

# Saturday morning interreligious prayer service

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*Leaders of Prayer enter in procession.*

## INTRODUCTION, CALL TO PRAYER

*Silence*

*One by one, seven members of the assembly take turns, each reading one of the following texts followed by the name of its author:*

*Reader 1:* "Christians are peacemakers, not because they cannot fight, but because they prefer the force of peace. And so I invite you, let us place all that energy that God has given our people, like a torrent, not at the service of bloodshed or violence. We have nothing to fear when [we] put all the assertiveness that God has given [us] at the service of building true justice, of building the order of things that truly ought to be defended."

Archbishop Oscar Romero, August 27, 1978.

*Reader 2:* "The decisive contradiction of the kingdom of God against all concealed or blatant kingdoms of force is to be seen simply in the fact that it invalidates the whole friend-foe relationship between one human being and another... The disciples are told: 'Love your enemies!' This is the end of the whole friend-foe relationship, for when we love our enemy he ceases to be our enemy. It thus abolishes the whole exercise of force, which presupposes this relationship, and has not meaning apart from it."

Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics IV

*Reader 3:* "Forgiving and being reconciled to our enemies or our loved ones are not about pretending that things are other than they are. It is not about patting one another on the back and turning a blind eye to the wrong. True reconciliation exposes the awfulness, the abuse, the hurt, the truth. It could even sometimes make things worse. It is a risky undertaking but in the end it is worthwhile, because in the end only an honest confrontation with reality can bring real healing. Superficial reconciliation can bring only superficial healing."

Archbishop Desmond Tu

*Reader 4:* "There must be amidst all the confusions of the hour a tried and undisturbed remnant of persons who will not become purveyors of coercion and violence, who are ready to stand alone, if it is necessary, for the way of peace and love among men."

Rufus Jones, Quaker theologian

*Reader 5:* "Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time; the need for mankind to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence. Mankind must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love."

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., December 11, 1964

*Reader 6:* "We may never be able to stop shouting the chant, 'No Justice, No Peace,' but I believe we can try if we persevere in doing good to the end of life. I want to be God's hands and heart on earth and continually be moved by grace and compassion to eliminate social inequities and injustices. As the faith community we must fight the good fight and leave the victory to God's grace."

Barbara Bayler, United Church of Christ

*Reader 7:* "In publicly gathering to proclaim and celebrate God's Gospel of peace, the Church uniquely contributes to earthly peace. Its most valuable mission for peace is to keep alive news of God's resolve for peace, declaring that all are responsible to God for earthly peace and announcing forgiveness, healing, and hope in the name of Jesus Christ. In praying for peace in the world, in interceding for all who suffer from war and injustice and for those in authority, the Church acts for peace."

ELCA Churchwide Assembly, For Peace in God's World, 1995.

*Leader:* Let us pray together using the words of St. Francis of Assisi:

*All:* Almighty, eternal,  
just and merciful God,  
grant us in our misery  
the grace to do for You alone  
what we know You want us to do,  
and always to desire what pleases You.  
Thus,  
inwardly cleansed,  
interiorly enlightened,  
and enflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit,  
may we be able to follow  
in the footprints of You beloved Son,  
our Lord Jesus Christ.  
And,  
by Your grace alone,  
may we make our way to You,  
Most High,  
Who live and rule  
in perfect Trinity and simple Unity,  
and are glorified  
God all-powerful  
forever and ever.  
Amen.

LECTOR 1: A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.

Rejoice in the Lord always;  
Again I will say, Rejoice!  
Let your gentleness be known to everyone.  
The Lord is near.

Do not worry about anything, but in everything,  
by prayer and supplication,  
with thanksgiving,  
let your requests be made known to God.  
And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,  
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.  
Finally, beloved,  
whatever is true,  
whatever is honorable,  
whatever is just,  
whatever is pure,  
whatever is pleasing,  
whatever is commendable,  
if there is any excellence  
and if there is anything worthy of praise,  
think about these things.  
Keep on doing the things that you have learned  
and received  
and heard  
and seen in me,  
and the God of peace will be with you.

PSALM: Psalm 36:5-10

*All respond:* **“May God bless us in his mercy; may God bless us in his mercy.”**

*Reader:* O God, be gracious and bless us  
And let your face shed its light upon us.  
So will your ways be known upon earth  
And all nations learn your salvation.

*Response*

*Reader:* Let the peoples praise you, O God;  
Let all the peoples praise you.  
May God still give us his blessing  
That all the ends of the earth may revere him

*Response*

*Reader:* Let the nations be glad and shout for joy,  
With uprightness you rule the peoples;  
You guide the nations on earth

*Response*

*please stand*

## INTENTIONAL PRAYER

*Leader:* We come before our God of peace in prayer.

*All respond:* **May we seek your truth, O God.**

*Reader:* To bring about a peaceful co-existence between peoples of different ethnic groups, cultures and religions, help us to maintain a dialogue of mutual respect and esteem. We pray:

*All respond:* **May we seek your truth, O God.**

*Reader:* Since a culture of dialogue is essential to authentic peace, help us to work toward understanding and mutual trust among peoples. We pray:

*All respond:* **May we seek your truth, O God.**

*Reader:* In working together to overcome selfishness and arrogance, hatred and violence, help us to work together for justice, in order to achieve a genuine and lasting peace. We pray:

*All respond:* **May we seek your truth, O God.**

*Reader:* In the desire to offer men and women of our time a genuine hope of justice and peace, help us to refuse to justify violence and evil. We pray:

*All respond:* **May we seek your truth, O God.**

*Reader:* To achieve a world of solidarity and peace built on justice, help us to take every opportunity to encourage leaders in government, religion and business to establish just policies. We pray:

*All respond:* **May we seek your truth, O God.**

*Reader:* The Spirit of Assisi calls every person to seek truth, justice, liberty, and love. Help every person to enjoy their inalienable rights, and every nation, peace. We pray:

*All respond:* **May we seek your truth, O God.**

## CONCLUDING PRAYER

*Leader:* The desert will sing and rejoice.

*All respond:* **and the wilderness blossom with flowers;**

*Leader:* All will see the Lord's splendor,

*All respond:* **see the Lord's greatness and power.**

*Leader:* Tell everyone who is anxious:

*All respond:* **Be strong and don't be afraid.**

*Leader:* The blind will be able to see;

*All respond:* **the deaf will be able to hear;**

*Leader:* the lame will leap and dance;

*All respond:* **those who can't speak will shout.**

*Leader:* They will hammer their swords into ploughs

*All respond:* **and their spears into pruning-knives;**

*Leader:* the nations will live in peace;

*All respond:* **they will train for war no more.**

*Leader:* This is the promise of God;

*All respond:* **God's promise will be fulfilled. Amen.**

*Leader:* Let us bless the Lord;

*All:* **and give him thanks.**

*All exchange a sign of peace.*