



prayer service

*international
day of peace*

september 21, 2012





The United Nations General Assembly has declared September 21 to be the International Day of Peace. It is to be observed as a day of global ceasefire and nonviolence. The United Nations has invited all member states, organizations of the United Nations' system, regional and nongovernmental organizations, and individuals to commemorate the day in an appropriate manner, and to cooperate with the United Nations in establishing a global ceasefire.

As Sisters of the Holy Cross, we choose to commemorate this day with prayer, reflection as well as appropriate action.

Items needed for prayer service:

- ⊗ Large bowl of water in the center of the prayer space
- ⊗ Small bowls for water and/or branches/leaves for a sprinkling rite
- ⊗ Paschal candle or large candle in the center of the prayer space
- ⊗ Individual candles for each person present (*optional*)

Opening Song: Choose an appropriate song.

Leader: This water is a symbol of Baptism, the sacrament of initiation into the Christian community. Through our baptismal promises we embraced the gift of community with one another and all creation in Christ.

This water, Earth's most precious resource, also reminds us how we have misused, wasted and polluted this precious gift. For this, we ask forgiveness.

Let us pray together:

All: **We are grateful for the gifts of community and Earth, especially the gift of life-giving water. We ask pardon for our sins against one another and against the harmony and balance of Earth.**

Leader: We now share this water with one another as a recommitment to our baptismal promises and to preserve the life of Earth that we share.

The water from the large bowl is poured into small bowls and shared with the congregation. Participants bless one another with the water, such as making a cross on another person's forehead. For larger groups, a sprinkling rite using a leaf or small branch may be used. Quiet music or a rain stick could be played during this time. Adapt as appropriate in your local community.

Reading: Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for they know the unutterable beauty of simple things.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they have dared to risk
their hearts by giving their love.
Blessed are the meek, for the gentle Earth shall embrace
them and hallow them as their own.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall know the taste of noble deeds and thoughts.
Blessed are the merciful, for in return theirs is the gift of
giving.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall be at one with themselves and the universe.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for theirs is a kinship with everything that is holy.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for the truth shall set them free.

— F. Forrester Church, *from Peace Prayers,*
edited by Carrie Leadingham, Joann E. Moschella
and Hillary M. Vartanian, 1992

Silent Reflection

Sharing (*optional*)

Response: Psalm 85 (*recite antiphonally*)

Side 1: O Beloved, how gracious You are to your people;
You restore their souls time and time again.
You forgive their distractions when they wander far
from You;
You give them new life.
Yes, You bless them and raise up new hope;
You awaken their hearts to justice and love.

Side 2: Restore us again, O Spirit of Truth,
Burn us with the refining fire of love!
We cannot live separated from You.
Revive us again, we pray;
May your people rejoice in You.
Have compassion on your people, O Holy One,
And grant us your forgiveness.

Side 1: Listen, O people, in the silent chapel of your heart,
And the Beloved will speak of peace to you, and to
all who turn their hearts to justice and love.
Surely new life is at hand for those who reverence love;
O, that harmony might dwell among the nations.

Side 2: Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
Justice and peace will embrace one another.
Wisdom will spring up from the ground and
truth will look down from the sky.
Yes, the Eternal Giver will grant what is good,
And the lands will yield abundantly.

All: Mercy and compassion are Love's way;
You will guide our footsteps along the path of peace
as we recognize with open hearts that You are our
peace.

— Psalms for Praying by Nan C. Merrill

Leader:

Our response to the intercessions will be:

**In the name of peace, may we grow in courage to
challenge injustice.**

To you, Creator of nature and humanity, of truth and
beauty, we pray: Hear our voices, for they are the voices of
the victims of all wars and violence among individuals and
nations. *(Response)*

Hear our voices, for they are the voices of all children
who suffer and will suffer when people put their faith in
weapons and war. *(Response)*

Hear our voices when we beg you to instill into the hearts
of all human beings the wisdom of peace, the strength of
justice and the joy of being together. *(Response)*

Hear our voices, for we 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. *(Response)*

Hear our voices, for they are the voices of the multitudes who look to their leadership for peaceful and just conditions in their countries. *(Response)*

Hear our voices 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. *(Response)*

Hear the voices of all our sisters, associates and those who minister with us as we strive to be bearers of God's peace and hope to the world.

Response: O God, hear our voices, and grant the world your everlasting peace.

— *Adapted from The Way of Peace by Hannah Ward and Jennifer Wild, and from the writings of Pope John Paul II on a visit to Hiroshima, Japan*

Leader:

Today, on the International Day of Peace, let us recall and renew our commitment to our congregation's Corporate Stand on Nonviolence.

Reader 1:

We, the Sisters of the Holy Cross, affirm that

- ⊗ Nonviolence is constitutive of the message of Jesus,
- ⊗ Nonviolence is intrinsic to right relationship with all creation, and
- ⊗ Nonviolent systemic change requires innovative, creative responses to social problems and conflicts.

Therefore, we reject violence in its multiple forms.

All:

We renew our affirmation.

Reader 2:

We support actions and policies that

- ⊗ Promote nonviolent means of conflict resolution,
- ⊗ Disallow discrimination of any kind,
- ⊗ Generate an equitable economic system for all,
- ⊗ Foster a culture of solidarity and peace, and
- ⊗ Protect Earth and Life in all its diversity.

All:

We renew our support.

Reader 3:

We oppose actions and policies that legitimate

- ⊗ Violent responses to conflicts, particularly war and terrorism,
- ⊗ Denial of human and civil rights,
- ⊗ Economic and military policies that exacerbate poverty and inequality, and
- ⊗ Degradation and destruction of natural resources and ecosystems.

All:

We renew our opposition to violence in all of its forms.

Reader 4:

We acknowledge that the nonviolent way of Jesus challenges us to

- ⊗ Examine the quality of our interpersonal relationships,
- ⊗ Own the complexity inherent in our struggle to live without violence,
- ⊗ Embrace diversity, and
- ⊗ Espouse the common good.

All:

We renew our willingness to live the Gospel challenge.

The four readers move toward the candle in the center of the prayer space. They light their individual candles from the flame, and then move out to share this fire with all present. Adapt as appropriate in each local community.

Leader: Receive this holy fire as a symbol of your recommitment to nonviolence in your lives and in all your actions.
Make your lives like this fire:
Holy lives, peace-filled lives that are seen by and shared with all.
Lives centered in God's justice and peace.
Lives that the darkness of violence does not overcome.
May this light of God's peace grow within you.
Share this fire for peace with one another and with all you meet, today and always. Amen.

— Based on a prayer from the Masai people of Tanzania from *Heart of Prayer* by Anthony Gittins, CSSp

Closing Song: Choose an appropriate song.

Leader: Please extinguish your candles and offer one another a sign of peace.

Suggested Songs:

"Bearers of Peace"
by Bernadette Farrell

"Let There Be Peace on Earth"
by Jill Jackson Miller and Sy Miller

"Canticle of the Turning"
by Rory Cooney

"Make Me a Channel of Your Peace"
by Sebastian Temple

"Christ Be Our Light"
by Bernadette Farrell

"On This Holy Mountain"
by Joe Mattingly

"Finlandia"
by Lloyd Stone and Georgia Harkness

"World Peace Prayer"
by Marty Haugen



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