

The Grace of Non-violence

May my life's work be a passion for peace and non-violence
May my soul rejoice in the present moment

The Soul of Non-violence

May my imagination overcome death and despair with new possibility
And may I risk reputation, comfort and security to bring this hope to the children

(Mary Lou Kownacki OSB)

The prayer service ends with the incensing of the globe or the map of the world and then of the gathered community while all say:

May the memory of wars strengthen our efforts for peace;
May the memory of those who died inspire our service to the living;
May the memory of past destruction move us to build for the future;
O God of Peace, O Companion of Our Souls,
O Builder of Love and Justice in This World.

Lord we commit our time, our energy, our talents, our gifts,
even our limitations, our failures and very selves
to the cause of justice, peace and human development.
We join our lives with those who support the struggle for life.
Amen.

(Linda Jones)



IPA
CIRCLE of PRAYER
for PEACE

26th Annual Peace Day
21 September 2007



You are a pathway to peace!

- For those who have died by acts of violence, we ask the blessing of justice and the gift of peace.
- For those who conscientiously object to military orders, we ask the blessing of justice and the gift of peace.

All:

Lord Christ,
 at times we are like strangers on this earth,
 taken aback by all the violence, the harsh oppositions.
 Like a gentle breeze, you breathe upon us the Spirit of Peace.
 Transfigure the deserts of our doubts,
 and so prepare us to be bearers of reconciliation
 wherever you place us,
 until the day when a hope of peace
 dawns in our world. Amen.

(A Prayer for Peace, Brother Roger of Taizé)

Commitment to Peace

All stand and commit themselves to peace.

The Call of Non-violence

I bow to the sacred in all creation

The Spirit of Non-violence

May my spirit fill the world with beauty and wonder
 May my mind seek the truth with humility and openness

The Heart of Non-violence

May my heart forgive without measure
 May my love for friend, enemy and outcast be without measure
 May my needs be few and my living simple

The Power of Non-violence

May my actions bear witness to the suffering of others
 May my hands never harm a living being
 May my steps stay on the journey of justice

The Courage of Non-violence

May my tongue speak for those who are poor without fear of the powerful
 May my prayers rise with patient discontent until no child is hungry



All: God of Compassion and Peace, help us to work for peace, pray for peace and live in peace with one another. May we respond to hatred with love, to injustice with total dedication to justice, to need with generosity and to war with peace.

Hymn or Song

Listen to or sing an appropriate hymn or song that the group knows.

Prayer for Peace

Leader: Let us pray to the Holy One who has given us the promise of peace.

Pause for quiet prayer in between each prayer read aloud by the Reader.

- For those people suffering the death, destruction and trauma of war, especially in the Middle East, in Timor Leste, in Sri Lanka and in Africa, we ask the blessing of justice and the gift of peace.
- For the victims of political persecution, social and domestic violence, we ask the blessing of justice and the gift of peace.
- For children who are born into and experience violence in their countries, in their cities and in their homes, we ask the blessing of justice and the gift of peace.
- For those whose dignity is diminished by economic hardship and poverty, especially the women of the world, we ask the blessing of justice and the gift of peace.
- For those whose lives are broken and wounded through violent relationships, we ask the blessing of justice and the gift of peace.
- For those who are impoverished by the effects of war, social disadvantage and discrimination, we ask the blessing of justice and the gift of peace.
- For those who commit acts of violence against others, we ask the blessing of justice and the gift of peace.
- For those who survive acts of violence, we ask the blessing of justice and the gift of peace.



Setting



Create a sacred space with candles, music and flowers. Place a large map of the world or a globe in the setting and have marked on it the places in the world where there is violence, war and civil unrest. Have incense burning in a thurible or other container.

Welcome and Introduction (Leader)

Welcome to this International Day of Prayer for Peace gathering. As we gather we acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we gather. We pay our respects to them, especially for their care of the land. May we too walk gently and respectfully upon the land.

In 2001, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a Resolution making 21 September of each year a day for the entire world to observe a day of peace and nonviolence. In 2004, UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, supported the proposal of the World Council of Churches to establish an International Day of prayer for peace.

In fidelity to our commitment at the 2003 IPA Assembly to work for a culture of peace, IPA is contributing to the Culture of Peace Initiative by engaging in a 24 hour Circle of Prayer for Peace around the globe. In this way we can show our belief in both the power and the promise of peace. We pray for peace. We pray for people in all nations who are working together for a peaceful world - we pray for them, we give thanks for them and we walk in solidarity with them.

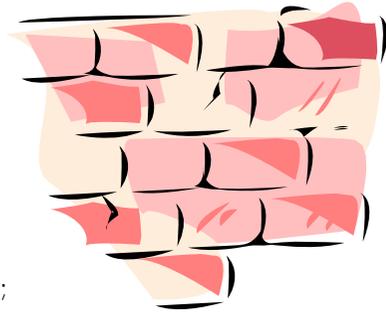


Ritual Action

A member of the group incenses the map of the world or the globe and then incenses the gathering while all pray:

All:

God of compassion and mercy,
We bring to you our divided society and our broken world,
Seeking your healing and transforming grace;
It is easy for us to point the finger at others,
Yet we know that we all need your forgiveness;
So we lift into your presence today,
not only the victims of conflicts,
but also those we have called enemies.
Break down the walls of hatred, distrust and bitterness
And open a way for us to reach one another
in truth and love.
Enable us to build a society where all can belong;
To share our gifts in mutual respect
And to seek for the new future which you offer us
Through Jesus Christ.



(Travelling the Road of Faith: Worship resources from the Corrymeela Community, Belfast, Northern Ireland)

Listen with the ears of your heart!

The following passages are read reflectively by different Readers. Between each reading the group prays a peace prayer from one of the world's religious traditions.

Reader 1:

Christian peacemaking begins with grief. We grieve with those who suffer and die from our bombs and wars. We weep over our own Jerusalems, for the people of Iraq, Palestine, and Columbia, for the world's poor ... for the world's crucified people, for ourselves. Like Christ, we feel the world's pain. Our hearts break. But this is the beginning of grace, wisdom and peace. We cannot love our enemies and neighbors as Jesus did, if we do not first enter their pain as he did. We cannot show compassion without standing in solidarity with those who suffer, especially with those who suffer from our bombs. As we weep and grieve, we repent of the sin of war and begin the Gospel project of conversion which leads to public, non-violent action. Like Jesus, we do not stop with grief and tears. We act, and keep on acting for peace ... In these days of despair, we side with Jesus, grieve with him, act with him and learn from him the things that make for peace.

(John Dear SJ)

Reflection and Sharing

Spend five to ten minutes in quiet reflection on one or two of the readings that have touched your heart or challenged you. Then share with one or two people near you how a particular reading has touched you or challenged you.

Intercessions *(based on the Prayer of Pope John Paul II at Hiroshima)*



Leader: So many voices cry out from a world of violence and war ...

Reader: Listen to their voices, for they are the voices of the victims of war and violence.

All: God of Compassion and Peace, help us to work for peace, pray for peace and live in peace with one another.

Leader: So many voices cry out from a world of violence and war ...

Reader: Listen to their voices, for they are the voices of children who suffer when people turn their hearts to war and violence.

All: God of Compassion and Peace, help us to work for peace, pray for peace and live in peace with one another.

Leader: So many voices cry out from a world of violence and war ...

Reader: Listen to their voices, for they are the voices of those committed to the wisdom of peace, the strength of justice and the joy of community.

All: God of Compassion and Peace, help us to work for peace, pray for peace and live in peace with one another.

Leader: So many voices cry out from a world of violence and war ...

Reader: Listen to their voices, for they are the voices of the people in every country and every period of history who do not want war and are ready to walk the road of peace.



All:

O Great Spirit of our Ancestors, I raise my pipe to you.
To your messengers, the four winds,
and to Mother Earth who provides for your children.
Give us the wisdom to teach our children to love, to respect,
and to be kind to each other so that they may grow with
peace in mind.

Let us learn to share all the good things you provide for us on this Earth.



(Native American Prayer for Peace)

Reader 6:

Dorothy Day founded the Catholic Worker in 1932 with Peter Maurin to offer hospitality to the homeless and the hungry, to give them their human right of housing and food. But as a Catholic Christian, her genius was to link this day to day practical work of mercy with concrete suffering people on the streets of New York with the global struggle to bring peace and justice to people everywhere. She announced that as a follower of Jesus, she would also oppose war, nuclear weapons and poverty. She called Christians to enact the works of mercy, justice and peace, to stand with the poor wherever they live and to speak out for peace and justice for all the world's poor. She was arrested repeatedly for protesting war and single-handedly gave birth to a new church of peace and non-violence.

"The greatest challenge of the day" she asked, "is how to bring about a revolution of the heart, a revolution which has to start with each one of us. War and the poverty of peoples which leads to war, are the greatest problems of the day and the fundamental solution is the personal response which each one of us makes to the message of Jesus. It is the solution which works from the bottom up rather than from the top down."

(John Dear SJ)

Pause for reflection

All:

Praise be to the Lord of the Universe who has created us and made us into tribes and nations,
that we may know each other, not that we may despise each other.
If the enemy incline towards peace, do thou also incline toward peace,
and trust in God, for the Lord is the one that heareth and knoweth all things.
And the servants of God, Most Gracious are those who walk on the Earth in humility, and when we address them, we say "PEACE."

(Muslim Prayer for Peace)

Pause for reflection

All:

May all beings everywhere plagued with sufferings of body and mind quickly be freed from their illnesses.
May those frightened cease to be afraid, and may those bound be free.
May the powerless find power, and may people think of befriending one another.

(Buddhist Prayer for Peace)

Reader 2:

They will hammer their swords into ploughshares
and their spears into sickles.
Nation will not lift up sword against nation and
there will be no more training for war.

(Isaiah 2:4)

Pause for reflection

All:

Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
that we may walk the paths of the Most High.
And we shall beat our swords into ploughshares,
and our spears into pruning hooks.
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation -
neither shall they learn war any more.
And none shall be afraid,
for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts has spoken.

(Jewish Prayer for Peace)

Reader 3:

"If you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers and sisters only, what's so unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same?" (Matthew 5:46-48)
These questions from The Sermon on the Mount get right to the heart of the spiritual life. Why don't we love everyone everywhere unconditionally? Why not love our enemies, as Jesus said? Why go along with the culture of war and its arrogant, ignorant warmakers? Why not practice "agape" like Jesus and his greatest followers, saints like Francis of Assisi, Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi, Dorothy Day, Dr King, Ita Ford and the Berrigans?



Jesus is adamant. He wants us to practice universal, unconditional, sacrificial, all-inclusive, non-violent love, in his words “unusual love”. Be like God, he tells us; love everyone on the whole planet. He exceeds the ancient biblical commandment, “Thou shalt not kill.” He even surpasses Isaiah’s call to “beat swords into ploughshares.” He leads us beyond anger, despair, greed, fear, anxiety, selfishness, violence, murder, and war, to God’s own universal, compassionate love.

(John Dear SJ)

Pause for Reflection

All:
Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

(St Francis of Assisi)

Reader 4:

Every human being on the planet has the right to live in peace. In pursuit of this basic human right, Mahatma Gandhi concluded that the only hope for the human race was for everyone of us to become non-violent ... Nonviolence, he determined, is our only way toward a future of peace and justice. Nonviolence therefore is the first and most essential ingredient if every human being alive is to possess all their human rights. “The principle on which the practice of non-violence rests” Gandhi suggested, “is that what holds good in respect of oneself equally applies to the whole universe.”

(John Dear SJ)



Pause for reflection

All:

Oh Lord Almighty, may there be peace in the celestial regions.
May there be peace on earth.
May the waters be appeasing.
May herbs be wholesome, and may trees and plants bring peace to all.
May all beneficent beings bring peace to us.
May thy Law propagate peace all through the world.
May all things be a source of peace to us.
And may thy peace itself, bestow peace on all,
and may that peace come to me also.

(Hindu Prayer for Peace)

Reader 5:

The Wolves Within (A Native American Story)

An old grandfather, whose grandson came to him with anger at a schoolmate who had done him an injustice, said, “Let me tell you a story.”



“I, too, at times have felt a great hate for those who have taken so much, with no sorrow for what they do. But hate wears you down, and does not hurt your enemy. I have struggled with these feelings many times.”

He continued, “It is as if there were two wolves inside me. One is good and does no harm. He lives in harmony with all around him. He will only fight when it is right to do so, and in the right way.

But the other wolf is full of anger. He fights everyone, all the time, for no reason. It is hard to live with these two wolves inside me, for both of them try to dominate my spirit.”

The boy looked intently into his Grandfather’s eye and asked, “Which one wins, Grandfather?”

The Grandfather solemnly replied: “The one I feed.”

Pause for reflection