

A Prayer Service for the UN World Day of Peace

Greeting: "The peace of the Lord in your soul is always of greater value than all the desires for good that you might have. Do reasonably all you can, with great peace" (St. Julie, Letter 259)

Introduction: Today we join people around the world to pray for peace for our earth. Why do we need to pray for peace? Without peace there is hunger, disease, malnutrition and poverty. Without peace children cannot go to school, cures cannot be found, justice cannot prevail. According to the United Nations, these countries currently involved in war or civil unrest: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Brazil, Britain, Burma, the Central African Republic, Chad, China, Colombia, Congo, Darfur, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, the Ivory Coast, Korea, Kurdistan, Laos, Lebanon, Mexico, Moldova, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Senegal, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, the United States, Uzbekistan, and Zimbabwe. We hold these countries, and all people experiencing violence and war, in our hearts as we pray for peace. Our faith tells us that true peace comes from God, and that God gifts each of us with peace. So we take a moment to turn to our good God who dwells within us, to ask for the gift of peace.

Moment of silence - to touch the peace of God within each of us.

First Reading & Lighting of the Candle: Matthew 5: 14-16 ("light and salt")

Quiet Reflection: What can I do to be the light of peace to those around me?

Let us pray: Good and gracious God, let your peace rest so gently on our hearts and minds that we may have the strength to work for peace in our world today, tomorrow and for ever. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Second Reading: Philippians 4:6-9

Prayers of Petition

That each of us may know your peace in our hearts and share the gift of your peace with those around us, we pray:

God of peace, hear our prayer.

For all families, that they may experience your peace and love, we pray:

God of peace, hear our prayer.

For all neighborhoods, that they may be places of respect and peace, we pray:

God of peace, hear our prayer.

For all the peoples of Asia, the South Pacific, Australia and Indonesia: that they may know true peace and see an end to all abuse, violence and war, we pray:

God of peace, hear our prayer.

[light a candle and pause for a moment of silence]

For all the peoples of Europe: that they may know true peace and see an end to all abuse, violence and war, we pray:

God of peace, hear our prayer.

[light a candle and pause for a moment of silence]

For all the peoples of South America: that they may know true peace and see an end to all abuse, violence and war, we pray:

God of peace, hear our prayer.

[light a candle and pause for a moment of silence]

For all the peoples of Africa: that they may know true peace and see an end to all abuse, violence and war, we pray:

God of peace, hear our prayer.

[light a candle and pause for a moment of silence]

For all the peoples of North America and Central America: that they may know true peace and see an end to all abuse, violence and war, we pray:

God of peace, hear our prayer.

[light a candle and pause for a moment of silence]

Conclusion: In unity with others around the world: Let us join our hearts and minds to our brothers and sisters around the world as we pray for the light of peace to illumine all the earth: **O God, who would fold both heaven and earth in a single peace, let the design of your great love enlighten and heal the relationships in our world so torn by misunderstanding, violence and war. Give peace to your people, peace among nations, peace in our dwellings, and peace in our hearts. We ask this through Jesus, your Son and our brother. Amen**

Some Notes to the Leaders

1. You will need six candles, a central one, plus five others for the Prayers of Petition.
2. During the time of silence following the Introduction, quiet music or a song can be played. Appropriate songs include "Peace Is Flowing Like a River," "Let Peace Begin with Me," or the "Peace Prayer of St. Francis." Quiet music could also be played throughout the Prayers of Petition, so that the brief silence moments after each response would be enriched.

(From the Notre Dame Virtual School... Educating for Life, September 21, 2007 - www.ndvs.org/images/pdf-files)