



Prayers for Peace

In his Angelus Address on September 1st, Pope Francis called for a day of fasting and prayer for peace in Syria on September 7th, the vigil of the Feast of the Birth of Mary, Queen of Peace. Pope Francis stated:

“Brothers and sisters, I have decided to proclaim for the whole Church on 7 September next, the vigil of the birth of Mary, Queen of Peace, a day of fasting and prayer for peace in Syria, the Middle East, and throughout the world, and I also invite each person, including our fellow Christians, followers of other religions and all men of good will, to participate, in whatever way they can, in this initiative.”

We hope that you find the prayers below helpful as you keep vigil with us.

Sincerely,

*The Center for Mission and Identity
Xavier University*

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Prayer for Peace in Syria

O God of Mercy and Tender Compassion,
we cry out to you in this time of crisis.
Hear the cries of the people of Syria.
Bring healing to those suffering from violence
and comfort to those mourning the dead.

O God of hope,
sustain those who labor for peaceful and just solutions.
Inspire leaders and decision makers
to choose the way of peace over the way of violence.
Deliver all your children from the threat of war
and teach us to encounter one another with reverence and love.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ
who came to bring to peace on earth
and who abides with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.
Amen.

- Sr. Deborah Harmeling, O.S.B.

Prayer for Peace in Our Time

O God, author and giver of peace,
in whose image and likeness each of us has been created
with a human dignity worthy of respect on earth
and destined for eternal glory,
Listen to the cry that rises from every corner of this fragile earth,
from our human family torn by violent conflict:

Give peace in our time, O good and gracious God,
that peace which, as your Son Jesus Christ told us
and as we have experienced in these days,
is a peace which the world cannot give.

To world leaders grant the wisdom
to see beyond the boundaries of race, religion, and nation
to that common humanity that makes us all your children
and brothers and sisters to one another.

To those who have taken up arms in anger or revenge
or even in the cause of justice
grant the grace of conversion to the path of peaceful dialogue
and constructive collaboration.

To the innocent who live in the shadow of war and terror,
especially the frightened children,
be a shelter and strength, their haven and hope.

And to those who have already lost their lives
as victims of human cruelty and chemical warfare,
open wide your arms and enfold them all
in the embrace of your compassion, healing, and everlasting life.

Grant this through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.
Mary, Mother of all and Queen of peace, pray for us.

- Peter J. Scagnelli

A Prayer for the People of Syria

Almighty eternal God, source of all compassion,
the promise of your mercy and saving help fills our hearts with hope.
Hear the cries of the people of Syria;
bring healing to those suffering from the violence,
and comfort to those mourning the dead.
Empower and encourage Syria's neighbors
in their care and welcome for refugees.
Convert the hearts of those who have taken up arms,
and strengthen the resolve of those committed to peace.

O God of hope and Father of mercy,
your Holy Spirit inspires us to look beyond ourselves and our own needs.
Inspire leaders to choose peace over violence
and to seek reconciliation with enemies.
Inspire the Church around the world with compassion for the people of Syria,
and fill us with hope for a future of peace built on justice for all.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace and Light of the World,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

- Adapted by the USCCB from Catholics Confront Global Poverty

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

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.

Alternate Version:

Lord, make me a channel of thy peace,
that where there is hatred, I may bring love;
that where there is wrong,
I may bring the spirit of forgiveness;
that where there is discord, I may bring harmony;
that where there is error, I may bring truth;
that where there is doubt, I may bring faith;
that where there is despair, I may bring hope;
that where there are shadows, I may bring light;
that where there is sadness, I may bring joy.

Lord, grant that I may seek rather to
comfort than to be comforted;
to understand, than to be understood;
to love, than to be loved.
For it is by self-forgetting that one finds.
It is by forgiving that one is forgiven.
It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life.

The Canticle of Hannah (1 Samuel 2:1-10)

And Hannah prayed:

“My heart exults in the LORD,
my horn is exalted by my God.
I have swallowed up my enemies;
I rejoice in your victory.
There is no Holy One like the LORD;
there is no Rock like our God.
Speak boastfully no longer,

Do not let arrogance issue from your mouths.
For an all-knowing God is the LORD,
a God who weighs actions.
“The bows of the mighty are broken,
while the tottering gird on strength.
The well-fed hire themselves out for bread,
while the hungry no longer have to toil.

The barren wife bears seven sons,
while the mother of many languishes.
“The LORD puts to death and gives life,
casts down to Sheol and brings up again.
The LORD makes poor and makes rich,
humbles, and also exalts.

He raises the needy from the dust;
from the ash heap lifts up the poor,
To seat them with nobles
and make a glorious throne their heritage.

“For the pillars of the earth are the LORD’s,
and he has set the world upon them.
He guards the footsteps of his faithful ones,
but the wicked shall perish in the darkness;
for not by strength does one prevail.

The LORD’s foes shall be shattered;
the Most High in heaven thunders;
the LORD judges the ends of the earth.
May he give strength to his king,
and exalt the horn of his anointed!”

Isaiah 11:1-10

But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse,
and from his roots a bud shall blossom.
The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him:
a spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
A spirit of counsel and of strength,
a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the LORD,
and his delight shall be the fear of the LORD.

Not by appearance shall he judge,
nor by hearsay shall he decide,
But he shall judge the poor with justice,
and decide fairly for the land's afflicted.

He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.
Justice shall be the band around his waist,
and faithfulness a belt upon his hips.

Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat;
The calf and the young lion shall browse together,
with a little child to guide them.
The cow and the bear shall graze,
together their young shall lie down;
the lion shall eat hay like the ox.

The baby shall play by the viper's den,
and the child lay his hand on the adder's lair.
They shall not harm or destroy on all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the LORD,
as water covers the sea.

On that day,
The root of Jesse,
set up as a signal for the peoples—
Him the nations will seek out;
his dwelling shall be glorious.

Psalm 72

O God, give your judgment to the king;
your justice to the king's son;
That he may govern your people with justice,
your oppressed with right judgment,
That the mountains may yield their bounty for the people,
and the hills great abundance,
That he may defend the oppressed among the people,
save the children of the poor and crush the oppressor.
May they fear you with the sun,
and before the moon, through all generations.
May he be like rain coming down upon the fields,
like showers watering the earth,
That abundance may flourish in his days,
great bounty, till the moon be no more.

May he rule from sea to sea,
from the river to the ends of the earth.
May his foes kneel before him, his enemies lick the dust.
May the kings of Tarshish and the islands bring tribute,
the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts.
May all kings bow before him,
all nations serve him.
For he rescues the poor when they cry out,
the oppressed who have no one to help.
He shows pity to the needy and the poor
and saves the lives of the poor.
From extortion and violence he redeems them,
for precious is their blood in his sight.

Long may he live, receiving gold from Sheba,
prayed for without cease, blessed day by day.
May wheat abound in the land,
flourish even on the mountain heights.
May his fruit be like that of Lebanon,
and flourish in the city like the grasses of the land.
May his name be forever; as long as the sun, may his name endure.
May the tribes of the earth give blessings with his name;
may all the nations regard him as favored.
Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel,
who alone does wonderful deeds.
Blessed be his glorious name forever;
may he fill all the earth with his glory. Amen and amen.

The Gospel of John 14:15-29

Jesus said to them, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live on that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you.

Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.” Judas, not the Iscariot, said to him, “Master, [then] what happened that you will reveal yourself to us and not to the world?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; yet the word you hear is not mine but that of the Father who sent me.

“I have told you this while I am with you. 26The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that [I] told you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.

You heard me tell you, ‘I am going away and I will come back to you.’ If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. 29And now I have told you this before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe.

The Gospel of John 20:19-23

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. [Jesus] said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."

A reading from an Angelus homily of Pope Francis

Today, dear brothers and sisters, I wish to add my voice
to the cry which rises up with increasing anguish from every part of the world...
from the one great family which is humanity.

It is the cry for peace!

It is a cry which declares with force:

We want a peaceful world; we want to be men and women of peace ...
and we want in our society, torn apart by divisions and conflict,
that peace break out!

There are so many conflicts in this world which cause me great suffering and worry,
but in these days my heart is deeply wounded by what is happening in Syria
and by the dramatic developments which are looming.

I appeal strongly for peace ...

How much suffering, how much devastation,
how much pain has the use of arms carried in its wake ...

I think of many children who will not see the light of the future!

With utmost firmness I condemn the use of chemical weapons.

There is a judgment of God and of history upon our actions which is inescapable!

Never has the use of violence brought peace in its wake.

War begets war; violence begets violence.

What can we do to make peace in the world?

As Pope John said, it pertains to each individual
to establish new relationships in human society
under the mastery and guidance of justice and love.

All men and women of good will are bound by the task of pursuing peace.

I make a forceful and urgent call to the entire Catholic Church,
and also to every Christian of other confessions
as well as to followers of every religion
and to those brothers and sister who do not believe:

Peace is a good which overcomes every barrier, because it belongs to all of humanity.

I repeat forcefully:

It is neither a culture of confrontation nor a culture of conflict
which builds harmony with and between peoples,
but it is a culture of encounter and a culture of dialogue;

This is the only way to peace.

May the plea for peace rise up and touch the hearts of everyone
so that they may lay down their weapons
and let themselves be led by the desire for peace.

- Pope Francis

POPE BENEDICT XVI

Excerpt from His Address for the Celebration of the World Day Of Peace

January 1, 2013

Peace concerns the human person as a whole, and it involves complete commitment. It is peace with God through a life lived according to his will. It is interior peace with oneself, and exterior peace with our neighbors and all creation. Above all, as Blessed John XXIII wrote in his Encyclical *Pacem in Terris* ... it entails the building up of a coexistence based on truth, freedom, love and justice. The denial of what makes up the true nature of human beings in its essential dimensions, its intrinsic capacity to know the true and the good and, ultimately, to know God himself, jeopardizes peacemaking. Without the truth about man inscribed by the Creator in the human heart, freedom and love become debased, and justice loses the ground of its exercise.

To become authentic peacemakers, it is fundamental to keep in mind our transcendent dimension and to enter into constant dialogue with God, the Father of mercy, whereby we implore the redemption achieved for us by his only-begotten Son. In this way mankind can overcome that progressive dimming and rejection of peace which is sin in all its forms: selfishness and violence, greed and the will to power and dominion, intolerance, hatred and unjust structures.

The attainment of peace depends above all on recognizing that we are, in God, one human family.

- Pope Benedict XVI

Pope John Paul II's Prayer for Peace

Lord Jesus Christ, who are called the Prince of Peace,
who are yourself our peace and reconciliation,
who so often said, "Peace to you," grant us peace.

Make all men and women witnesses of truth, justice,
and brotherly love.
Banish from their hearts whatever might endanger peace.

Enlighten our rulers that they may
guarantee and defend the great gift of peace.
May all peoples on the earth
become as brothers and sisters.
May longed for peace blossom forth
and reign always over us all.

- Pope John Paul II

Excerpts from Pope Paul VI's address on the 1978 World Day of Peace

To the world and to humanity

we once more dare to address the meek and solemn word, Peace.

Peace is not a purely ideal dream.

It is, and must be, a reality—

a dynamic reality and one to be generated at every stage of civilization,

Peace is an equilibrium that is based on motion

and continually gives forth energy of spirit and action;

It is intelligent and living courage.

We beseech all men and women of good will

to begin once more to reflect on peace in the world today!

We would like to be able to dispel the threatening nightmare of war

by proclaiming at the top of our voice the absurdity of war

and the absolute necessity of peace—

Peace is not founded on the power of arms

that today are endowed with an infernal capacity for destruction,

but is founded on the patient, rational and loyal method of justice and freedom.

Violence is not courage.

It is the explosion of a blind energy that degrades those who give in to it,

lowering them from the rational level to the level of passion.

It looks for ignoble ways of expressing itself:

insidious attacks, surprise,

physical supremacy over a defenceless adversary.

It takes advantage of surprise and terror and of its own madness.

Violence is antisocial by reason of the very methods

that allow it to be organized into group complicity,

in which a conspiracy of silence forms the binding cement.

Violence leads to revolution and revolution to the loss of freedom.

Perhaps it is appropriate to recall Christ's phrase:

"...all who take the sword will perish by the sword."

Let us remember therefore that violence is not courage.

Violence does not ennoble the one who has recourse to it.

- Pope Paul VI