

# DO YOUR JOB

## PART 4

Pope Francis' World Peace Day Message AD 2017

In his World Peace Day Message for 2017 Pope Francis states, “*To be true followers of Jesus today also includes embracing his teaching about nonviolence.*” This is a fine example of a bishop being what a bishop is commissioned to be by Jesus (Mt 28:19). He is teaching the disciples of Jesus “*to obey all that I have commanded you.*”

### **Doing His Job and Only the Job Given to Him**

He is not teaching some idea from some philosophy about the nature of nature and its ethical implications, nor does he go on to say what Jesus gave him no commission to say, that is, how he will punish, use violence against, those who do not follow the truth he is teaching them about being a true follower of Jesus. There is no threat of torture, or burnings at the stake, or denial of the Eucharist, or imprisonment, or excommunication, or censure. He simply proclaims, “*To be true followers of Jesus includes embracing his teaching about nonviolence.*”

The truth of Jesus, the truth of His Gospel, is simply placed before the disciples of Jesus by Francis. They in their freedom are called to follow it, to be true followers of Jesus and followers of Jesus, the Truth. In their freedom one or many may refuse to follow, but no coercive violence of any type will be used to make them be true followers of Jesus and His truth. The bishop, in this case the Bishop of Rome who is also the Petrine Minister in the Church, teaches Baptized disciples of Jesus to obey what Jesus commanded, thereby not only doing his job as a bishop (Mt 28:19) but also doing his job as the successor of Saint Peter (Jn 21:15-17).

### **Incarnational Consequences**

But, for the Pope to state in the most public of forums, “*To be true followers of Jesus includes embracing his teaching about nonviolence,*” has incarnational consequences, since nonviolence by definition deals with human acts of thought, word and deed. For example, it self-evidently means a Catholic cannot continue to be in ROTC since this program includes learning how to kill and maim people by violence, which is the opposite of nonviolence. If he or she were to continue in such a program they would cease “*to be true follower of Jesus.*” Or say, if a Catholic University were to have an ROTC program it would have to drop it or else it would be teaching its students not “*to be true followers of Jesus,*” and its reason for being a Christian university would evaporate and it would be nothing more than Harvard or Michigan State Universities.

These are but a couple of examples from untold numbers of instances where a change of mind (*metanoia*) and a change of behavior will need to take place in light of this unambiguous public Papal declaration that “*To be true followers of Jesus includes embracing his teaching about nonviolence.*” Catholic homes, Catholic schools,

Catholic journalism, Catholic religious education, Catholic media, Catholic seminaries, if they are not already teaching that “*To be true followers of Jesus includes embracing his teaching about nonviolence,*” must begin to so teach.

## **DO YOUR JOB PART 4**

### **False Witness Now by the Ordained is a Perversion of Ministry**

Outdoor bulletin boards of Catholic Churches should now display this ancient but long forgotten truth of the Catholic faith: *“To be true followers of Jesus includes embracing his teaching about nonviolence.”* Priests and deacons who previously had been reluctant or resistant to even mention the word nonviolence in relationship to Jesus and discipleship in their homilies, should now feel totally comfortable in enthusiastically proclaiming it whenever they preach on Jesus and/or on being a faithful disciple of Jesus. Catholic bishops should now feel the glorious freedom of being children of God and be able to oversee with joy the process of making this truth known to every Christian in their diocese, while spiritually helping those who find it difficult to understand and/or accept as a requirement for being a *“true follower of Jesus.”* The tragic consequence of bishops, priests and deacons not now informing their people that *“To be true followers of Jesus includes embracing his teaching about nonviolence”* would be that their people and they themselves would be false followers of Jesus giving false witness about Jesus, while inviting others to become false witnesses to the truth of Jesus.

### **A Grace Accepted or a Grace Rejected**

Every Catholic has his and her roll to play in resurrecting this ancient Gospel truth regarding true discipleship from the grave of Christian non-awareness in which it was bury by history and by befogged, and perhaps even bedeviled, minds. Encouraging, by every loving nonviolent means conceivable, bishops, priests, deacons, religious brothers and sisters, religious education directors, diocesan newspapers as well as national Catholic newspapers and magazines, to teach with Pope Francis, *“To be true followers of Jesus includes embracing his teaching about nonviolence”* is now also an essential task for the laity. I think we all realize, that unless each of us works energetically, according to his or her means and gifts, to prompt and urge, to buoy up and motivate the Catholics in charge of these various avenues of communication in our local Churches, Pope Francis declaration on being a *“true follower of Jesus”* will be dispatched to the graveyard of “non-existent non-thoughts” in the local and universal Church.

A grace has been bestowed upon every Christian and the entire Church when Pope Francis professed and confessed, *“To be true followers of Jesus includes embracing his teaching about nonviolence.”* But, those on whom this grace has been given must act on it, must do their job in proclaiming it in word and deed in order for it to achieve its purposes, which are to renew the face of the earth and to bring eternal salvation to all people—no exceptions.

-Emmanuel Charles McCarthy

Feast of the Theophany, AD 2017

(To be continued)