

Prayers for Peace : January 2016
Overcome indifference and win peace.

That is the theme of this year's Peace Sunday (this coming Sunday). It carries the implication that it is our ***lack*** of concern which is the biggest obstacle to peace in our world; that we have become resigned to accepting distrust, discord and naked aggression as the way of the world; that we have got used to the notion that violence is unavoidable or an acceptable way to solve problems; that we have begun to accept that 'might is right' and that it is ok for the rights of the vulnerable to be trampled on because it is too difficult to try and resist the powerful.

In our prayer and reflection this evening let us ask the Lord to change our hearts that we may become champions of peace.

Lord Jesus, in you alone is true peace to be found.

Reading (1 Cor 12.4-11)

If ever we are tempted to think, '*There's nothing we can do,*' we need to hear Paul's message in his First Letter to the Corinthians, reminding us how richly blessed we each are with the gifts of the Spirit - gifts which can change not just us but our world, preparing the paths of peace and reconciliation.

Reading (Matthew 5: 1-10 & 17 : 24-25)

In the beatitudes as recounted in the gospel of St Matthew we hear Jesus himself. He challenges us to set aside worldly values and to work for his kingdom of justice, love and peace. Later in the same gospel Jesus makes even more explicit what it is that we must do - we must take up our cross and follow him.

Prayer of St John Paul II

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 install 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 in 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 the sharing of self, to war with peace.

O God, hear my voice and grant to the world Your everlasting peace.

Amen.

(Pause for reflection)

Prayers of Intercession

We pray for ourselves: that the Lord may lead us beyond indifference; that we may dare to get involved, listening to the Lord in our prayer and then doing whatever he tells us.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

In this 'Year of Mercy', we pray that the whole Church may become a place of reconciliation and peace for all - and that we will play our part in that.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for the young: may they have a passion for justice and peace and work together for a world in which no one is excluded and no one is discarded as though they were worthless.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for reconciliation where there is conflict; for peace where there is fighting. We remember especially the people of Syria and of the wider Middle East. We remember the many places and peoples around the world suffering as a result of terrorism. We remember the places where conflict has existed for many years - countries in Central Africa, in Central and South America, in Asia - and whose plight is no longer in the spotlight. Help us to play our part in changing hearts and minds to move away from violence.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

We ask God's blessing on all who work for peace and justice, on all who will not be silent in the face of injustice or human hurt; on all who take risks for peace. We ask God's blessing especially on the work of the International Catholic Peace Movement, Pax Christi, on the work of the United Nations and its agencies and on the work of national governments.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for refugees escaping from war and violence. May they find places of safety and the means to rebuild their lives. We pray too for the communities and nations who reach out to welcome them with all of the challenges involved in extending that welcome. We pray that we may be among those reaching out to help.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

In a moment of silence, let us place before the Lord our own thirst for peace and justice and ask Him to help us to make our contribution to building His kingdom of justice, love and peace.

Put into our hearts, O God, our King, a new song, a song of joy and peace. Lead us beyond indifference to the love of your Kingdom. We make our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

We pray for help in being peacemakers

Leader : With the help of God's grace

All: We will struggle for justice.

Leader : With the compassion of Christ

All: We will stand for what is true.

Leader : With God's abiding kindness

All: We will love even our enemies.

Leader : With the love of Christ

All: We will resist all evil.

Leader : With God's unending faithfulness

All: We will work to build the beloved community.

Leader : With Christ's passionate love

All: We will carry the cross.

Leader : With God's overwhelming goodness

All: We will walk as pilgrims of peace.

Leader : With Christ's fervent conviction

All: We will labour for truth.

Leader : With God's infinite mercy

All: We will live in solidarity with all people.

Leader : In the end there are three things that last:

All: Faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love.

Leader : Let us abide in God's love.

All: Thanks be to God.

We say together the Our Father with its affirmation that His will be done in our lives and in our world.

Make a difference in the world

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers and half-truths,
so that you will live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people, so that
you will work for justice, equality and peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain,
rejection, starvation and war,
so that you will reach out your hand to comfort them and change their pain to joy.

And may God bless you with the foolishness to think that you can make a difference to
the world and to act in that belief.

May the blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love God and the fellowship of the Holy
Spirit be with us all. Amen

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