Opinion
Guest Voices
Benedicta McCarthy and her father, Melkite Fr. Emmanuel Charles McCarthy

Benedicta McCarthy and her father, Melkite Fr. Emmanuel Charles McCarthy, from Brockton, Mass., display an icon of her namesake Sr. Teresa Benedicta, also known as Blessed Edith Stein in a 1997 photo. (CNS/Reuters)



by John Dear

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

July 21, 2025
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

This week on "The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast," John Dear speaks with Fr. Charles McCarthy, one of the world's great teachers of Christian nonviolence.

McCarthy is a priest of one of the Eastern Catholic Churches, Byzantine-Melkite, in full communion with the bishop of Rome. He has been a Catholic priest for 40 years. He has master's degrees in English and theology from University of Notre Dame, and earned his doctorate in jurisprudence from Boston College Law School.

He was married for 53 years to Mary Margaret McCarthy, who died in 2019, and they have 13 children and 23 grandchildren. (The cure of their daughter, Teresa Benedicta, was the official miracle for the canonization of Sr. Teresa Benedicta, known as St. Edith Stein.)

McCarthy taught at Notre Dame, where he founded and was the original director of the Program for the Study and Practice of Nonviolent Conflict Resolution. He served

for many years at St. Gregory the Theologian Byzantine-Melkite Catholic Seminary. For over 50 years he directed retreats and spoke at conferences throughout the world on the nonviolent Jesus.

McCarthy defines nonviolence as a "nonviolent love of friends and enemies modeled by Jesus in the Gospels." Nonviolence, he said, asks, 'Is this action that you are doing imbued with Christlike, nonviolent love?' Any action without love is nothing at all. If our actions are not motivated by and imbued with Christlike love, they are not going to be effective in countering evil and death.

Advertisement

"Jesus is nonviolent because God is nonviolent," McCarthy continued. "Jesus' purpose is to reveal to us how to love as God loves us because God is love. Jesus wants us to be at one with God. The words, deeds, and spirit of Jesus in the Gospel reveal the love of God."

McCarthy said that when the will of God is known, we must live it, embrace it and follow it. "Jesus comes and reveals the will of the father, which is to love as God loves, even under the most horrendous conditions, as he shows as he undergoes his death."

"It is important to nurture the capacity of empathy beyond our friends, family, nation, to every human being so that we learn to love the one that does not love you, that is hostile to you. Love your enemies is an authentic teaching of Jesus. That's what he wants us to do. That's nonviolence."

Listen to the full episode here.

This story appears in the **The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast** feature series. View the full series.