



A proposal of prayer for the celebration of the

49th World Day of Peace 2016

Overcome Indifference and win Peace

2016 is the **Year of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy**, celebrated from 8 December 2015 – Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception – to 20 November 2016 – Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.

“This Extraordinary Year is itself a gift of grace. To pass through the Holy Door means to rediscover the infinite mercy of the Father who welcomes everyone and goes out personally to encounter each of them. It is he who seeks us! It is he who comes to encounter us!” [...] let us experience *the joy of encountering that grace which transforms all things.*”

(Pope Francis, *Homily for the Opening of the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica*, 8 December 2015)

The *Message for the World Day of Peace* of this 2016 is on the theme ***Overcome Indifference and win Peace*** and with it the Holy Father invites all people of good will, particularly those who work in the education, media, culture - each one acting according to their possibilities and according to their best aspirations - to experience the joy of encountering that transforming grace, building together a more conscious and merciful, and, therefore, more free and fair world.

This resource is offered by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace to all Justice and Peace Commissions, to Associations and Ecclesial Movements, to University Chaplaincies and Parishes, with the hope that it can be helpful in the preparation of a Mass, a Prayer Meeting or a Holy Hour to celebrate the World Day of Peace.

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Introduction to the Liturgy/meditation/Holy Hour

Leader : We are gathered here today to make a moment of prayer and to reflect on the theme chosen by the Holy Father for the annual Message for the World Day of Peace: **Overcome Indifference and Win Peace.**

Let us read and ponder some suggestions coming from the words of Pope Francis in the *Message*:

Leader/Reader: “We continue to trust that 2016 will see us all firmly and confidently engaged, on different levels, in the pursuit of justice and peace. Peace is both God’s gift and a human achievement. As a gift of God, it is entrusted to all men and women, who are called to attain it” (§ 1).

Kinds of indifference

“Clearly, indifference is not something new; every period of history has known people who close their hearts to the needs of others, who close their eyes to what is happening around them, who turn aside to avoid encountering other people's problems. But in our day, indifference has ceased to be a purely personal matter and has taken on broader dimensions, producing a certain “globalization of indifference” (§3).

The first kind of indifference in human society is indifference to God

“We feel self-sufficient, prepared not only to find a substitute for God but to do completely without him. As a consequence, we feel that we owe nothing to anyone but ourselves, and we claim only rights” (§3).

Peace is threatened because:

“Indifference towards God transcends the purely private sphere of the individual and affects the public and social sphere. As Benedict XVI pointed out, “the glorification of God and human peace on earth are closely linked”. Indeed, “without openness to the transcendent, human beings easily become prey to relativism and find it difficult to act justly and to work for peace” (§4).

Indifference to God then leads to indifference to one’s neighbour,

“Indifference to our neighbour shows itself in different ways. Some people are well-informed; they listen to the radio, read the newspapers or watch television, but they do so mechanically and without engagement. They are vaguely aware of the tragedies afflicting humanity, but they have no sense of involvement or compassion”. [...] In other cases, indifference shows itself in lack of concern for what is happening around us, especially if it does not touch us directly. Some people prefer not to ask questions or seek answers; they lead lives of comfort, deaf to the cry of those who suffer” (§3).

Peace is threatened because:

“Indifference and lack of commitment constitute a grave dereliction of the duty whereby each of us must work in accordance with our abilities and our role in society for the promotion of the common good, and in particular for peace, which is one of mankind’s most precious goods” (§4).

and, finally, to indifference to the environment.

“Because we dwell in a common home, we cannot help but ask ourselves about the state of its health, as I sought to do in *Laudato Si’*. Water and air pollution, the indiscriminate exploitation of forests and the destruction of the natural environment are often the result of man’s indifference to man, since everything is interrelated. Then too, there is the way we treat animals, which has an effect on the way we treat other people, and the cases where people freely do elsewhere what they would never dare do at home” (§3).

Peace is threatened because:

“ [...] indifference to the natural environment, by countenancing deforestation, pollution and natural catastrophes which uproot entire communities from their ecosystem and create profound insecurity, ends up creating new forms of poverty and new situations of injustice, often with dire consequences for security and peace. How many wars have been fought, and how many will continue to be fought, over a shortage of goods or out of an insatiable thirst for natural resources?” (§4).

Leader: Let us ask to the Lord to change our hearts so to overcome these kinds of indifferences that do not allow us to achieve that gift of God that is Peace (cf. §1).

Lord Jesus, in you alone is true peace to be found. **Lord have mercy**

Christ Jesus, you taught us to be merciful like our heavenly Father, give us not ‘to pass by on the other side’. **Christ have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you gave us our common home: it is yours, filled with your presence and your tender love. **Lord have mercy**

Reading of the Scriptures

Readings suggested: **Gen 4:1-16 (Cain and Abel)**

Psalm 34

R: The Lord is kind and merciful, slow to anger and rich in compassion

I will bless the Lord at all times;
his praise shall be ever in my mouth.
Let my soul glory in the Lord:
the lowly will hear me and be glad. R.

Glorify the Lord with me,
let us together extol his name.
I sought the Lord and he answered me
and delivered me from all my fears. R.

Look to him that you may be radiant with joy,
and your faces may not blush with shame.
When the afflicted man called out, the Lord heard,
and from all his distress he saved him. R.

Fear the Lord, you his holy ones,
for nought is lacking to those who fear him.
The great grow poor and hungry;
but those who seek the Lord want for no good thing. R.

Come, children, hear me;
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
Which of you desires life,
and takes delight in prosperous days? R.

Lk 10:29-37 (The Good Samaritan)

Homily or Reflection

Prayers of the faithful

(Building a culture of solidarity and mercy to overcome indifference)

Leader: *God is not indifferent! God cares about mankind! God does not abandon us!* (§1) In the same way, in Jesus his Son, God has come down among us. He took flesh and showed his solidarity with humanity in all things but sin. Let us acknowledge the need around us, in the Church, in the world and our needs, too, trusting that God is not indifferent to our requests.

And we say: **In your mercy, Lord, hear our prayer**

1. In this *Year of Mercy*, let us pray that the whole Church may become a parable of the Compassion of God, a place where all can find reconciliation and peace.

In your mercy, Lord, hear our prayer

2. Let us pray for the leaders of nations: may they “refrain from drawing other peoples into conflicts or wars which destroy not only their material, cultural and social legacy, but also – and in the long term – their moral and spiritual integrity”. May they “forgive or manage in a sustainable way the international debt of the poorer nations; *[and]* adopt policies of cooperation which, instead of bowing before the dictatorship of certain ideologies, will respect the values of local populations and, in any case, not prove detrimental to the fundamental and inalienable right to life of the unborn” (§8).

In your mercy, Lord, hear our prayer

3. Let us pray for all families, which are “called to a primary and vital mission of education. Families are the first place where the values of love and fraternity, togetherness and sharing, concern and care for others are lived out and handed on. They are also the privileged milieu for transmitting the faith, beginning with those first simple gestures of devotion” (§6).

In your mercy, Lord, hear our prayer

4. Let us pray for teachers and educators who “have” the challenging task of training children and youth in schools or other settings”. May they be conscious that their responsibility extends also to the moral, spiritual and social aspects of life and that young people are thirsty of that joy coming “from the daily exercise of charity and compassion towards others and from taking an active part in the building of a more humane and fraternal society” (§6).

In your mercy, Lord, hear our prayer

5. Let us pray for communicators, who also have “a responsibility for education and formation, especially nowadays, when the means of information and communication are so widespread” (§6). May their duty be “first and foremost to serve the truth, and not particular interests”(§6).

In your mercy, Lord, hear our prayer

6. Let us pray that civil society feels “called to make specific and courageous gestures of concern for *[its]* most vulnerable members, such as prisoners, migrants, the unemployed and the infirm” (§8).

In your mercy, Lord, hear our prayer

7. Let us pray for reconciliation where there is conflict; for peace where there is fighting. We remember especially today **[name a situation of oppression or violence that you want to remember...]**

In your mercy, Lord, hear our prayer

8. We ask God’s blessing on all who work for peace and justice, on all who will not be silent in the face of injustice or human hurt, on all who take risks for peace: those “amidst epidemics, disasters and armed conflicts, brave difficulties and dangers in caring for the injured and sick, and in burying the dead;[...] those individuals and associations which assist migrants who cross deserts and seas in search of a better life” (§7); and those - individuals, families, parishes, religious communities, monasteries and shrines - who readily responded to the appeal of the pope to welcome a refugee family (cf. §7).

In your mercy, Lord, hear our prayer

Leader: In a moment of silence, let us place before our Lord Jesus our own thirst for peace and our personal prayers.

Leader: Put into our hearts, God, a new song, a song of joy and peace. Lead us beyond indifference to the love of your Kingdom and hear our prayers.

All: Amen

Our Father

“Jesus taught us to be merciful like our heavenly Father (cf. *Lk* 6:36). [...] He taught his listeners, and his disciples in particular, to stop and to help alleviate the sufferings of this world and the pain of our brothers and sisters, using whatever means are at hand, beginning with our own time, however busy we may be” (§5).

On our path to find the road that leads to the Father, we say/we sing:

Our Father.....

Concluding blessing :

If the leader is a priest:

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

All: Amen

May his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you.

All: Amen

May he look upon you with kindness, and give you his peace.

All: Amen

May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

If the leader is not a priest:

We praise you, Father of all;

We thank you for calling us to be your people,

And for choosing us to give you glory.

In a special way we thank you for the gift of being your instrument for peace and justice in our time.

Cleanse our hearts and our lives

With your holy word

And make our prayer pleasing to you.

Guide us by your Spirit

As we follow in the paths of Jesus.

All glory and praise are yours, Father,

For ever and ever.

Amen

Concluding Hymn