

Prayer Service for Peace

OPENING PRAYER

God of faithfulness, we come to You troubled by the threat of war, filled with anxieties and questions. What change are we able to effect by our prayer before You, by our words, by our deeds? What can we do to bring peace to our planet?

God, we are in need of Your grace to unsettle and redirect our hearts. We are in need of Your hope to rekindle and sustain our passion for justice. We are in need of Your wisdom that we might recognize anew Your presence dwelling within us, calling us to live as children of light and of hope rather than of darkness and fear.

Be with us in our prayer this day. Help us to truly believe, not only in Your abiding presence within and among us, but in the power of our prayer to move mountains. All this we ask in the name of Jesus our brother, who shares our lives and Yours in the unity of the Spirit. Amen.

(Adapted from opening prayer of "Vigils in Case of Outbreak of War", Our Prayers Rise Like Incense: Liturgies for Peace, Pax Christi USA, 1998.)

PSALM 13

Side 1: How long, O God, will You quite forget me? How long will You hide Your face from me?

Side 2: How long must I suffer anguish in my soul, grief in my heart day and night?

Side 1: Look now and answer me, O God. Give light to my eyes lest I sleep the sleep of death.

Side 2: Lest my enemies say, "I have overthrown them," And my enemies rejoice at my downfall.

Side 1: But for my part I trust in Your true love. My heart shall rejoice, for You have set me free.

Side 2: I will sing to God, Who has granted all my desires.

LITANY FOR PEACE

Let us pray to Jesus Christ that we may be set free from the chains of violence and war.

Jesus the Christ, by your cross and resurrection
. . . deliver us by your suffering and forgiveness and grant all your children peace.

by your nonviolence and love
 by your witness to truth
 by your passion and death
 by your victory over the grave

from the desire for power
 from the conspiracy of silence
 from the negation of life
 from the worship of weapons
 from the celebration of killing
 from the slaughter of the innocent
 from the extermination of the weak
 from the nightmare of hunger
 from the politics of terror
 from a false peace from
 relying on weapons
 from the spiral of armaments
 from plundering the earth's resources
 from the despair of this age
 from global suicide.

by the light of the Gospel
. . . give us peace
 by the good news for the poor
 by your healing and wounds
 by faith in your word
 by a hunger and thirst for justice
 by the coming of Your reign
 by the outpouring of the Spirit
 by reconciliation of enemies
 by gentleness and nonviolence
 by the truth that sets us free
 by prophecy and witness
 by persecution because of your name
 by the power of love



Prayer Service for Peace (continued)

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world,
grant us peace

From Linda Friern, Tony Bartlett

CALL TO THE FAITHFUL

We know, O God, it is easier to reflect on the Gospel than to be summoned to live out its call. Let our anger and fear flow out of us
with the tears we shed,
so that we can be emptied and able to hear this call, to remember this wisdom,
and to be open to the grace we need to live it out.

READINGS FROM CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

For this reason, during these sacred days our supplication is raised with greater fervor towards Christ, who by His painful passion and death overcame sin—the root of discord and the source of sorrows and inequalities—and by His Blood reconciled humankind to the eternal God: “For Christ himself is our peace, Christ it is that hath made both one . . . And coming Christ announced the good tidings of peace to you who were afar off, and of peace to those who were near.” And in the liturgy of these days we hear the announcement: “Our Lord Jesus Christ, after His resurrection, stood in the midst of the disciples and said ‘Peace be to you,’ alleluia: The disciples rejoiced seeing the Lord,” Christ leaves us peace, Christ bring us peace: “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you.”

This is the peace which we implore of God with the ardent yearning of our prayer. May God banish from our hearts whatever might endanger peace. May God transform us

into witnesses of truth, justice and love. May God enlighten the rulers of peoples so that in addition to their solicitude for the proper welfare of their citizens, they may guarantee and defend the great gift of peace; may God enkindle the wills of all, so that they may overcome the barriers that divide, cherish the bonds of mutual love, understand others, and pardon those who have done them wrong; by virtue of Christ’s action, may all people of the earth become sisters and brothers, and may the most longed-for peace blossom forth and reign always among us.

Pacem in Terris (169-171) Pope John XXIII, 1961

In the last few days, as the winds of war were threatening to engulf the entire Middle Eastern region, we have received the good news that Iraq will resume its collaboration with the international community. Let us pray that the Lord may enlighten those who are responsible for leading the nations [i.e. George W. Bush], that He may generate and support a glimmer of good will, that the Lord may lead humanity, which is already tormented by so many evils, towards a cohabitation that is free of wars and overwhelming violence.

Pope John Paul II, Castelgandolfo, September 18, 2002, National Catholic Reporter

“Given the precedents and risks involved, we find it difficult to justify extending the war on terrorism to Iraq, absent clear and adequate evidence of Iraqi involvement in the attacks of September 11th or of an imminent attack of a grave nature . . . We fear that resort to force, under [current] circumstances, would not meet the strict conditions in Catholic teaching for overriding the strong presumption against the use of military force . . . While we recognize improved capability and serious efforts to avoid directly targeting civilians in war, the use of massive military force to remove the current government of Iraq could have incalculable consequences for a civilian population that has suffered so much from war, repression, and a debilitating embargo. We raise these troubling questions to contribute to the vital national debate about ends and



Prayer Service for Peace (continued)

means, risks and choices reflecting our responsibilities as pastors and teachers. Our assessment of these questions leads us to urge you to pursue actively alternatives to war.

September 13, 2002, letter to President George W. Bush from Bishop Wilton D. Gregory, President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

SHARING:

Take some time to share your thoughts and feelings about violence and nonviolence, the threat of war and the call to peace.

FINAL PRAYER:

To you, Creator of nature and humanity, of truth and beauty, I pray:

Hear my voice, for it is the voice of the victims of all wars and violence among individuals and nations.

Hear my voice, for it is the voice of all children who suffer and will suffer when people put their faith in weapons and war.

Hear my voice, when I beg you to instill into the hearts of all human beings the wisdom of peace, the strength of justice and the joy of fellowship.

Hear my voice, for I speak for the multitudes in every country and every period of history who do not want war and are ready to walk the road of peace.

Hear my voice, and grant insight and strength so that we may always respond to hatred with love, to injustice with total dedication to justice, to need with sharing of self, to war with peace.

O God, hear my voice, and grant unto the world your everlasting peace.

Pope John Paul II

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

