

Peace Hour

Sunday 16th January



Swindon Catholic Deanery Justice & Peace Group
welcome you to this Peace Hour

Introduction to the Liturgy

The Bishops of England and Wales invite us to make today a day of prayer for world peace and to reflect on the theme that Pope Benedict has chosen:

'Religious Freedom, the Path to Peace.'

We are invited to recognise that we are fellow pilgrims, together with the whole of humanity. All are invited to respond to God's invitation. All are invited to seek the Kingdom of God together. All have a fundamental right and duty to live their faith in peace and right living.

Let us pause to reflect on how faithful we are to our calling.

Silence

We say together:

Lord Jesus, you are the Light of the Nations. Lord have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you came in the power of the Spirit to preach the Gospel of peace. Christ have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are the Chosen One of God, bringing salvation to our broken world. Lord have mercy.

Silence

Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:1-3

In these opening words of his First Letter to the Corinthians, Paul shows both a strong awareness of his own role ('called to be an apostle') and an immense respect for the members of other Christian communities ('for he is their Lord no less than ours').

Two thousand years later, in a very different setting, we might use the same words to express our own calling to holiness and our own respect for the spiritual paths followed by others.

*Time for personal reflection during which music
will be played*

Prayers of the Faithful - please join in the responses

We have the great gift of enjoying the freedom to gather today in prayer as Christ's Church. Let us pray that we may use that freedom well, seeking peace together. And let us hold in our prayer all those who do not have the freedoms we enjoy.

We pray for ourselves: may we always rejoice in our faith in Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world; and may our baptismal faith and our joy in the Gospel be renewed and deepened by our celebration today. Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

Silence

Let us pray for the Church: that we may give true witness to Christ, the Light of the Nations, and that we may be always obedient to the promptings of the Spirit. Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

Silence

We pray for all Christians. We pray for the healing of the wounds and divisions left by Christians' failure to preserve the unity of Christ's Body. Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Silence

Let us pray for peace among the religions of the world, that all believers may seek the truth, the goodness and the beauty which is God and may respect those who follow other paths. May the Spirit lead all to the unity God wills for all people. Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

Silence

In all those places where violence has been done in God's name or where religion is invoked to justify conflict, may the Holy Spirit bring healing and peace. We ask God's blessing today especially on the work of the international Catholic peace movement, *Pax Christi*. Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Silence

We commend to God's mercy all who are sick that they might be restored to health; and that all who have died may they be gathered, with people of every race and language and way of life, into the joy of God's Kingdom. Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

In silence, let us place before the Lord all that is in our hearts...

Time for personal reflection during which music will be played

Litany

Leader: In Christ, the world is reconciled to God who entrusts to us the message of reconciliation. As the ambassadors of Christ's reconciling work, we make our petitions to God:

L: When we pray together from our diverse traditions,

All: Holy One who makes us one, make our unity visible and bring healing to the world.

Silence

L: When we read the Bible together in our diversity of language and context,

A: Revealing One who makes us one, make our unity visible and bring healing to the world.

Silence

L: When we establish relations of friendships among Jews, Christians and Muslims; when we tear down the wall of indifference and hatred,

A: Merciful One who makes us one, make our unity visible and bring healing to the world.

Silence

L: When we work for justice and solidarity; when we move from fear to confidence,

A: Strengthening One who makes us one, make our unity visible and bring healing to the world.

Silence

L: Wherever there is suffering through war and violence, injustice and inequality, disease and prejudice, poverty and hopelessness, drawing us near to the cross of Christ and to each other,

A: Wounded One who makes us one, make our unity visible and bring healing to the world.

Silence

Lord God, you grant us true freedom, freedom of heart, that we might praise you and serve our brothers and sisters in their need. Heal our divisions and hear these, our prayers, which we make through Jesus Christ our Lord God of all cultures, God of all people, help us not to label anyone inferior or second-class.

Help us overcome our attitudes of superiority and oppression.
May we broaden our vision and widen our tents
so that plurality and diversity determine who we are:
people called and committed to a world united
in justice and peace, now and forever. Amen.

*Time for personal reflection during which music
will be played*

Please join in the words in heavy type

Our Father . . . **who always stands with the weak, the powerless, the poor, the abandoned, the sick, the aged, the very young, the unborn, and those who, by victim of circumstance, bear the heat of the day.**

Who art in heaven . . . **where everything will be reversed, where the first will be last and the last will be first, but where all will be well and every manner of being will be well.**

Hallowed be thy name . . . **may we always acknowledge your holiness, respecting that your ways are not our ways, your standards are not our standards. May the reverence we give your name pull us out of the selfishness that prevents us from seeing the pain of our neighbour.**

Your kingdom come . . . **help us to create a world where, beyond our own needs and hurts, we will do justice, love tenderly, and walk humbly with you and each other.**

Your will be done . . . open our freedom to let you in so that the complete mutuality that characterizes your life might flow through our veins and thus the life that we help generate may radiate your equal love for all and your special love for the poor.

On earth as in heaven . . . may the work of our hands, the temples and structures we build in this world, reflect the temple and the structure of your glory so that the joy, graciousness, tenderness, and justice of heaven will show forth within all of our structures on earth.

Give . . . life and love to us and help us to see always everything as gift. Help us to know that nothing comes to us by right and that we must give because we have been given to. Help us realize that we must give to the poor, not because they need it, but because our own health depends upon our giving to them.

Us . . . the truly plural us. Give not just to our own but to everyone, including those who are very different than the narrow us. Give your gifts to all of us equally.

This day . . . not tomorrow. Do not let us push things out into some indefinite future so that we can continue to live justified lives in the face of injustice because we can make good excuses for our inactivity.

Our daily bread ... so that each person in the world may have enough food, enough clean water, enough clean air, adequate health care, and sufficient access to education so as to have the sustenance for a healthy life. Teach us to give from our sustenance and not just from our surplus.

And forgive us our trespasses . . . forgive us our blindness toward our neighbor, our self-preoccupation, our racism, our sexism, and our incurable propensity to worry only about ourselves and our own. Forgive us our capacity to watch the evening news and do nothing about it.

As we forgive those who trespass against us . . . help us to forgive those who victimize us. Help us to mellow out in spirit, to not grow bitter with age, to forgive the imperfect parents and systems that wounded, cursed, and ignored us.

And do not put us to the test ... do not judge us only by whether we have fed the hungry, given clothing to the naked, visited the sick, or tried to mend the systems that victimized the poor. Spare us this test for none of us can stand before your gospel scrutiny. Give us, instead, more days to mend our ways, our selfishness, and our systems.

But deliver us from evil . . . that is, from the blindness that lets us continue to participate in anonymous systems within which we need not see who gets less as we get more. Amen.

Time for personal reflection during which music will be played

**We join together in this Muslim, Jewish, Christian,
prayer for peace**

**O God, you are the source of
life and peace.**

Praised be your name forever.

**We know it is you who turn
our minds to thoughts of peace.**

Hear our prayer in this time of crisis.

Your power changes hearts.

**Muslims, Christians and Jews
remember, and profoundly affirm,
that they are followers of the one God,**

**Children of Abraham,
brothers and sisters;**

**Enemies begin to speak to
one another;**

**those who were estranged
join hands in friendship;**

nations seek the way of peace together.

**Strengthen our resolve to
give witness to these
truths by the way we live.**

Give to us:

**Understanding that puts
an end to strife;**

Mercy that quenches hatred, and

**Forgiveness that overcomes
vengeance.**

**Empower all people to live in
your law of love. Amen.**

Peace

Salh