

Prayer Service

Prayer Service In a Time of War

Form a circle with your group.

Opening Prayer:

Leader:

To you, Creator of nature and humanity, of truth and beauty, I pray:

Hear my voice, for it is the voice of the victims of all wars and violence among individuals and nations.

Hear my voice, for it is the voice of all children who suffer and will suffer when people put their faith in weapons and war.

Hear my voice, when I beg you to instill into the hearts of all human beings the wisdom of peace, the strength of justice and the joy of fellowship.

Hear my voice, for I speak for the multitudes in every country and every period of history who do not want war and are ready to walk the road of peace.

Hear my voice, and grant insight and strength so that we may always respond to hatred with love, to injustice with total dedication to justice, to need with sharing of self, to war with peace.

O God, hear my voice, and grant unto the world your everlasting peace.

Pope John Paul II

Reflections

Reader 1:

We worked and prayed and hoped that war would be avoided. The task now is to work and pray and hope that war's deadly consequences will be limited, that civilian life will be protected, that weapons of mass destruction will be eliminated, and that the people of Iraq soon will enjoy a peace with freedom and justice.

A time for prayer and solidarity—In time of war, our first obligation is prayer and solidarity. We pray for all those most directly affected by this war: the men and women who risk their lives in the service of our nation, their families and loved one who face such fear and anxiety at this time, and the chaplains who serve them; the long-suffering people of Iraq, and those who labor to provide for their humanitarian needs. All of us should do what we can to reach out in solidarity to all those who will suffer as a result of this war.

Bishop Wilton D. Gregory, President of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Reader 2:

I ask all of you for this prayer and fasting . . . May these be concrete gestures of the involvement on the part of those who believe in the mission to remind the world that it is never too late for peace

Pope John Paul II, March 5, 2003

Reader 3:

It is a duty for believers, regardless of the religion to which they belong, to proclaim that we will never be able to be happy if we are against one another; the future of humanity will never be able to be assured by terrorism and the logic of war. We Christians, in particular, are called to be like guardians of peace in the places where we live and work. We are asked, that is, to be alert, so that consciences will not yield to the temptation to egoism, falsehood and violence.

Pope John Paul II, March 23, 2003



Prayer Service In a Time of War (continued)

Group Prayer: (*Arrange in advance that a different person read each paragraph.*)

We will plant olive trees
where before
there were thorns.

All of us the same,
each one of us different,
we will walk hand in hand
with a new song
of peace and love on our lips

We will plant olive trees
where before
there were thorns

Sharing
is the one urgent need
in this dawning
of a new century.

Paz, peace, paix,
mir, shalom, salaam:
we will plant olive trees
where before
there were thorns!

Federico Mayor
Spanish Director General, UNESCO

Sharing (*This is a time for those wishing to share thoughts/reflections with the group to do so.*)

Closing Prayer

All:

You, the one
From whom on different paths
All of us have come,
To whom on different paths
All of us are going,
Make strong in our hearts what unites us;

Build bridges across all that divides us;
United make us rejoice in our diversity,

At one in our witness to your peace,
A rainbow of your glory. Amen.

Br. David Steindl-Rast, O.S.B.
Mount Saviour Monastery, New York

Group members should now join hands for a few moments in silent prayer for peace.

In the coming days and weeks, we will all be faced with a barrage of news and violent images of the war in Iraq. We encourage everyone to make a strong effort to balance their intake of media with silent reflection, prayers and witnesses for peace.

During this time of war, you may also wish to burn a candle for a period of time each day (and/or in your window at night) as a symbol of hope for Christ's peace on earth.

