

An Invitation to Join the 40-Day Fast for Christian Nonviolence

As many of you know, each year Pax Christi Metro New York joins with others around the country to fast for Christian nonviolence. The fast is a response to and a prayerful protest against the culture of violence that plagues our society whether in our media, entertainment, language, or actions against individuals and nations. It is also a commitment to peacemaking in our everyday lives.

TWO WAYS TO APPROACH THE FAST:

Individuals are invited to fast in whatever way they choose. Some possibilities are choosing one day a week for the 40-Day period, choosing one single day, or choosing a block of days.

Groups are invited to take one day of the week, e.g. Mondays. One member of the group will then fast on each of the Mondays (or whichever other day of the week your group chooses) during the 40-day period. Others can also fast, of course, but this insures that at least one member will be fasting each day.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUR FAST DAY:

- This fast is, traditionally, a fast from all solid foods from the time you get up until the time you retire in the evening. It is recommended that you drink fruit or vegetable juices. Drinking caffeinated beverages is not recommended.

If the traditional fast is not feasible for you, you can replace one, two, or all three meals with bread and water.

If you are unable to fast from food for health reasons, consider fasting from social media, texting, e-mail, television, or some other “addiction” that will be a sacrifice for you.

- Try to attend Mass, a religious service of your faith if not Catholic, or some other communal gathering at which you can share your hopes and prayers for and commitment to a more nonviolent world, especially a world free of nuclear weapons.
- A common bond in all faiths is belief in the power of nonviolent love. If you are a person of faith, pray that people of faith might re-commit themselves to the lesson of love taught in their faith.
- Seek forgiveness for your own violent tendencies.
- As much as possible, occupy yourself with works of mercy.

An excellent book on fasting is *Fasting Rediscovered* by Thomas Ryan, published by Paulist Press.

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