



Prayer for Peace

Introduction: *Every year on 21 September, the United Nations invites the world to mark the International Day of Peace. This year's focus is on "Cultivating a culture of peace". In a world mired by conflict, inequalities and discrimination, we must strive ever harder to promote dialogue, empathy and human rights for all.*
(Secretary General of the United Nations June 2024)

Our service this year is based on simplicity of word and deepening silence. After each reading we will have 5 minutes of quiet as we communally open our hearts to the movement of the Spirit and any invitation that comes to us from our God. The readings are included in the body of this prayer service so that, if you wish, you can have them readily available for further reflection after our prayer together. We seek to live peace, be peace and build peace. We seek to contribute toward creating a culture of peace within our hearts, communities and world.



Leader: Please stand as you are able as we sing our Dominican Blessing
(Please be seated.)

1st reading: Deuteronomy: 30: 19-20

I set before you life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life, then, so that you and your descendants may live, by loving your God, by obeying God's voice and by clinging to God. For that will mean life for you, a long life in the land which God swore to give your descendants Sarah and Abraham, Rebecca and Isaac, and Leah and Rachel and Jacob.

Silent Presence

2nd Reading: John O'Donohue, To Bless the Space Between Us pp. 215-16

Blessing Our World Now

Sometimes when we look out, the world seems so dark. War, violence, hunger, and misery seem to abound. This makes us anxious and helpless. What can I do in my private little corner of life that could have any effect on the march of world events? The usual answer is: nothing....Believing ourselves to be helpless, we hand over all our power to forces and systems outside us that then act in our names; they go on to put their beliefs into action; and ironically these actions are often sinister and destructive. We live in times when the call to full and critically aware citizenship could not be more urgent....

When we yield to helplessness, we strengthen the hand of those who would destroy. When we choose indifference, we betray our world. Yet the world is not decided by action alone. It is decided more by consciousness and spirit; they are the secret sources of all action and behavior. The spirit of a time is an incredibly subtle, yet hugely powerful force. And it is comprised of the mentality and spirit of all individuals together. Therefore, the way you look at things is not simply a private matter. Your outlook actually and concretely affects what goes on. When you give in to helplessness, you collude with despair and add to it. When you take back your power and choose to see the possibilities for healing and transformation, your creativity awakens and flows to become an active force of renewal and encouragement in the world. In this way, even in your own hidden life, you can become a powerful agent of transformation in a broken, darkened world.

Silent Presence

3rd Reading: Matthew 5: 2-10

Blessed are those who are poor in spirit: the kingdom of heaven is theirs.
Blessed are those who are mourning; they will be consoled.
Blessed are those who are gentle: they will inherit the land.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice: they will have their fill.
Blessed are those who show mercy to others: they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are those whose hearts are clean; they will see God.
Blessed are those who work for peace: they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted because of their struggle for justice; the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

Silent Presence

4th Reading: from the Earth Charter

We have forgotten who we are, we have lost our sense of wonder and connectedness, we have degraded the Earth and all creatures, and *we have nowhere else to go.*

if we lose the sweetness of the waters, we lose the life of the land,
if we lose the life of the land we lose the majesty of the forest,
if we lose the majesty of the forest, we lose the purity of the air,
if we lose the purity of the air, we lose the creatures of the Earth,
Not just for ourselves, but for our children, both now and in the future.

We pray that we may remember who we are as Dominicans of Peace and to remember whose we are. We pray to cherish and nurture a sense of wonder and connectedness with Mother Earth and with all life.

Silent Presence

Leader: Please stand as you are able and pray together the World Peace Prayer

Lead us from death to life,
from falsehood to truth;
lead us from despair to hope,
from fear to trust;
lead us from hate to love,
from war to peace.
Let peace fill our hearts,
our world, our universe.

(Adaptation from the Upanishads, prayed by Christians, Buddhists, Hindus and many others)

Leader: Let us offer each other a sign of Peace
We close with singing the Dominican Blessing

