

- What evidence would a stranger use to identify me as a peaceful person? A Sower of Peace? When I take Fr. Parent's challenge and substitute "I am patient, I am kind, I am not jealous, etc." in 1 Corinthians 13, what do I discern about myself?

3. ***Peace requires practice.***

Fr. Parent uses Bjorn Borg as an example of a champion who practiced the same energetic discipline that Jesus imposed on his disciples, so they could journey. Borg concentrated ferociously on his game, and then shifted his focus to others when the game was over. Fr. Parent challenges us (p. 126-7): "...to become champions in our profession of being a Christian, we too must pay attention to our concentration, that is, to become aware that God is in us with his power, his riches, his energies, and that he uses us like polished instruments to live and distribute true peace each in our own milieu....A Sower of Peace is someone who is conscious of being in love with God and neighbor..."

- How do I use this energetic discipline and awareness to place myself in the service of others?
- How can I be an "...animator of peace in the family, in the team, in the community, and in society"?
- Looking at the practice of St. John Climacus (p. 128), how do I respond to his strategies as a Sower of Peace?
- How can I be a Sower of Peace in the current political climate?
- How am I personally challenged by Paul's exhortation in Ephesians 4:22-32 (p. 129)
- How can I embrace what Fr. Parent calls the chance of a lifetime "Live in a manner worthy of the call you have received." (Eph. 4:1).

4. ***Peace withstands rejection.***

Fr. Parent warns us that the task of being a Sower of Peace is demanding, especially when people or circumstances create a loss of peace. When that happens, despite all our efforts, his advice is Christ's – "Shake the dust off your feet" – or escape. Sometimes this is easier said than done. For Martin Luther King, Jr., there was no escape from racism. He regularly ventured into hostile territory – for him, being a Sower of Peace demanded that he risk his life, while at the same time sowing calm, tranquility, and order among his followers. He could not "keep the peace" when injustice and inequality were the status quo. He saw peace not as an absence (of war, conflict), but as deliberate action that gives witness and speaks truth.

- How has my experience in Voluntas Dei helped me recover from a loss of peace?
- What might I do with no escape, when my peace has been rejected? What strategy might help someone else recover and maintain peacefulness?
- How can our Voluntas Team recognize and support this recovery?

5. ***Peace loves company.***

In his address to Congress, Pope Francis put us in the company of four Sowers of Peace in our country's history: Abraham Lincoln, Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, and Thomas Merton.

- How do we broker our personal peace to create a collective peace in our Voluntas Team? Our community? Our nation?
- Who are our fellow peacemakers?

As a closing prayer, we suggest the words of Mary, in her Magnificat. As Voluntas Members, Fr. Parent reminds us of Mary's response to the angel Gabriel: "Here I am to do the will of God. " He describes her Magnificat as "... the expression of a heart invaded by the Holy Spirit and overflowing with peace."

*My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
and my spirit exalts in God my savior;
because he has looked upon his lowly handmaid.
Yes, from this day forward all generations will call me blessed,
For the Almighty has done great things for me.
Holy is his name,
And his mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear him.
He has shown the power of his arm,
He has routed the proud of heart.
He has pulled down princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly.
The hungry he has filled with good things, the rich sent empty away.
He has come to the help of Israel, his servant, mindful of his mercy
According to the promise he made to our ancestors –
of his mercy to Abraham and to his descendants forever.
(Jerusalem Bible text of Luke 1: 46-55)*

Finally, we encourage Voluntas members to end this study of the second of the three Fives with the prayer shared with us by Fr Dunstan:

*Lord, give me the grace to think of you every hour, just for today,
so that I may live in your presence.
Lord, empty my heart of all sadness, hate, and spite, just for today,
so that I might love without criticism and serve without complaint.
Lord, help me to follow in your footsteps, just for today,
so that, following your example, and Mary's,
I may be an element of peace. Amen.*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In discussing the lesson, our team brainstormed examples of people who were Sowers of Peace in the world. Gandhi, MLK, Jr., Dorothy Day, and Mother Teresa were cited. We also tried to think of movies that showed the impact of a group of peacemakers on a community. The films "Bridge of Spies" and "Of Gods and Men" came to mind. The former stars Tom Hanks as the lawyer sent to negotiate a spy swap with the Russians during the Cold War, while the latter recounts the true story of a group of French monks who served the people as they served God in a mostly Muslim village in Algeria. We encourage you to share other people and films within your Voluntas Team.