

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

September 21

The U.N. General Assembly declared in 1981 that the third Tuesday of September, the opening day of the regular session of the General Assembly, each year "shall be officially dedicated and observed as the International Day of Peace and shall be devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace within and among all nations and peoples." In 2002, September 21 was fixed as the date for this observance. In a message commemorating the Day in 1996, the Secretary-General said, "We must continue to promote a culture of peace. We must never forget that peace is much more than the absence of conflict. We must show solidarity with those who are suffering or deprived. And we must be willing, in the face of inevitable obstacles and setbacks, to take risks for peace."

Call to Worship

We come together as family and children of the God of Peace to celebrate the International Day of Peace: A day dedicated to touching the minds and hearts of all. We join in prayer in the hope that the universal desire for peace may be realized.

War and violence continue to kill, maim and destroy. As family, and as brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus, we recognize that this must not continue, and that all our efforts, our words and our actions must contribute to bring about peace for all.

Let us pray:

Leader: Lord God, help us to recognize that each one of us is required to commit himself or herself to the effort of peace in the world. Let us begin by a careful reflection on our daily routine, being certain that our thoughts, words and works reflect always that peace for which we search. This we pray through Christ, our Lord. **All:** Amen.

Reading from the Word of God (Micah 4:1-4)

In the last days, the mountain of Yahweh's house shall be set over the highest mountains and will tower over the hills. All the nations will stream to it, saying, "Come, let us go to the mountain of Yahweh, to the house of the God of Jacob, so that he may teach us his ways and we may walk in his paths. For the Teaching comes from Zion, and from Jerusalem comes the Word of Yahweh."

He will rule over the nations and settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not raise the sword against nation, neither will they train for war any more. But each one will sit in peace and freedom under a fig tree or a vine of his own, for the mouth of Yahweh, Lord of hosts, has spoken.

Reader 1: We cannot be silent.

Reader 2: We must not be silent.

Reader 3: We will not be silent.

Reader 1: We continue to build nuclear weapons.

Reader 2: The poor are being trampled upon.

Reader 3: Violence abounds.

Reader 1: We can call upon world leaders...

Reader 2: We must call upon world leaders...

Reader 3: We will call upon world leaders...

Readers 1, 2 and 3: ...to establish peace with justice in our world.

Reader 1: Glory to God, who makes salvation known!

Reader 2: Glory to God, who reveals justice!

Reader 3: Glory to God, who lives among us!

Reading from St. Augustine (Sermon 357, 4: "Are You a Lover of Peace?")

Are you a lover of peace? Be still there in your heart with your beloved.

"And what am I to do?" There is plenty you can do. Put a stop to wrangling; turn to prayer. Don't repel with abuse people who are showering you with abuse, but pray for them. You want to speak against them; instead speak to God for them. I'm not telling you to keep quiet, but rather to choose carefully where you speak, in whose presence you speak. While keeping quiet, your lips shut tight, your heart is crying out loudly. Where those people can't see you, that's where you must be a good friend on their behalf.

But can give this kind of peaceable answer to one who doesn't love peace and wants to pick a quarrel: "Whatever you may wish to say, however much you hate me, detest me as you please, you are still my brother or my sister. What can you do in order not to be my brother or sister? Whether you're good or bad, whether you like it or not, inescapably you are my brother or sister."

And he or she says, "How am I your brother or your sister, my foe, my enemy?"

"By the very fact of your saying this, you are my brother or my sister."

General Intercessions

Reader: In faith, and with persistence, we ask God to listen as we say, "God, hear our prayer and move us to action." **All:** God, hear our prayer and move us to action.

Reader: Let us pray not to be silent as we seek to encourage world leaders to replace the politics of war with the politics of peace and say ... **All:** God, hear our prayer and move us to action.

Reader: Let us pray not to be silent as we seek to assist in conserving God's earth and nurturing its people and say ... **All:** God, hear our prayer and move us to action.

Reader: Let us pray not to be silent as we seek to work toward alleviating patterns of unbridled consumption that lead to unendurable poverty and say ... **All:** God, hear our prayer and move us to action.

Reader: Let us pray not to be silent as we seek to show a love that can create a more just and peaceful world and say ... **All:** God, hear our prayer and move us to action.

Reader: Let us pray not to be silent as we seek to urge each other to work tirelessly to promote Gospel values and say ... **All:** God, hear our prayer and move us to action.

All: Loving God, lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth, from despair to hope, from fear to trust, from hate to love, from war to peace, now and ever more. Amen.

All: God, who make peace and harmony in the heavenly spheres, help your bewildered humanity to understand the futility of war and hatred and violence. Help us to overcome the rationalizations that ultimately end in justification of actions, which inevitably lead to bloodshed and suffering. As hundreds of thousands of human beings look at their brothers and sisters over the barrels of guns, cannons and missiles, help us to hear your voice that counsels compassion, patience and rational discourse. Send us your Spirit of peace, understanding and patience, so that one day soon, all people will live in harmony, with trust and confidence in your message. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Blessing

Suggested Hymns

Bring Forth the Kingdom (Haugen)
I Say Yes/Digo Sí (Peña)
Lord, Give Your Justice (Wrynn)
Peace Prayer (Foley SJ)
Song of the Body of Christ (Haas)
We Are Many Parts (Haugen)

Christ, Be Our Light (Farrell)
Envía Tu Espíritu (Hurd)
One Bread, One Body (Foley SJ)
Peace (Norbert)
Ubi Caritas (Taizé)

City of God (Schutte SJ)
Jerusalem My Destiny (Cooney)
Let There Be Peace on Earth (Miller/Jackson)
Sing of the Lord's Goodness (Sands)
We Are Called (Haas)

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