

Liturgical Resources: World Day of Peace

January 1

PREACHING TIE-INS BASED ON LITURGICAL TEXTS (PRAYERS AND READINGS)

Collect: "...the grace of eternal salvation..."

That grace gives us peace in our hearts, a peace that we can carry out into the world in our thoughts, words, and actions; "...to receive the author of life, our Lord Jesus Christ, you Son..." Christ fulfills the covenant God gave to us, a covenant that brings us the peace that passes all understanding

Nm 6:22-27

Moses is talking to Aaron about how to bless the Israelites, a people who are in the midst of subjugation and slavery: 'the Lord bless, keep, let His face shine upon you, be gracious with you – and give you peace'.

Gal 4:4-7 "to ransom those under the law, you are no longer a slave, but a son, and...also an heir"; Jesus was sent to bring us peace, to save us.

Lk 2:16-21

Jesus has come to complete the covenant and give us peace. Through Him we are given the fullness of the message of God, a God who is love, compassion, justice, and peace.

Prayer Over the Offerings: "...in your kindness begin all good things and bring them to fulfillment..."

Our call as followers of Christ is to try and bring heaven to earth, and we know that God in God's infinite power can make that happen, and that will mean peace for and between all people – a peace that is both without violence and full of prosperity

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SOURCE MATERIAL FROM CHURCH TEACHING DOCUMENTS

The World Day of Prayer for Peace started in 1968 w/ Pope Paul VI).

Building Peace

- Pope John Paul II has written: "The goal of peace, so desired by everyone, will certainly be achieved through the putting into effect of social and international justice, but also through the practice of virtues which favor togetherness, and which teach us to live in unity." The Church sees the growth of interdependence across the world, though not without problems due to sin, a force that can contribute to peace.
- We are to love one another, forgive one another, and live humbly in imitation of Jesus
- To achieve this peace, like our heavenly Father, who "makes the sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Mt 5:45), we are to love our enemies, bless them, pray for them, not retaliate, and share our possessions with those who would take things from us (Lk 6:27-35). Furthermore, we must be prepared to establish just relations with them, for true peace is the fruit of justice, and "because justice is always fragile and imperfect, it must include and, as it were be completed by the forgiveness which heals and rebuilds troubled human relations from their foundations."
- Catholic theology of peace takes a positive stance. It focuses on resolving the causes of conflict and building the conditions for lasting peace.
- To achieve this peace: (1) promotion and protection of human rights, (2) advancing integral human development, (3) supporting international law and international organizations, and (4) building solidarity between peoples and nations. This vision of peace is articulated in the whole body of contemporary Catholic social teaching beginning with Pope John XXIII's *Pacem in Terris* ("Peace on Earth").
- On the other hand, no one can cultivate a sober and satisfying life without being at peace with him or herself. An adequate understanding of spirituality consists in filling out what we mean by peace, which is much more than the absence of war. Inner peace is closely related to care for ecology and for the common good because, lived out authentically, it is reflected in a balanced lifestyle together with a capacity for wonder which takes us to a deeper understanding of life. [Laudato Si' \("Praise Be"\)](#), Pope Francis, 2015 #225

The Evil of Violence & War

- In the encyclical letter, *Evangelium vitae* ("The Gospel of Life"), Pope John Paul II identified war as part of the culture of death, and he found a positive sign of the times in "a new sensitivity ever more opposed to war as an instrument of the resolution of conflict between people, and increasingly oriented to finding effective but 'nonviolent' means to counter the armed aggressor."
- The Catholic tradition today upholds both a strong presumption against the use of force and an obligation to resist the denial of rights and other grave public evils by active nonviolence, if at all possible. (cf. Rom 12:14-21; 1 Thess 5:14f)

- Peace is not merely the absence of war. Nor can it be reduced solely to the maintenance of a balance of power between enemies. Nor is it brought about by dictatorship. Instead, it is rightly and appropriately called “an enterprise of justice” (Is. 32:7). Peace results from that harmony built into human society by its divine founder, and actualized by men as they thirst after ever greater justice. [Gaudium et Spes \(“The Church in the Modern World”\)](#), Vatican II, 1965 #78
- Peace cannot be limited to a mere absence of war, the result of an ever precarious balance of forces. No, peace is something that is built up day after day, in the pursuit of an order intended by God, which implies a more perfect form of justice among men. [Populorum Progressio \(“On the Development of Peoples”\)](#), Pope Paul VI, 1967 #76
- Not all violence is deadly. It begins with anger, intolerance, impatience, unfair judgements and aggression. It is often reflected in our language, our entertainment, our driving, our competitive behavior, and the way we treat our environment. These acts and attitudes are not the same as abusive behavior or physical attacks, but they create a climate where violence prospers and peace suffers. *Confronting a Culture of Violence: A Catholic Framework for Action*, U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1994
- In many small ways, each of us can help overcome violence by dealing with it on our block; providing for the emotional, physical and spiritual needs of our children; dealing with our own abusive behavior; or, even treating fellow motorists with courtesy. Violence is overcome day by day, choice by choice, person by person. All of us must make a contribution. *Confronting a Culture of Violence: A Catholic Framework for Action*, U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1994
- Today in many places we hear a call for greater security. But until exclusion and inequality in society and between peoples are reversed, it will be impossible to eliminate violence. The poor and the poorer peoples are accused of violence, yet without equal opportunities the different forms of aggression and conflict will find a fertile terrain for growth and eventually explode. [Evangelii Gaudium \(“The Joy of the Gospel”\)](#), Pope Francis, 2013 #59

For her part, the Church, in fidelity to the mission she has received from her Founder, is committed to proclaiming everywhere “the Gospel of peace.” In the firm conviction that she offers an indispensable service to all those who strive to promote peace, she reminds everyone that, if peace is to be authentic and lasting, it must be built on the bedrock of the truth about God and the truth about man. This truth alone can create a sensitivity to justice and openness to love and solidarity, while encouraging everyone to work for a truly free and harmonious human family. The foundations of authentic peace rest on the truth about God and man. [World Day of Prayer for Peace message](#), Pope Benedict XVI, 2006 #15

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POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord God of peace, hear our prayer!
We have tried so many times and over so many years
to resolve our conflicts by our own powers
and by the force of our arms.

How many moments of hostility and darkness have we experienced;
how much blood has been shed;
how many lives have been shattered;
how many hopes have been buried . . .

Now, Lord, come to our aid!
Grant us peace, teach us peace; guide our steps in the way of peace.
Open our eyes and our hearts and give us the courage to say: "Never again war!" . . .
Instill in our hearts the courage to take concrete steps to achieve peace.
Keep alive within us the flame of hope,
so that with patience and perseverance
we may opt for dialogue and reconciliation.

In this way may peace triumph at last,
and may the words "division", "hatred" and "war"
be banished from the heart of every man and woman. . . .

Renew our hearts and minds,
so that the word which always brings us together will be "brother",
and our way of life will always be that of: Shalom, Peace, Salaam!
Amen.