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Renewal and the Path of Non-Violence

We often speak of renewal as a gentle and comforting word. Yet true renewal begins with a courageous honesty about the violence that wounds our world and our own hearts. If we desire reconciliation and peace, we must first name the many forms of violence that surround us and sometimes live within us.

Violence is not only the clash of weapons or the outbreak of war. It appears wherever the strong oppress the weak. Political violence emerges when power is used to silence or dominate. Economic violence grows when wealth becomes a tool of exclusion and the poor are pushed to the margins. Social violence persists when those of higher status deny the dignity of those considered lower. Religious violence arises when authority is used to control rather than to guide, when faith becomes a burden rather than a path to freedom.

There is also ecological violence when nature is exploited without reverence, as though the earth were not our shared home. Emotional violence occurs when feelings are suppressed or ignored, leaving hearts wounded and unheard. Sexual violence takes shape when the human body and its sacredness are misunderstood or shamed. Spiritual violence happens when people are prevented from discovering their deepest calling—to grow into communion with God. Even ideological violence can arise when rigid ideals are imposed in ways that crush the living reality of persons and communities.

These forms of violence may seem different, yet they share a common root: separation. Whenever we forget our unity—with God, with one another, and with creation—we create conditions where violence can grow. Renewal, therefore, is not merely external reform. It is a deep reconciliation that restores this unity.

True renewal begins within. It is the rediscovery that every human being is created for communion—with the Divine, with humanity, and with the whole of creation. When this awareness awakens, the layers of violence begin to fall away. Power becomes service. Wealth becomes sharing. Authority becomes care. Differences become gifts rather than threats. The earth becomes a sacred trust rather than an object of exploitation.

The season of Lent stands before us as an invitation to such renewal. It calls us not only to personal repentance but to a transformation of relationships. It invites us to examine the ways we may participate—knowingly or unknowingly—in systems of violence. It asks us to return to the heart, where we rediscover our unity with God and with all that exists.

This journey is not easy. It requires humility, courage, and a willingness to change. Yet it is also filled with hope. For when hearts are renewed, communities are renewed. When communities are renewed, societies begin to heal. Non-violence is not merely the absence of conflict; it is the presence of love, justice, and right relationship.

Let this Lenten season awaken in us a deep longing for reconciliation—within ourselves, within our families and communities, and within the wider world. Let it move us to become instruments of peace where there is division, compassion where there is suffering, and justice where there is oppression. May our renewal be genuine and profound. May it remove every form of violence from our hearts and from our structures. And may it lead us toward a world where unity, peace, and non-violence are not distant ideals but living realities among us.