

Prayers for Justice, Peace, and Healing during this Time of Civil Unrest

A Prayer for Peace in Our Time

O God, author and giver of peace,
in whose image and likeness each of us has been created
with a human dignity worthy of respect on earth
and destined for eternal glory,
Listen to the cry that rises from every corner
of this fragile earth,
from our human family torn by violent conflict:

Give peace in our time, O good and gracious God,
that peace which, as your son Jesus Christ told us
and as we have experienced in these days,
is a peace which the world cannot give.

To world leaders grant the wisdom
to see beyond the boundaries of race, religion,
and nation to that common humanity
that makes us all your children
and brothers and sisters to one another.

To those who have taken up arms in anger or revenge
or even in the cause of justice
grant the grace of conversion
to the path of peaceful dialogue
and constructive collaboration.

To the innocent who live in
the shadow of war and terror,
especially the frightened children,
be a shelter and strength, their haven and hope.

And to those who have already lost their lives
as victims of human cruelty,
open wide your arms and enfold them all
in the embrace of your compassion,
healing, and everlasting life.

Grant this through Jesus Christ, your son, our Lord.
Mary, Mother of all and Queen of peace, pray for us.

- Peter J. Scagnelli

Pope John Paul II's Prayer for Peace

Lord Jesus Christ, who are called the Prince of Peace,
who are yourself our peace and reconciliation,
who so often said, "Peace to you," grant us peace.

Make all men and women witnesses of truth,
justice, and love.

Banish from their hearts
whatever might endanger peace.

Enlighten our rulers that they may
guarantee and defend the great gift of peace.

May all peoples on the earth
become as brothers and sisters.

May longed for peace blossom forth
and reign always over us all.

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace;
Where there is hated, let me sow love;
where there is injury, let me bring pardon;
where there is discord, let me bring harmony;
where there is error, let me bring truth;
where there is doubt, let me bring faith;
where there is despair, let me bring hope;
Where there is darkness, let me bring your light;
and where there is sadness, let me bring 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.

- St. Francis of Assisi

Prayer for Justice

God, you have given all peoples one common origin.
It is your will that they be gathered together
as one family in you.
Fill the hearts of humankind with the fire of your love
and with the desire to ensure justice for all.
By sharing the good things you give us,
may we secure an equality
for all our brothers and sisters throughout the world.
May there be an end to division, strife, and war.
May there be a dawning of a truly human society
built on love and peace. We ask this in your name.

Prayer for Peace

O God, Creator of the universe,
who extends your paternal concern over every creature
and guides the events of history to goals of salvation,
we acknowledge your Fatherly love when you break t
he resistance of mankind and,
in a world torn by strife and discord,
you make us ready for reconciliation.
Renew for us the wonders of your MERCY;
send forth your Spirit to work
in the intimacy of our hearts,
that enemies may begin to dialogue,
that adversaries may shake hands
and peoples may encounter one another in harmony.
May all commit themselves to the sincere search
for true peace which will extinguish all arguments,
for charity which overcomes hatred,
for pardon which disarms revenge.

- Pope John Paul II

We Are One With You

O God, we are one with you. You have made us one with you. You have taught us that if we are open to one another, you dwell in us. Help us to preserve this openness and to fight for it with all our hearts. Help us to realize that there can be no understanding where there is mutual rejection. O God, in accepting one another wholeheartedly, fully, completely, we accept you, and we thank you, and we adore you, and we love you with our whole being, because our being is your being, our spirit is rooted in your spirit. Fill us then with love, and let us be bound together with love as we go our diverse ways, united in this one spirit which makes you present in the world, and which makes you witness to the ultimate reality that is love. Love has overcome. Love is victorious.

- *Thomas Merton (1915-1968)*

Prayer to Heal Racial Division

We thank you, O Lord, for in your loving wisdom You created one human family with a diversity that enriches our communities.

We pray to you, O Lord, that we always recognize each member of this human family as being made in your image and beloved by you, with worth and dignity.

We pray to you, O Lord, That we may envision a way forward to heal the racial divisions that deny human dignity and the bonds between all human beings.

We pray to you, O Lord that we may affirm each person's dignity through fair access for all to economic opportunity, housing, education, and employment.

We pray to you, O Lord, that we may have eyes to see what is possible when we reach out beyond fear, beyond anger, to hold the hand of our sisters, our brothers.

We thank you, O Lord, for your call and challenge to us that we may reveal your teachings and your love through our actions to end racism and to proclaim that we are all your children, heirs to your sacred creation. Amen.

- *U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops*

A Prayer for Peace

We are molded, each one of us, in the image of God, and within our souls there is a fingerprint none can erase.

We pray for those who have no regard for anyone but self, who put no value on human life.

We are not called to be judge or jury, but we are called to be agents of change. May we be the voice of God to the world.

STATEMENT OF U.S. BISHOPS' PRESIDENT ON GEORGE FLOYD & THE PROTESTS IN AMERICAN CITIES - May 31, 2020

WASHINGTON – Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles and president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has issued a statement on George Floyd and the protests in American cities that have taken place over the last days. Archbishop Gomez's full statement follows:

The killing of George Floyd was senseless and brutal, a sin that cries out to heaven for justice. How is it possible that in America, a black man's life can be taken from him while calls for help are not answered, and his killing is recorded as it happens?

I am praying for George Floyd and his loved ones, and on behalf of my brother bishops, I share the outrage of the black community and those who stand with them in Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and across the country. The cruelty and violence he suffered does not reflect on the majority of good men and women in law enforcement, who carry out their duties with honor. We know that. And we trust that civil authorities will investigate his killing carefully and make sure those responsible are held accountable.

We should all understand that the protests we are seeing in our cities reflect the justified frustration and anger of millions of our brothers and sisters who even today experience humiliation, indignity, and unequal opportunity only because of their race or the color of their skin. It should not be this way in America. Racism has been tolerated for far too long in our way of life.

It is true what Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, that riots are the language of the unheard. We should be doing a lot of listening right now. This time, we should not fail to hear what people are saying through their pain. We need to finally root out the racial injustice that still infects too many areas of American society.

But the violence of recent nights is self-destructive and self-defeating. Nothing is gained by violence and so much is lost. Let us keep our eyes on the prize of true and lasting change.

Legitimate protests should not be exploited by persons who have different values and agendas. Burning and looting communities, ruining the livelihoods of our neighbors, does not advance the cause of racial equality and human dignity.

We should not let it be said that George Floyd died for no reason. We should honor the sacrifice of his life by removing racism and hate from our hearts and renewing our commitment to fulfill our nation's sacred promise — to be a beloved community of life, liberty, and equality for all.

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For more on the Church's stance, read the U.S. Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter against Racism, [*Open Wide Our Hearts: the Enduring Call to Love.*](#)