

LIVING OUR FAITH at St Philip Neri

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39th World Day of Peace. January 1, 2006



is the 39th World Day of Peace. Pope Benedict XVI has continued

in the tradition of his predecessors Paul VI and John Paul II by issuing his first World Peace Day Message, "In Truth, Peace." He calls on all followers of Christ to begin the new year by praying and working for peace.

"Peace is an irrepensible yearning present in the heart of each person, regardless of his or her particular cultural identity. ... All people are members of one and the same family. ... We need to regain an awareness that we share a common destiny which is ultimately transcendent, so as to maximize our historical and cultural differences, not in opposition to, but in cooperation with, people belonging to other cultures. ..."

"Peace thus comes to be seen in a new light; not as the mere absence of war, but as a harmonious coexistence of individual citizens within a society governed by justice, one in which the good is also achieved, to the extent possible, for each of them."

-Pope Benedict XVI, 2006 World Peace Day Message

Although the number of wars and armed conflicts has steadily declined over the last decade – from 62 in 1993 to 42 in 2004 – our world is not at peace. Moreover, war and armed conflicts increasingly impact civilian populations:

- At the start of the 20th Century, civilians accounted for 5% of war dead.
- In World War II civilians were 65% of the victims of war.
- By the early 1990s over 75% of war dead were civilians.
- Today over 90% of those killed in war are civilians – including in Iraq.



The cost of war is not measured only by the loss of human life. Worldwide, \$1 trillion, 34 billion dollars went toward military expenditures in 2004. US military spending totaled \$455.3 billion dollars, or 47% of the global total.

"In this regard, one can only note with dismay the evidence of a continuing growth in military expenditures and the flourishing arms trade ... How can there ever be a future of peace when investments are still made in the production of arms and in research aimed at developing new ones?"

"It can only be hoped that the international community will find the wisdom and courage to take up once more ... the process of disarmament, and thus concretely ensure the right to peace enjoyed by every individual and every people."

-Pope Benedict XVI, 2006 World Peace Day Message

To put global and US military spending in perspective:

- Universal access to water AND universal primary education AND reducing infant mortality by two-thirds by 2015 would ALL be possible with just a 7.5% reduction in world military expenditure.
- Every girl and boy in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America could go to primary school with \$11 billion – half the amount spent on arms purchases by countries in those regions.
- For the estimated cost of war and occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan as of June 2005 (\$230 billion), more than 3 years worth of basic food, HIV/AIDS medication, childhood immunization and clean water and sanitation could be provided for the world's neediest.

"The resources which would be saved could then be employed in projects of development capable of benefiting all their people, especially the poor."

-Pope Benedict XVI, 2006 World Peace Day Message





Food for Thought. In your opinion, which of the following statements reflect Scriptures and the teachings of the Church? Which statements do you agree/disagree with? Why?

- Conflict is inevitable. It is part of the human condition.
- We should oppose the arms trade.
- People have the right to fight against oppressive regimes.
- If a war has a just cause then as Christians we should support it.
- Under certain circumstances war can be justified.
- We should intervene when other countries are in conflict.
- All war is evil. As Christians we are opposed to war at all costs.

Prayers for Peace

Mary, Mother of the Prince of Peace

With confidence and filial abandonment let us lift up our eyes to Mary, Mother of the Prince of Peace. At the beginning of this New Year, let us ask her to help all God's People, wherever they may be, to work for peace and to be guided by the light of truth that sets all people free. Through Mary's intercession may all people grow in esteem for this fundamental good and strive to make it ever more present in our world, and in this way, to offer a safer and more serene future to generations yet to come.

Pope Benedict XVI

An Islamic Peace Prayer

Oh God, You are Peace.
From You comes Peace,
To You Returns Peace.
Revive us with a salutation of Peace,
and lead us to your abode of Peace.

*a saying from The Prophet,
used in daily prayer by Muslims*

A Native American Prayer for Peace

Let us know peace.
For as long as the moon shall rise,
For as long as the rivers shall flow,
For as long as the sun will shine,
For as long as the grass shall grow,
Let us know peace.

A Cheyenne Indian



Prayer for Light of Peace

God who created light that your children might walk in light and live an abundant life, we come before you in faith and in hope that even now the nations might choose to walk in light and put aside warfare and killing. Drawn to the light of this candle we make bold to pray that you will touch the hearts and minds of world leaders afresh. May the councils of the powerful yield to your everlasting wisdom. Wherever wars and rumors of war abound may your Peace and understanding quiet all fears and animosities. May you give new and powerful gifts of courage and leadership to those who speak and work for Peace. Help us to confess that war in this time is a mark of our failing one another and contrary to your will. In these days of anxiety and preparation for war stand by us and make us strong that we might not be paralyzed by fear but rather empowered to speak on behalf of Peace, work for Peace, pray for Peace, and live in Peace each with one another. Amen

National Council of Churches

Jewish Prayer for Peace

May we see the day when war and bloodshed cease when a great peace will embrace the whole world

Then nation shall not threaten nation
and humankind will not again know war.

For all who live on earth shall realize
we have not come into being to hate or destroy
We have come into being
to praise, to labor and to love.

Compassionate God, bless all the leaders of all nations
with the power of compassion.
Fulfill the promise conveyed in Scripture:
"I will bring peace to the land,
and you shall lie down and no one shall terrify you.
I will rid the land of vicious beasts
and it shall not be ravaged by war."

Let love and justice flow like a mighty stream.
Let peace fill the earth as the waters fill the sea.
And let us say: Amen

Chanted together during the Shabbat Saturday service

*Sources: Educating for Justice Website, Center of Concern
Vatican Website*

