

How do you deal with someone you disagree with? When we let our disagreements fester, anger and hatred can boil over into violence against another. The crucifixion of Jesus is the prime example of anger boiling over into intentional murder. “Crucify him! Crucify him!” The cry of the crowd on Good Friday should haunt all of us. It is ironic, Jesus preached just the opposite. “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father” (Mt 5:43-45).

How do you deal with someone you disagree with? Saul was a zealous Jew who did not like the fact that Jewish people were converting to Christianity. He tells us: “I imprisoned many of the holy ones with the authorization I received from the chief priests, and when they were to be put to death I cast my vote against them. Many times, in synagogue after synagogue, I punished them in an attempt to force them to blaspheme; I was so enraged against them that I pursued them even to foreign cities” (Acts 26:10-11). Jesus blinded Saul and struck him down not with vengeance in mind but with conversion as an end goal. It took a little convincing on the part of Jesus, but he used Saul’s enemies to show him the way. “I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness of what you have seen [of me] and what you will be shown. I shall deliver you from this people and from the Gentiles to whom I send you, to open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God” (26:16-18).

How do you deal with someone you disagree with? Roman Emperors were often intolerant of Christians and Jews who refused to treat them as gods. “The Emperor Claudius expelled all Jews from Rome in 49-50 A.D.” The following decade when many Christians lived in Rome, although a minority, they were made the scapegoat for a tragedy. “More than half of Rome was destroyed by fire. Rumor blamed the tragedy on Nero, who wanted to enlarge his palace. He shifted the blame by accusing the Christians.” Many Christians were put to death. “Wherever the Good News of Jesus was preached, it met the same opposition as Jesus did, and many of those who began to follow him shared his suffering and death. But no human force could stop the power of the Spirit unleashed upon the world. The blood of martyrs has always been, and will always be, the seed of Christians.”<sup>i</sup>

How do you deal with someone you disagree with? Gandhi used non-violent resistance in India to help end colonial rule. Martin Luther King, Jr. used it in the United States to fight for civil rights. Nelson Mandela, originally a proponent of violence, turned to non-violent resistance to help end apartheid. Non-violent resistance to evil is a powerful force to change hearts and minds for the better.

How do you deal with someone you disagree with? Retired Archbishop Charles Chaput suggests that we ask ourselves the question: What are you willing to die for? “To even ask that question is an act of rebellion against a loveless age. And to answer it with conviction is to become a revolutionary; the kind of loving revolutionary who will survive and resist—and someday redeem a late modern West that can no longer imagine anything worth dying for, and thus, in the long run, anything worth living for.”<sup>ii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> [franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/first-martyrs-of-the-church-of-rome](http://franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/first-martyrs-of-the-church-of-rome)

<sup>ii</sup> [angelusnews.com/faith/what-are-you-willing-to-die-for-chaput-asks-students/](http://angelusnews.com/faith/what-are-you-willing-to-die-for-chaput-asks-students/)