

LIVING WITH CHRIST THIS WEEK

Sunday, February 21: First Sunday in Lent (C) - violet
Monday 22: Chair of St. Peter, apostle - white
Tuesday 23: Ferial - purple
Wednesday 24: Ferial - purple
Thursday 25: Ferial - purple
Friday 26: Ferial - purple
Saturday 27 : Ferial - purple
Sunday 28: Second Sunday in Lent (C) - violet

The Bible and Violence



3. Christ and the Path of Non-Violence

During our analysis of the presence of violence in the Bible, we acknowledge that it is omnipresent in our modern societies. We may define violence as *the intrusion of brutal force (physical or verbal) in relationships* (L. Debarge). And this intrusion of force appears in all spheres of our society. At the international level, we have witnessed genocides, tribal warfare, terrorism, torture inflicted on prisoners, the murder of UN workers and journalists. Even in our beautiful country, there are daily reports of violence in the media. It has infiltrated our families: there have been more than 40 cases of infanticide in the last decade. It appears in our schools as *taxing* and *verbal bullying*. It is everywhere on the Internet as *cyber-bullying*. Graffiti defaces the countryside and vandalism occurs even in sacred places such as cemeteries. Our societies need more than ever to be cured of this horrible disease. What remedies does Christ have for this pandemic?

HOW WE REGARD ONE ANOTHER

The source of violence is how we regard one another. It is striking to acknowledge that most serial killers only see their victims as hateful objects. To eradicate violence at its source, Christ invites us to change how we look at others, to look at them as God would have: not as perfect beings, but as equal beings with dignity. Any conversation about how we regard others must be accompanied by how we see ourselves. *Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?* (Lk 6:41). In this passage, Christ cautions us never to disregard the gravity of evil that we can inflict on another. We carry within ourselves the seeds of violence.

ELIMINATE INJUSTICE

Most violence is caused by injustice that is present in our world. Our first duty is to denounce and combat injustice and social inequalities in all their forms. Jesus said: *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others* (Mt 23:23). Christ declared blessed are those who thirst for justice and suffer persecution because of it (Mt 5:6,10).

INCLUSION NOT EXCLUSION

During Jesus' era, many social groups were marginalized, excluded from society, and deprived of their legal rights. Christ astonished and even scandalized people by affirming the equality of men and women, (this is the first reason for refusing divorce: Mt 19:3-10), by welcoming children (Mk 10:13-16) and by responding to even the pagans' [foreigners'] prayers (Mt 15:22-28).

Georges Madore , s.m.m.

Translated by Honore Kerwin Borrelli