

Prayer for International Peace Day

September 21, 2011



*Let us join with peacemakers around the world
in a minute of silence for peace at noon on September 21*

Prepared by International Presentation Association



WELCOME/INTRODUCTION

Leader: In the name of the God of peace, the nonviolent Jesus, and the Holy Spirit of love.

All: Amen.

Let's take a minute in silence to give thanks for all the blessings of love and peace that we have received throughout our lives. We ask forgiveness for all the ways we have rejected those blessings of love and peace, all the ways we have chosen violence instead of nonviolence, all the ways we have hurt others and supported the culture of violence and war. Let's repent and ask for the grace to become people of peace. *(Silence)*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Leader: Because we nurture too many grudges against others:

All: **God of Peace, have mercy.**

Leader: Because we are sometimes unwilling to forgive:

All: **Christ, our brother, have mercy.**

Leader: Because we are slow to seek peace and reconciliation:

All: **God of Peace, have mercy.**

Leader: Jesus, you wept over the sins of your city. On our city:

All: **Jesus, have mercy.**

Leader: Jesus, you heal the wounds of sin and division, jealousy and bitterness. On us:

All: **Jesus, have mercy.**

Leader: Jesus, you bring pardon and peace to the sinner. Grant us peace:

All: **Jesus, have mercy.**

Leader: Let us pray...

All: God of peace, be with us now as we repent of our violence and hear your word of peace. Help us to become your holy people of peace, that we might follow the nonviolent Jesus, love one another, love our enemies, reconcile with everyone, resist injustice and pursue a new world without war, poverty, nuclear weapons, global warming or violence, your reign of nonviolence in our midst. We ask this in the name of the nonviolent Jesus, our brother and our friend. Amen.

PEACE READINGS *(Pause for reflection after each of the following Readings)*

Reading 1

The wolf and the young lamb will feed together, the lion will eat hay like the ox... no hurt, no harm will be done on all my holy mountain, God says. (Is 65:25)

Reading 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)

Reading 3

We are constantly being astonished these days at the amazing discoveries in the field of violence, but I maintain that far more undreamt of and seemingly impossible discoveries will be made in the field of nonviolence. My optimism rests on my belief in the infinite possibilities of the individual to develop nonviolence. The more you develop it in your own being, the more infectious it becomes til it overwhelms your surroundings and by and by might oversweep the world. (Mohandas Gandhi)

Reading 4

No more will the sound of weeping be heard there, nor the sound of a shriek; never again will there be an infant there who lives only a few days, nor an old man who does not run his full course; ... They will build houses and live in them, they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They will not build for others to live in, or plant for others to eat; ... they will not toil in vain ... (Is 65:19-23)

Reading 5

I shall break the bow and the sword and warfare, and banish them from the country, and I will let them sleep secure. (Hosea 2:20)

Reading 6

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. (Is 2:4)



Reading 7

Blessed are those who mourn: they shall be comforted... Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness... Blessed are the peacemakers. (Matthew 5:3-10)



Reading 8

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. (Matthew 5:44)

Reading 9

They will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them, they will plant vineyards and drink their wine, they will lay out gardens and eat their produce. (Amos 9:14)

Share one of the above Readings that spoke to your heart in a particular way at this time. If you wish, share why you chose this Reading.

Leader: Let us pray...

God of all,
as we walk together,
open our hearts
to your tenderness.
Open our minds
to your understanding.
Open our lives
to your challenge.
We are one people, many nations,
building hope through steps for peace.
One world with many barriers,
breaking chains so we dance free.
One voice that shouts for justice
shatters hatred, calls for change.
One God, one world, one people,
turning tables, share the feast.
Amen.

(Linda R Jones)



INTERCESSIONS FOR PEACE

Let us pray for peace in our world. We pray for all those who seek peace, reconciliation and fullness of life for all people. Grant them discernment, courage and determination to work for your peace, relying on your Spirit and power. We pray for ourselves that your peace may become more present in us.

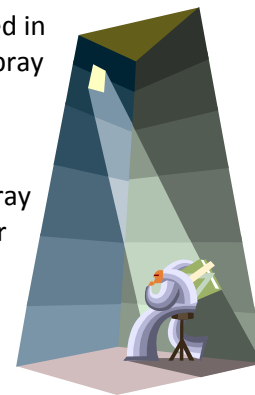
God of Peace, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for justice in our world. We pray for all who seek justice for the victimised and marginalized in the world. Grant them the courage to fight injustice, prejudice and suspicion wherever it occurs. We pray for ourselves that we may act justly in our homes and at work.

God of Peace, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for all those who suffer torture, have disappeared or are denied their human rights. We pray for all those who are held prisoner, tortured or suffer because they believe in the rights they and their communities have as human beings. We pray that through knowing you they may be comforted. We pray for those who oppress them, that through knowing you they may be changed. We pray for ourselves, that we may not forget them as it is hoped we will.

God of Peace, in your mercy, hear our prayer.



Let us pray for people living in poverty. We pray for all those who are trapped by poverty and suffer illness, lack of education and lost opportunities for a full life as a result. By our generosity may we share their sufferings and contribute to the solving of their problems. We pray for ourselves, that we may always recognise that we are called to be trustworthy stewards of all we have both for ourselves and for our brothers and sisters.

God of Peace, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for the hungry and the starving of the world. We pray for all those who are even now hungry and dying of starvation across the world. We pray for those who control their lives that they might know the misery they cause. We pray for ourselves that we might always share our daily bread as you have commanded us.

God of Peace, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

(cf Linda Jones)

Reader: *Making Peace*

A voice from the dark called out,
'The poets must give us
imagination of peace, to oust the intense, familiar
imagination of disaster. Peace, not only
the absence of war.'

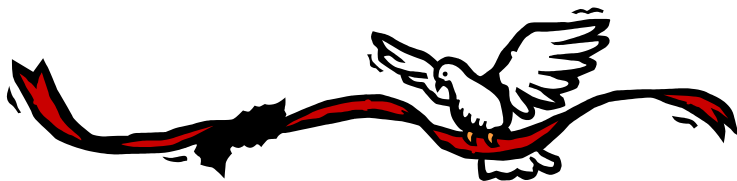
But peace, like a poem,
is not there ahead of itself,
can't be imagined before it is made,
can't be known except
in the words of its making,
grammar of justice,
syntax of mutual aid.

A feeling towards it,
dimly sensing a rhythm, is all we have
until we begin to utter its metaphors,
learning them as we speak.

A line of peace might appear
if we restructured the sentence our lives are making,
revoked its reaffirmation of profit and power,
questioned our needs, allowed
long pauses...

A cadence of peace might balance its weight
on that different fulcrum; peace, a presence,
an energy field more intense than war,
might pulse then,
stanza by stanza into the world,
each act of living
one of its words, each word
a vibration of light--facets
of the forming crystal.

(Denise Levertov)



CLOSING PRAYER

May your kingdom come
May fear strike no longer,
Let pain fade away,
May earthly power be challenged,
When it plunders the poor,
And tramples on hope.

God of peace, may your kingdom come
Help us put away the weapons of war,
Help us destroy the tools of destruction,
Let earthly power be challenged,
When it plunders the poor,
And tramples on hope.

God of peace, may your kingdom come.
Teach us to follow the ways of justice,
Teach us to walk the paths of truth,
Let integrity challenge the power that plunders,
When it tramples the poor
And pours scorn on our hope.

God of peace, may your kingdom come.
Bring peace sweet as honey,
Bring peace like a shield,
And may we be the challenge
To earthly power that plunders
And tramples on hope.
God of peace, may your kingdom come.

(Linda Jones)



CLOSING BLESSING

After a closing song of peace known by the group, all are invited to offer each other a sign of peace.



This year's observance of the International Day of Peace at UN Headquarters in New York is being held the morning of 15 September (due to logistics). It will feature the ringing of the Peace Bell and an address by Secretary General Ban Ki-moon as well as a Moment of Silence for Peace; a 'Flags of the World' ceremony led by the World Peace Prayer Society; and a Youth Event featuring United Nations Messengers of Peace: Michael Douglas, who brings a special focus on disarmament; Jane Goodall, special focus on the environment; and Stevie Wonder, special focus on people with disabilities; along with several youth ambassadors from UNICEF and other organizations or countries.

It will be webcast by the UN at www.un.org/webcast.