capable of understanding and capable of Holy Love. God wanted us to know Love, to experience Love, to become Love, just like God.

God gave to us a Gift that communicates Love. God gave us the Word that brings us Love.

The Word of God that God gave to us so that we could know Love is Jesus—God's Son—human, like us.

When Jesus was on earth He showed us how to live with love. The disciples, the people who followed Jesus and learned from Him, always saw Jesus loving other people: sinners, the Jews, the Gentiles, anyone and everyone. Their hearts must have burned within them when Jesus talked to them:

“Blessed are the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them.” MT 5: 7

You must love one another just as I have loved you. JN 13:34

“As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love.” JN 15:9

The disciples were used to the ways of the harsh world—always protecting themselves, loving only their own friends, standing up for themselves even if it hurt the other person. But now they were with Jesus. And Jesus kept talking about such an unusual love—a love of friend and enemy! The disciples didn't always understand Jesus; they didn't understand what Jesus had on his mind.

But the mind of Jesus was always Nonviolent, Merciful Love for everyone.

But to you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic. LK 6:27-29

*Love your enemies and do good to them.
LK 6:35*

Jesus didn't just talk about loving. He lived out what was on His mind.

Remember how Jesus entered Jerusalem shortly before the Passover?

With great excitement people spread palm branches and their cloaks, singing and shouting. And what did they see?

They saw Jesus on a donkey! To their amazement they found Jesus dressed without any of the decorations, or weapons, or armor of a conquering political or military hero. Jesus wasn't on a beautiful horse. It was a donkey he rode! Jesus didn't come to overpower people.

Jesus came as a humble servant.

He came to bring mercy.

He came with a mind filled with Nonviolent Love of God.

When Jesus' time on earth was coming to an end He gave the apostles a gift that would continue to help them grow in love.

During the feast of the Passover, the Jewish feast celebrating the freedom of the Jews, Jesus took bread and wine and said the blessing that the apostles had heard all their lives. Then He added some new words. Jesus said:

“This is my body.

This is my blood.”

Jesus gave Himself to His disciples so they could become like Him, so they could live and love as He did. Jesus fed them with Himself. Jesus is the Bread of Life who nourishes us.

When this first happened the disciples' understanding was very small and new and weak. Jesus knew this and told them He would send them more help.

The disciples continued praying and singing with Jesus that night of the first Eucharist. When darkness fell the group went to the Garden of Olives to continue praying as they frequently did.

But this night was different.

I'm sure you know most of what happened.

Jesus was betrayed by a friend and taken as a prisoner.

While the guards and soldiers were grabbing Jesus one of the disciples, Peter, did something that Jesus had to stop—it was against everything Jesus was about. Peter took a sword and struck out at a man trying to take Jesus away. Peter cut off the man’s ear! Jesus immediately told Peter:

“Put your sword into its scabbard. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father gave me?”
JN 18:11

And then Jesus did a most amazing thing—He healed the ear of the man who was taking Him to His death.

When have we ever heard of a leader under attack healing the enemies in battle?

Jesus returned good for the evil done to Him. That's the way Jesus lived; that's the way Jesus acted even when He was suffering. He healed the hurting guard, the man who was there to take Him away.

You see, people of Jesus' Kingdom don't fight with earthly weapons. They reject the ways Jesus rejected. They don't do violence back to those who do violence to them.

But they certainly do something!

They respond with prayer and fasting, good deeds and nonviolent actions. They confront evil with good even if it means giving up their lives. People of Jesus' kingdom "put on the mind of Jesus."

Can you imagine how Jesus felt at that very moment? He was being taken away from his friends—violently—and His friends were showing that they didn't really understand what Jesus had been teaching them all along.

And Jesus knew where He was going—to His death. Jesus wouldn't be able to keep guiding the disciples as he had been.

Jesus knew in just a few hours He would be living out the love of enemies He had been teaching. He would be loving even the fieriest enemy—loving the enemy that was bringing Him to His death.

Jesus is the Lamb of God that dies with love in His heart and mind, in His words and in His actions. Jesus is the Lamb that dies so we have The Way to LIFE, the way that breaks the power of evil.

Jesus' terrible night continued.

He was beaten badly.

He was humiliated and crucified.

And Jesus died.

But this is NOT the end of the story.

Jesus didn't stay in the darkness of death.

He rose to New Life.

Jesus appeared to His amazed disciples.

He called them by name. He hugged them as he had before. He looked deeply into their eyes.

Christ is Risen!

ALLELUIA!!

What great news this is!

It is as if when He rose Jesus said, “See, my words are true. My Way is believable. My Way of loving friends and enemies IS the Way of real LIFE. My Way conquers evil and death. My Way heals the biggest problems in life.

Nonviolent Love is the Way to live FOREVER.

Christ is Risen!

ALLELUIA!

This was all so new. The amazed disciples struggled to understand. They continued to celebrate the Eucharist and to pray, but for the first little while, even after the Resurrection, they were afraid. They found hope in remembering that Jesus said He would soon send help to them.

And one day it happened. When the disciples were together in the room where they shared the Last Supper with Jesus, suddenly a noise like rushing wind sounded in their ears.

Tongues of fire rested on each person.

The disciples were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, the power of Holy Love.

A new energy came to them—the ability to love as Jesus loved, the power to live by faith and the courage to bring Jesus to anyone and everyone filled them.

Now the disciples stood tall and proud and fearless.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit Peter, James, John, and all the disciples became Jesus' hands and Jesus' feet and Jesus' voice on earth. They lived with the mind of Jesus carrying Jesus' Love to others so others could become Love.

The enthusiasm and community of the disciples was very strong now. They shared their food and possessions among themselves and with anyone in need. Non-believers frequently said, “See how they love one another.” And many non-believers became Nonviolent Followers of Jesus because of this powerful love of friends.

You might think that everyone was happy to hear this great news of Nonviolent Love. But that was not so. Some people were afraid of the changes this Good News would bring. Some people were angry about this new Way of living. They were so angry they became enemies to the disciples and treated them harshly.

One person who worked hard for the Community of Nonviolent Love was Stephen. Stephen was full of energy and a great preacher, too. He vigorously proclaimed Jesus as God and His Way of Nonviolent Love as the Truth.

One day when Stephen was in the temple preaching he was asked about this Jesus he proclaimed. The listeners didn't like what Stephen said. Sadly, Stephen was forced out of the city where he could be killed.

But even as Stephen was being stoned to death he didn't stop loving the way Jesus loved. With the strength of the Holy Spirit, as he was dying, Stephen begged God to forgive those who were hurting him. Stephen prayed for his enemies and loved them just as Jesus had done.

This is not surprising—Stephen was part of the enemy-loving community, the Nonviolent Followers of Jesus.

Many of those who witnessed Stephen's love of enemy burned with desire to live that same love. They, too, became Nonviolent Followers of Jesus.

Peter and the other apostles continued their work of bringing the Good News of Nonviolent Love as they moved out of Jerusalem into the whole world. Communities of Christians—people with the mind of Jesus started growing; The Way began spreading.

As the apostles died for their faith new Nonviolent Followers of Jesus took over the work. In fact, there is an unbroken connection from God—who is Merciful Love, to God's Son Jesus—the Nonviolent Lamb, to the apostles and through the centuries in the Nonviolent Followers, the disciples who persevere in following closely Jesus' Way of Nonviolent Love.

Nonviolent Love is the Golden Thread through history which answers the deepest longing of our hearts—the longing for love and joy and peace for those we love, for everyone. Nonviolent Love is the Golden Thread that leads us to Parousia, the time of Eternal Love and Unity, that time when God will be “All in All”.

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