

# International Peace Day

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Friday 21 September 2012

## PRAYER FOR PEACE

St Michael's Peshawar  
Peace Day 2008



Dubuque

## Setting

A map of the world or a globe, flowers or leaves, a candle.

## Introduction - Leader

In 1981 the United Nations General Assembly passed resolution 36/67 declaring an International Day of Peace. In 2001 the United Nations General Assembly adopted a new resolution 55/282 declaring 21 September of each year as the International Day of Peace. The 2001 Resolution:

- “Declares that the International Day of Peace shall henceforth be observed as a day of global ceasefire and non-violence, an invitation to all nations and people to honour a cessation of hostilities for the duration of the Day”
- “Invites all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system, and non-governmental organizations and individuals to commemorate, in an appropriate manner, the International Day of Peace, including through education and public awareness, and to cooperate with the United Nations in the establishment of the global ceasefire”.



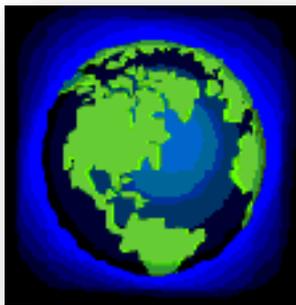
In 1983, in commemoration of the annual International Day of Peace and in solidarity with the United Nations, **Pathways To Peace** inaugurated what would become a tradition. This observation of a **Noon Minute of Silence/Moment of Peace** has grown throughout the world, not only on the International Day of Peace. The International Day of Peace, and the noon Minute of Silence/Moment of Peace, is a shared and practical act of peace-building in which all individuals, organizations and nations can participate. Peace Day is an opportunity to mark our individual progress toward building a Culture of Peace, and serves as a reminder of our permanent commitment to peace.

## Call to Prayer

*Individually or around the group call to mind the people of countries experiencing war, violence, oppression or unrest. For example, “I/we gather in solidarity with the people of ..... who are experiencing ....."*

*Place a flower or leaf on the map or around the globe each time a group of people is called to mind.*

*Then light the candle while saying: “May the light of peace, forgiveness and hope bring light to the darkness of violence, hatred and war.”*



## Readings

### Reader 1

They will hammer their swords into ploughshares and their spears into sickles. Nation will not lift sword against nation, no longer will they learn how to make war.

*Isaiah 2:4*



**Response** (Diann L Neu)

All merciful God of Many Names,  
Yahweh, Allah, Holy One, Goddess, Wisdom-Sophia,  
your power and grace sustain the universe.  
Teach us to hallow your names throughout the world.  
**In your mercy, grant us peace.**

**Reader 2**

Because we all share this planet earth, we have to learn to live in harmony and peace with each other and with nature. That is not just a dream, but a necessity. We are dependent on each other in so many ways that we can no longer live in isolated communities and ignore what is happening outside those communities.

*The Dalai Lama*

**Response** (Diann L Neu)

Compassionate and merciful God of Many Names,  
change the hearts of the United States and Iraq governments  
and their allies, and those who use violence as a solution.  
Help us find together a way to peace that serves every nation.  
**In your mercy, grant us peace.**

**Reader 3**

Peace cannot be a mere word or a vain aspiration. Peace is a commitment and a manner of life which demands that the legitimate aspirations of all should be satisfied, such as access to food, water and energy, to medicine and technology, or indeed the monitoring of climate change. Only in this way can we build the future of humanity; only in this way can we facilitate an integral development valid for today and tomorrow.

*Pope Benedict XVI, Address to the Diplomatic Corps, 7 January 2008, n7*

**Response** (Diann L Neu)

You chose Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar to birth many nations.  
You continue to speak through prophets and peacemakers.  
Forgive us, their offspring, for our wars and misdeeds.  
Save us from further terrorism and destruction  
that all children may live in peace.  
**In your mercy, grant us peace.**

**Reader 4**

According to the United Nations, a culture of peace is “a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behaviour and ways of life that rejects violence and prevents conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations”.



**Response** (Diann L Neu)

Guardian of all life,  
guide the leaders of the United States and its allies,  
guide the rulers of Iraq and the Middle East and their allies,  
to act responsibly to bring peace and welfare to humankind.  
**In your mercy, grant us peace.**

## Reader 5

Not only is another world possible,  
She is on her way.  
On a quiet day,  
I can hear her breathing.

*Arundhati Roy*

## Response (Diann L Neu)

God of Peace and Justice,  
guide all religious communities around the world  
to work for peace with justice  
so that all may have food, housing, prosperity, and peace.  
**In your mercy, grant us peace.**



## Reader 6

Peace is not the product of terror or fear. Peace is not the silence of cemeteries. Peace is not the silent result of violent repression. Peace is the generous, tranquil contribution of all to the good of all. Peace is dynamism. Peace is generosity. It is right and it is duty.

*Archbishop Oscar Romero*

## Response (Diann L Neu)

God of Many Names, fill us with peace.  
May our peace radiate to loved ones and all we meet.  
May this peace touch communities around the world  
so that all may live in peace forever and ever.  
**Amen. Blessed be. Let it be so.**

## Prayer for Peace - All

Loving God, you inspire us with love for all persons  
and concern for the well-being of all creation.

Give us today the strength and courage  
to transform the compassion of our hearts  
into acts of peace, mercy, and justice.

Forgive us for the arrogance that leads to moral blindness,  
for desires for vengeance and retaliation,  
and for willingness to sacrifice others for our own security and avarice.

Help us to renounce all forms of violence:  
prejudice, unfair allegations, intolerance, and injury.

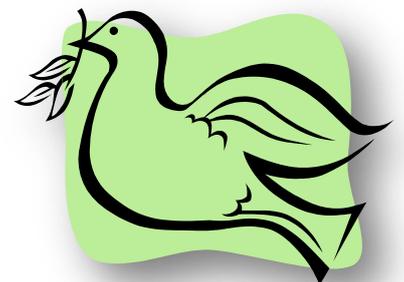
Give us the courage to resist threatening postures,  
calls to arms, mobilization of troops and weapons,  
and all actions that threaten the lives and livelihoods of innocent people.

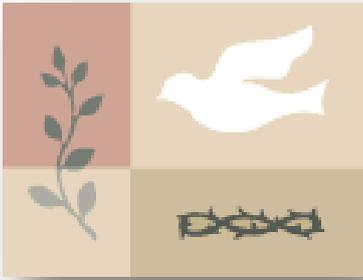
Empower us to live out the caring presence  
of the merciful and generous persons we claim to be.

Make us channels of your peace, bearers of healing,  
women and men who hear and respond with alacrity  
to pleas for justice in our world.

We ask all this in the name of Jesus  
who came among us to show us the way.

*Sisters of Mercy of the Americas*





*Spend a minute in silence praying for peace around the world,  
in the hearts of those we love, and in our own hearts.*

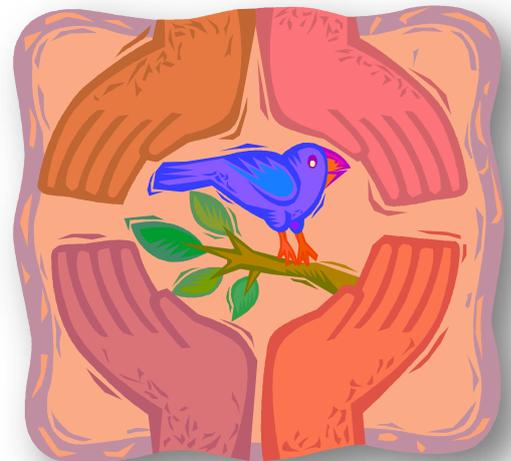
## **Peace for the Children of God - All**

O God, all holy One,  
you are our Father, and our Mother,  
and we are your children.  
Open our eyes and our hearts  
so that we may be able to discern  
your work in the universe.  
And be able to see Your features  
in every one of Your children.  
May we learn that there are many paths  
but all lead to You.  
Help us to know that you have created us  
for family, for togetherness,  
for peace, for gentleness,  
for compassion, for caring, for sharing.

May we know that You want us  
to care for one another  
as those who know  
that they are sisters and brothers,  
members of the same family,  
Your family,  
the human family.

Help us to beat our swords into plowshares  
and our spears into pruning hooks,  
so that we may be able to live  
in peace and harmony,  
wiping away the tears  
from the eyes of those  
who are less fortunate than ourselves.  
And may we know war no more,  
as we strive to be  
what You want us to be:  
Your children.  
Amen.

*Desmond M Tutu,  
Former Archbishop of Cape Town,  
South Africa (adapted)*



***The cry of those made poor and the cry of the Earth call us to continue the mission of Jesus to bring forth a sustainable society founded on respect for Earth, universal human rights, economic justice and a culture of peace.***

***IPA Mission 2007***

As defined by the United Nations, **a Culture of Peace** is a set of values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations (*UN Resolutions A/RES/52/13 : Culture of Peace and A/RES/53/243, Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace*). For peace and non-violence to prevail, we need to:

***foster a culture of peace through education***

by revising the educational curricula to promote qualitative values, attitudes and behaviours of a culture of peace, including peaceful conflict-resolution, dialogue, consensus-building and active non-violence. Such an educational approach should be geared also to:

- promote sustainable economic and social development
- promote respect for all human rights
- ensure equality between women and men
- foster democratic participation
- advance understanding, tolerance and solidarity
- support participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge
- promote international peace and security.

***Prayer for Peace:*** Diann L Neu, D Min, is co-founder and co-director of WATER, Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual