



## **Cesar Chavez. *Consistent.***

Cesar Estrada Chavez was among the most influential and visible leaders of the labor movement in the United States.

Chavez was a Mexican-American farmworker and prominent activist for both labor unions and civil rights. With Dolores Huerta, he co-founded the National Farm Workers Association (later the United Farm Workers).

Born in 1927 in Arizona, Chavez suffered with his family during the Great Depression, moving to California as migrant farmworkers after they lost their farm. Chavez and his family picked peas and lettuce in the winter, cherries and beans in the spring, corn and grapes in the summer, and cotton in the fall. In his mid-20s, Chavez became an organizer for worker rights and encouraged Mexican-Americans to register to vote.

Cesar Chavez embraced nonviolence early in his career as an activist. Deeply grounded in his Catholic faith, Cesar was unabashed in his regard for all living things (he was a strict vegetarian) and publicly described nonviolence as an innately spiritual practice.



Chavez was profoundly inspired by Mohandas Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King. Like them, he viewed nonviolence as a highly effective strategy for change. "Violence just hurts those who are already hurt...instead of exposing the brutality of the oppressor, it justifies it. We can turn the world if we can do it nonviolently."

Chavez extended his commitment to nonviolence beyond his farmworker advocacy. "Only when we have become nonviolent towards all life will we have learned to live well with others," he said. When abortion was legalized in the U.S. in 1973, the United Farm Workers did not allow the practice in their clinics.

Chavez was known for his many fasts in support of his humanitarian causes. In early 1968, he fasted for 25 days. Senator Robert F. Kennedy and more than 8,000 farmworkers joined him when he broke his fast at a Catholic Mass. Kennedy called him "one of the heroic figures of our time."

This humble activist died on April 23, 1993, shortly after a 36-day fast in support of his beloved farmworkers. Cesar Estrada Chavez was consistent to the very end.

Will you join him in rejecting violence?

*We are committed to the protection of life, which is threatened in today's world by war, abortion, poverty, racism, the death penalty, and euthanasia. We believe that these issues are linked under a 'consistent ethic of life.' We challenge those working on all or some of these issues to maintain a cooperative spirit of peace, reconciliation, and respect in protecting the unprotected.*



**Consistent Life**

[www.consistentlifefnetwork.org](http://www.consistentlifefnetwork.org)