

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

Prayers for Peace and Reconciliation



Ordinary Time

Tuesday

12.30pm

Our Lady Undercroft, Crypt



Introduction

In this short service of prayers and silent reflection we invite you into a safe and quiet space where, in solidarity of love and faith, we pray for the needs of the world, especially for those places where there is desperate need of healing, peace, hope, and reconciliation. We also pray for peace and reconciliation in our own lives; where there is unease or difficulty in our relationships, or conflict in our hearts. And we pray that God would give us strength to become peacemakers ourselves. Please bring your own thoughts, concerns and petitions to the heavenly throne of grace as we share this time together before the living God.

Canterbury and District Inter-Faith Action Shared Values and Principles for Peace and Justice

Respect for Human Dignity

We affirm the inherent dignity and worth of every human being, recognising that all people are created equal and deserve to be treated with respect and compassion. Our faith and belief traditions teach us to honour the sanctity of life and the intrinsic value of each individual. We commit to opposing any form of discrimination, prejudice, or injustice that undermines human dignity.

Commitment to Peace

We are dedicated to the principles of non-violence and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. We believe that dialogue and understanding are essential to resolving differences and building a peaceful society. We pledge to be peacemakers in our communities and to encourage others to resolve conflicts through peaceful means.

Justice and Equality

We uphold the values of justice and equality, advocating for the fair and equitable treatment of all individuals, regardless of race, religion, gender, or socio-economic status. Our faiths and beliefs call us to stand against oppression and to work for social justice. We commit to supporting policies and initiatives that promote justice and reduce inequalities in our own and worldwide communities.

Solidarity and Compassion

We pledge to stand in solidarity with those who are marginalised or oppressed. Our faiths and beliefs call us to acts of compassion and charity, to love our neighbours and to support those in need. We commit to working together to alleviate poverty, hunger, and disease, and to support initiatives that improve the well-being of all people.

Fostering a Culture of Peace

We will actively promote a culture of peace within our communities and beyond. Through education, dialogue, and advocacy, we will work to instil values of non-violence, tolerance, and respect in future generations. We will develop and support programmes that teach conflict resolution, empathy, and cross-cultural understanding, helping to build a more peaceful and harmonious society.

Order of Service

Peace be with you.
And also with you.

We come together to pray for peace and reconciliation in our world, in our church, in our cities and communities, in our families and friendships, and in our hearts. We bring before God our concerns and our hopes, knowing that God can achieve more than we can imagine.

Opening Prayer

O God, the author of peace
and lover of concord,
to know you is eternal life,
to serve you is perfect freedom.
Defend us your servants
from all assaults of our enemies;
that we, surely trusting in your defence,
may not fear the power of any adversaries;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Litany of Reconciliation

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

The hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class,
Father forgive.

The covetous desires of people and nations to possess what is not their own,
Father, forgive.

The greed which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the earth,
Father, forgive.

Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others,
Father, forgive.

Our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugee,
Father, forgive.

The lust which dishonours the bodies of men, women and children,
Father, forgive.

The pride which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God,
Father, forgive.

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another
As God in Christ forgave us.

From Coventry Cathedral, as part of their work of peace and reconciliation

First Reading

Isaiah 32:15-18

The effect of justice will be peace.
Once more there will be poured on us
the spirit from above;
then shall the wilderness be fertile land;
and fertile land become forest.

In the wilderness justice will come to live
and integrity in the fertile land;
integrity will bring peace,
justice give lasting security.
My people will live in a peaceful home,
in safe houses,
in quiet dwellings.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 71.2-4, 7-8, 12-13, 17

R. Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.

O God give your judgement to the king,
to a king's son your justice,
that he may judge your people in justice
and your poor in right judgement. **R.**

May the mountains bring forth peace for the people
and the hills, justice.

May he defend the poor of the people
and save the children of the needy. **R.**

In his days justice shall flourish
and peace till the moon fails.
He shall rule from sea to sea,
from the Great River to earth's bounds. **R.**

For he shall save the poor when they cry
and the needy who are helpless.
He will have pity on the weak
and save the lives of the poor. **R.**

May his name be blessed for ever
and endure like the sun.
Every tribe shall be blessed in him,
all nations bless his name. **R.**

Second Reading

Colossians 3:12-15

May the peace of Christ reign in your hearts.

You are God's chosen race, his saints; he loves you, and you should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same. Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love. And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together as parts of one body. Always be thankful.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Collect

Almighty God,
from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed:
kindle, we pray, in the hearts of all, the true love of peace
and guide with your pure and peaceable wisdom
those who take counsel for the nations of the earth
that in tranquillity your kingdom may go forward,
till the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Silence

In a time of silence of around ten minutes, we reflect upon those places in the world, in our communities, families and hearts in need of healing and restoration. We bring them before God and we pray for peace.

Lighting a candle

During the silence, please come forward to light a candle as a symbol of light in our sometimes dark world, and pray for those who are on your heart.

When the time of silence is over, the Officiant says

Most holy God and Father,
hear our prayers for all who strive for peace
and all who fight for justice.
Help us, who today remember the cost of war,
to work for a better tomorrow;
and, as we commend to you lives lost in terror and conflict,
bring us all, in the end, to the peace of your presence;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

We say together

Prayer of Saint Francis

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;
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.

Blessing

The peace of God that passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God, and in Jesus Christ his Son, and the
blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, be with you, and all
those whom you love, pray and care for, now and for evermore. **Amen.**

Let us depart in peace.
Thanks be to God.

A Reflection on Peace

Peace is not simply the absence of war, but a general condition in which the human person is in harmony with themselves, in harmony with nature and in harmony with others. This is peace. Nevertheless, silencing weapons and extinguishing the hotbeds of war is an inevitable condition to begin a journey that leads to peace in its various aspects. We must convince ourselves, despite every appearance to the contrary, that harmony is always possible, on every level and in every situation. There is no future without proposals and plans for peace! There is no future without peace!

In the Old Testament, God made a promise. The Prophet Isaiah said: “they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (cf. Is 2:4). This is beautiful! Peace is proclaimed, as a special gift of God, in the birth of the Redeemer: “on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased” (cf. Lk 2:14). This gift needs to be ceaselessly implored in prayer. Let us recall that “prayer is at the root of peace”. This gift must be implored and must be welcomed with commitment every day, in whatever situation we are in. We are all called to rekindle in our heart an impulse of hope, which must be translated into concrete works of peace. “Do you not get on with a certain person? Make peace!”; “At home? Make peace!” “In your community? Make peace!”; “At your place of work? Make peace!”. Work for peace, for reconciliation and fraternity. Each of us must perform gestures of fraternity towards our neighbour, especially towards those who are tried by family tensions or various types of conflict. These small gestures are of so much value: they can be seeds which give hope, they can open paths and perspectives of peace.

Pope Francis

Cover Picture: The Peace Window, by Ervin Bossányi, (1891-1975)
South-East Transept, Canterbury Cathedral

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