Opinion
Guest Voices



Parishioners perform in a "pastorela," a Nativity folk drama, on the feast of the Epiphany at Our Holy Redeemer Church in Freeport, N.Y., Jan. 5, 2025. The reenactment of the Christmas story is presented annually by the parish's Latino young adult ministry. (OSV News/Gregory A. Shemitz)



by John Dear

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This week on "The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast," I take a deep dive into Matthew 2, the famous story of the Magi.

I offer this Christmas reflection as four movements:

1. The journey to the nonviolent Jesus;
2. The epiphany of meeting the nonviolent Jesus;
3. What we do after we meet the nonviolent Jesus;
4. The epilogue, how the empire, the culture of violence and war, reacts to the coming of the nonviolent Jesus and the threat of active nonviolence.

I invite us to reflect on the story of the Magi as our story. Like the three wisdom figures, we too are on a spiritual journey, a holy pilgrimage, one that lasts a lifetime — the journey to the God of peace, to God's reign of peace and the nonviolent Jesus.

During the episode, I offer some questions for our Christmas reflection, such as: When did you have an epiphany of the God of peace? When have you met the nonviolent Jesus among the poor, the homeless and the marginalized? How does nature point you to the God of peace? What gifts do you bring the nonviolent Jesus?

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The shocking part of Matthew 2 is what happens after the Epiphany. The Magi were ordered to report back to the lying, greedy, warmaking, sociopathic tyrant King Herod. But Matthew shows that once you meet the nonviolent Jesus and experience the God of peace, you disobey the ruling authorities who kill, oppress and wage war. The Magi commit civil disobedience and head home a different way.

Matthew invites us this Christmas to seek the nonviolent Jesus on the margins of the culture of violence, empire and war; to let our encounter with the nonviolent Jesus lead us away from the corrupt culture of violence and war; to live as wisdom pilgrims of nonviolence who obey Jesus' Sermon on the Mount teachings; to do our part to stop the ongoing slaughter of the innocents; and to serve God and God's reign of

peace only from now on.

Listen to the full episode here.

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