

Pastoral reflection: 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Nov. readings

I happened upon some "commandments" that I thought you all might be interested in. They are "commandments" for those seeking to live a spiritual life of nonviolence. They are called "The Decalogue for a Spirituality of Nonviolence" by Rosemary Lynch and Alain Richard.

Active nonviolence calls us:

1. To learn to recognize and respect "the sacred" in every person, including in ourselves, and in every piece of Creation. . . .
2. To accept oneself deeply "who I am" with all my gifts and richness, with all my limitations, errors, failings and weaknesses, and to realize that I am accepted by God. .
3. To recognize that what I resent, and perhaps even detest, in another, comes from my difficulty in admitting that this same reality lives also in me. . . .
4. To renounce dualism, the "we-they" mentality (Manicheism). This divides us into "good people/bad people" and allows us to demonize the adversary. It is the root of authoritarian and exclusivist behavior. It generates racism and makes possible conflicts and wars.
5. To face fear and to deal with it not mainly with courage but with love.
6. To understand and accept that the New Creation, the building up of the Beloved Community is always carried forward with others. It is never a "solo act." . . .
7. To see ourselves as a part of the whole creation to which we foster a relationship of love, not of mastery, remembering that the destruction of our planet is a profoundly spiritual problem, not simply a scientific or technological one. We are one.
8. To be ready to suffer, perhaps even with joy, if we believe this will help liberate the Divine in others. This includes the acceptance of our place and moment in history with its trauma, with its ambiguities.
9. To be capable of celebration, of joy, when the presence of God has been accepted, and when it has not been to help discover and recognize this fact.
10. To slow down, to be patient, planting the seeds of love and forgiveness in our own hearts and in the hearts of those around us. Slowly we will grow in love, compassion and the capacity to forgive.

—Fr. Jack (he/him)