

International Day of Peace

September 21, 2016

**“Peace begins with each of us.
It is a process of repeatedly showing
mercy to ourselves,
forgiving ourselves,
befriending ourselves,
accepting ourselves.
As we learn to appreciate ourselves
and accept God’s gift of peace,
we begin to radiate peace and love to others.” (John Dear)**

(This video can be used for the beginning of the prayer service. It's very reflective and would set a wonderful mood.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCxdItivTfQ>



Opening Prayer:

Grant us, Lord God, a vision of your world as your love would have it:
a world where the weak are protected, and none go hungry or poor;
a world where the riches of creation are shared, and everyone can enjoy them;
a world where different races and cultures live in harmony and mutual respect;
a world where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love.
Give us the inspiration and courage to build it, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
(Downloaded from UCC prayer website)

Litany of Peace (said side to side or leader and response)

Let there be peace on earth

Lord, it seems as if our entire planet is one of war – war of bullets, war of words, war of apathy.

And let it begin with me.

So often I'm (we're) tempted to engage in violence in how I (we) treat myself (ourselves), others and Your creation. With Your grace, I (we) can move toward peace.

Let there be peace on earth

Lord, each day my brothers and sisters are killed by accident or intent.

The peace that was meant to be

And yet, You said so often “my peace be with you.” Peace is your gift to us.

With God as our Father (mother, Creator)

Lord, you brought our world into being as a home for all creation...a world to care and nourish us all.

Brothers and sisters are we

Help us to recognize that we are all part of each other and of all creation.

Let us walk with each other

Help us to see and respect the dignity of each creature.

In perfect harmony

And work to build a world in which all know that their lives matter...recognizing and appreciating each other's gifts and talents.

Let there be peace on earth

Lord, so much of our earth struggles from pollution and exploitation

Let this be the moment now

Help me (us) to respond when there is a need and not let my (our) ministry, an appointment, or may apathy get in the way. Make me (us) aware of how I (we) contribute to this violence.

With every step I take

Whether in my family, community, ministry, job, parish, neighborhood, city or nation let me bring peace to those places.

Let this be my solemn vow

Help me to commit myself anew each day.

To take each moment and live each moment

Wherever I (we) am (are), let me (us) be peace, build peace and preach peace

In peace eternally

To ensure that peace continues into the future

All: Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.

The Word

A reading from the first letter of Peter:

"All of you, be of one mind, sympathetic, loving toward one another, compassionate, humble. Do not return evil for evil, or insult for insult; but, on the contrary, a blessing, because to this you were called, that you might inherit a blessing. For: "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep the tongue from evil and the lips from speaking deceit, must turn from evil and do good, seek peace and follow after it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears turned to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against evildoers."

Now who is going to harm you if you are enthusiastic for what is good? But even if you should suffer because of righteousness, blessed are you. Do not be afraid or terrified with fear of them, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope..." (1 Peter 3:8-15)

Reflection Questions:

How am I using the inherited blessing I have received to be a peace builder?

In what ways am I aware of how my actions and responses affect the whole human Community?

Closing Prayer

Father of all, we pray for the power to be gentle; the strength to be forgiving; the patience to be understanding; and the endurance to accept the consequences of holding to what we believe to be right. May we put our trust in the power of good to overcome evil and the power of love to overcome hatred. We pray for the vision to see and the faith to believe in a world emancipated from violence, a new world where fear shall no longer lead people to commit injustice nor selfishness make them bring suffering to others. Help us to devote our whole life and thought and energy to the task of making peace, praying always for the inspiration and the power to fulfill the destiny for which we and all humankind were created.

We pray this in the name of Jesus, Your Son, now and forever. Amen (A Prayer for World Peace, 1978)



" If anyone slew an innocent person it would be as if he slew the whole mankind
and if anyone saved a life it would be as if he saved the life of the whole mankind." (Quran 5:32)