



COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION
USG/UISG SECRETARIAT
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SEPTEMBER 21, 2011 INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE PRAYER



INTRODUCTION

On September 21, 2011, a variety of groups, organizations and people worldwide will host and attend **International Day of Peace**. In 2002, the U.N. General Assembly officially declared September 21 as the permanent date for the International Day of Peace. It was suggested that:

"Peace Day should be devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples...This day will serve as a reminder to all peoples that our organization, with all its limitations, is a living instrument in the service of peace and should serve all of us here within the organization as a constantly pealing bell reminding us that our permanent commitment, above all interests or differences of any kind, is to peace."

Since its inception, Peace Day has marked our personal and planetary progress toward peace. It has grown to include millions of people in all parts of the world, and each year events are organized to commemorate and celebrate this day. Events range in scale from private gatherings to public concerts and forums where hundreds of thousands of people participate.

Anyone, anywhere can celebrate Peace Day. It can be as simple as lighting a candle at noon, or just sitting in silent meditation. Or, it can involve getting your co-workers, organization, community or government engaged in a large event. If millions of people in all parts of the world come together for one day of peace, the impact will be immense.

JPIC/USG/UISG invites all of us to be part of this action for peace in a prayerful way. This prayer material was prepared to be used by your communities, houses, groups, parishes and dioceses.

International Day of Peace is also a Day of Ceasefire – personal or political. Take this opportunity to make peace in your own relationships as to impact the larger conflicts of our time. Imagine what a whole Day of Ceasefire would mean to humankind.

Entrance Song for Liturgy - Please find an appropriate song for your group and situation
Examples: Peace is Flowing Like a River; Peace I Leave with You; Lord Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace



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Silence (Ring a bell or a gong..)

Let us contemplate the reality of today's world and listen to Jesus

1. Military spending

In 2009, global military expenditure rose to \$1536 billion. This enormous amount tops a decade of continuous growth of military budgets around the world: since 2000, military spending increased by 49% to an all time high in 2009. In 2010, the amount rose to US\$1630 Billion. **US\$30 billion could solve the problem of hunger in the world. This amount is equivalent to one week budget of military spending.** And yet the world spends this enormous amount of its resources to kill, to maim, to destroy, and to eliminate human beings with the justification that they are the enemies.

The prayer that Jesus taught is a prayer for peace. The prayer is about becoming the presence of God in our unique ways and about how we reach out to others. It is about having the heart, mind and soul of God because God dwells within each one of us as an indwelling presence.

Our Father who art in heaven:

Creator Mother and Father God, the whole of creation praises You. The blue sky lauds You. The distant hills praise You, together with the sweet-smelling air that is full of brilliant light. I, too, praise You, Creator Mother and Father, with all the brothers and sisters. We are all one silence, and a diversity of voices. You have made us together, You have made us one and many, You have placed me here in the midst as witness, as awareness, and as joy and peace. Here I am.

Our Father who art in heaven.

Silence (Ring a bell...)

2. Nuclear weapons

60 years after Hiroshima/Nagasaki, there are more than 19,000 nuclear weapons in the world. Thousands can be launched within moments. Physicians for Social Responsibility did a simulated attack on 3 sites with 2 nuclear bombs. 2.8 million can be killed within the first 24 hours, 5 million in the next 2 weeks; untold numbers over the years.

Hallowed be your name:

Wherever I am, You my Lord are loved and praised. The trees indeed love You without knowing You. Without being aware of Your presence, the tiger lilies and cornflowers proclaim that they love You. The beautiful dark clouds ride slowly across the sky musing on You. In the midst of them



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all, I know You and I know of Your Presence. In the midst of these things that have never offended You, I am loved by You. I am seen by You under the sky. *Hallowed be Your name.*

Silence (Ring a bell...)

3. Small weapons

The vast majority of today's wars are started and fought with small arms and light weaponry. Cheap, portable, easy to use, and widely available, small arms are responsible for 90 percent of conflict-related deaths since World War II. Small arms include hand guns, pistols, sub-machine guns, mortars, landmines, grenades and light missiles. Every year 8 million small arms and 12 billion bullets are produced in the world. 2,000 people are killed everyday. There are approximately half a billion military small arms around the world. They are the major cause of civilian casualties in modern conflicts.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Sophia is a gift, is Spirit, Donum Dei. She is God-given, God as Gift. Hagia Sophia in all things is the Divine Life reflected in them. Sophia is God's sharing God's self with creatures, God's outpouring, and the love by which God is given and known, held and loved. Sophia is life as communion, life as thanksgiving, life as praise. Make us aware of Her presence in us. Let us hear Her voice in us.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven.

Silence (Ring a bell...)

4. Hunger in the world

At present, there are 925 million people in the world who do not eat enough to be healthy. That means one in every seven people on Earth goes to bed hungry each night. Hunger is number one on the list of the world's top 10 health risks. It kills more people every year than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. A third of all deaths in children under the age of five in developing countries are linked to under-nutrition. It costs just US \$0.25 per day to provide a child with all of the vitamins and nutrients he or she needs to grow up healthy. By 2050, climate change and erratic weather patterns will have pushed another 24 million children into hunger. Almost half of these children will live in sub-Saharan Africa.

Reading Mt. 25: 36-40

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.'



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Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers [sisters] of mine, you did for me.'

Common prayer:

Name people, communities, groups that suffer from hunger and poverty. After each name, repeat:
Give us this day our daily bread.

Song: Ubi Caritas.

5. Violence against women

Violence against women is a human rights scandal. At least one out of every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. In Europe, domestic violence is the leading cause of death and disability for women aged 16 to 44. In the United States, a woman is raped every 6 minutes; a woman is battered every 15 seconds. Rape of women is widespread in armed conflicts such as Colombia and Darfur.

Trafficking of women has become a global phenomenon where victims are sexually exploited, forced into labor and subjected to abuse. Murders of women in Guatemala, Russia, India, and other countries often go uninvestigated and unpunished.

The experience or threat of violence affects the lives of women everywhere, cutting across boundaries of wealth, race and culture. In the home and in the community, in times of war and peace, women are beaten, raped, mutilated, and killed with impunity.

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Spirit of God, you hold us in Your embrace.

Your presence burns through this world, transforming it.

You hold us in Your embrace.

You call us to see and confront the mystery of evil.

You hold us in Your embrace.

You call us to live the astonishing mystery of good in the face of the mystery of evil.

You hold us in Your embrace.

Be with us as we experiment with your nonviolence.

You hold us in Your embrace.

Give us the strength to break the rules of war, to move from the war zone to the house of love.

You hold us in Your embrace.



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We are grateful for You and for each other.

You hold us in Your embrace.

You hold us in Your embrace.

You hold us in Your embrace.

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Silence (Ring a bell...)

6. Deliver us from evil

Let us look at the reality of today's world. The world is divided and wounded as we witness numerous manifestations of hatred, denial, refusal and disregard at many different levels of the reality. There are wars, conflicts, discrimination, marginalization and segregation that would not allow people to live fully as human beings. As we look at this painful reality carefully, we become aware of our own reality which is also hurt and wounded. When we pray touching our reality that needs to be healed, we discover our commitment to work for a non-violence of Jesus, to enable peace in this world.

Reading John 15:10-17

As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. This I command you: love one another.

John 15: 10-17

Prayer (Song)

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;



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and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

to be consoled as to console;

to be understood as to understand;

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen

Ring a bell...

References

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