



## *Reflection from Fr. Garry Richmeier*

An old saying goes, "If all you have is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail." It implies that if a person has only one tool, they will try to use it for every task. We are seeing this dynamic at work with the recent killings of unarmed black men and women by police. It sometimes seems that police have only one tool at their disposal in dealing with problems: controlling people with force and violence. We can blame police, but if we are honest with ourselves, all of us have some desire to control others. We may want to make them think like we do, or we make them look bad so we look good, or we drown out their voice so ours will be heard, etc. We each have our own brand of "force and violence" as a favorite tool.

Jesus demonstrated that there are other tools that can be used in dealing with others, tools like compassion, understanding, listening, forgiveness, and acceptance. He taught that using these tools instead of force and violence would create better relationships and a better world. With today's law enforcement, this could look like employing social workers to accompany police when they answer disturbances so police wouldn't necessarily have to resort to violence each time. In the international arena, it could look like sharpening the skills of negotiation and mutual understanding so that war isn't the automatic answer to problems. Life is much better when we have options (more than one tool to use). But it takes faith to believe that the tools that Jesus recommended will really get us where we want to be -- the reign of God.

*~ Peace,*

*Fr. Garry*