



LIVING THE PEACE PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI Prayer Discussion

Setting: Statue or picture of Saint Francis of Assisi and a lit candle on a table.
Added option: 18 small votive or tea candles to be lit and placed on table as service progresses.

LEADER – INTRODUCTION

The Peace Prayer of Saint Francis first appeared in 1915 during the First World War. It is thought to have been penned by an anonymous French writer. It was found in a Normal Almanac written on the back of a holy card of Saint Francis of Assisi. Since the prayer was found on the back of the holy card and embodied the life and spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi's simplicity and poverty it became known as the Peace Prayer of Saint Francis. When we look at the authentic writings that we do have from the Poverello (the "little poor man") we find the values, insights and spirituality of the Franciscan tradition reflected in the prayer prayed all over the world by a variety of traditions/cultures.

First Reading: Taken from writings of Daniel Horan, OFM – Living the Prayer of Saint Francis with All of Creation

Human beings give praise to God through loving one another amid difficult times and by being peacemakers who seek reconciliation. Just as the Sun is most genuinely itself when providing light and warmth, women and men are most truly themselves when they love, forgive, and make peace. In this sense the Peace Prayer reflects the spirit and the outlook of the man for whom it is named. The prayer is a petition to

God that we might live up to the true way of being-in-the-world that God intends for His human family. To be authentically human is to be an instrument of peace or, to put it in the sense of the prayer – one who sows: love, pardon, faith, hope, light and joy in our world. This pray offers us a chance to pause, pray, and reflect on who it is that we are and what it is that we are each created to be and to do.

LITANY

ALL: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace
Where there is hatred, let me bring love

READER:

I am the member of the American Missionary Baptist Church in Charleston, South Carolina struggling to help heal our congregation.

I am the veiled woman in Iraq, afraid for my policeman husband, hoping he will not be a victim of the religious extremists.

I am the new father in Gaza, hoping my son will be able to grow up in a country that is not at war.

(Pause - 3 small candles may be lit)

ALL: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is injury, let me bring pardon

READER:

I am the grandmother fleeing the violence in Nigeria with only the clothes on my back, hoping to find a little peace in a refugee camp.

I am the young child in Syria praying for an end to come to terrorism.

I am the shop keeper in Israel, sifting through the bombed out remains of my shop, hoping there is enough to re-open tomorrow.

(Pause – 3 small candles may be lit)

ALL: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is doubt, let me bring faith.

Reader:

I am the father in India spending sleepless nights working to end human trafficking.

I am the worried mother in Mexico praying for an end to the drug cartels.

I am the mother grieving with no legal resources or means to help my son who is on death row.

(Pause – 3 small candles can be lit)

ALL: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is despair, let me bring hope.

READER:

I am the medical researcher, overwhelmed with the number of sick and underserved patients, struggling to bring an end to AIDS.

I am the North Korean grandfather, separated from family members in the South for decades, praying I will get to see them again.

I am the young girl in Afghanistan, whose school was torn down, hoping someday it will not be against the law for girls to go to school.

(Pause – 3 small candle may be lit)

ALL: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is darkness, let me bring light.

READER:

I am the resident of an Oklahoma City destroyed by a tornado trying to help rebuild my home while reaching out to those who have less than me.

I am the volunteer at Mother Teresa's home for the dying, sitting with a woman to reassure her she is not alone.

I am the homeless man you passed on the street who found strength from your smile and your recognition of my presence on the street.

(Pause – 3 small candles may be lit)

ALL: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is sadness, let me bring joy.

READER:

I am the migrant work in Salinas Valley working daily under the hot sun so that others may have food and I can feed my family.

I am the young motherless child in Uganda who took care of my father until his death and now relies upon the village for care.

I am the elderly man in Appalachia with Black Lung disease praying for assistance so I do not lose my home.

(Pause – 3 small candles may be lit)

All: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace
Where there is hatred, let me bring love.
Where there is injury, let me bring pardon.
Where there is doubt, let me bring faith.
Where there is despair, let me bring hope.
Where there is darkness, let me bring light.
Where there is sadness, let me bring joy.
Oh Divine Master, grant that I may not so much
Seek to be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
To beloved as to love,
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

REFLECTION:

What are some concrete ways you can live out the Peace Prayer in your everyday life?

What phrase of the Peace Prayer resonates with you at this time?

Is there someone you know who you feel lives out the Peace Prayer?
Why?

SHARING OF THOUGHTS

SECOND READING: 1 John 7-8 and John 13 34-35

Dear friends, Let us love one another, because love comes from God. Whoever loves is a child of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples.

BLESSING AND SENDING

Leader: I invite you to turn to one another and to raise your hands in blessing over one another.

Repeat after me.....

May the Lord bless and keep you.

ALL: May the Lord bless and keep you

May God's face shine on you and be gracious to you.

ALL: May God's face shine on you and be gracious to you.

May God look upon you kindly and give you peace.

ALL: May God look upon you kindly and give you peace.

LEADER: We are all sent forth to be disciple of peace and love in our world. Let us live out the Peace Prayer of Saint Francis in our daily lives. Amen.

SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS: If needed, each can be accessed on www.youtube.com

Let There Be Peace On Earth (Words by Sy Miller and Jill Jackson)

Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.
 Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.
 With God as our Father, family all are we.
 Let me walk with each other in perfect harmony.
 Let peace begin with me. Let this be the moment now.
 With every breath I take, let this be my solemn vow:
 To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally.
 Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me!

ALTERNATE SONG: Prayer for Peace (David Haas)

Peace before us, peace behind us. Peace under our feet.
 Peace within us, peace over us, let all around us be peace.

Love before us, love behind us, love under our feet.
 Love within us, love over us, let all around us be love.

Light before us, light behind us, light under our feet.
 Light within us, light over us, let all around us be light.

Christ before us, Christ behind us, Christ under our feet.
 Christ within us, Christ over us, let all around us be Christ.

Alleluia.

Peace before us, peace behind us, peace under our feet.
 Peace within us, peace over us, let all around us be peace.