

# CONGREGATIONAL JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION OFFICE

*SISTERS OF CHARITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD<sup>1</sup>*

## Prayer Service for World Day of Peace – 2017<sup>2</sup>

**Setting:** Create a small altar in the center of your group with symbols of peace from your culture, one large candle lit in the center, and smaller unlit candles around the larger one.

**Opening Song:** Peace Before Us by David Haas  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pevH0Ez6bms>

**Leader:** Every day, we hear of issues—such as war, terrorism, or social violence—that affect us and our brothers and sisters around the world. The problems can seem so complex that they can leave us paralyzed, overwhelmed, or even numb. We may wonder, “What can I possibly do?”

**Reader 1:** In his message for the 50th World Day of Peace, celebrated on January 1, 2017, Pope Francis urges us to overcome such challenges by replacing cautiousness with courage and cynicism with hope. This year Pope Francis has asked Catholics to focus on Christian nonviolence as a style of politics for peace. He says in his opening statement, “I wish peace to every man, woman and child, and I pray that the image and likeness of God in each person will enable us to acknowledge one another as sacred gifts endowed with immense dignity. Especially in situations of conflict, let us respect this, our “deepest dignity”, and make active nonviolence our way of life.”

**Reader 2:** In our families, schools, and institutions, we must learn the things that make for peace. There are effective Christian ways to counter war, terrorism, and social and domestic violence that can be accomplished without resorting to violence or military options. We must reach out to engage in positive encounters with our neighbors, in civil dialogue for the common good, and building skills to address these problems in meaningful ways. Working together, we can creatively build “cultures of peace” and our churches can become places of peacemaking in our communities.

**Scripture Reading: John 14: 26-27**



*Carol Smith from Fair Trade Towns FDL places a dove on the Peace Tree.*

<sup>1</sup> Used with Permission

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from resources of the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative

“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have told you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled; do not be afraid.”

### **Questions for Reflection and Sharing:**

- 1) What can you do to affirm the centrality of active nonviolence in the message of Jesus, the life of the Catholic Church, and to the calling to be part of the healing and reconciling of both people and our earth?
- 2) How might the Holy Spirit be calling our faith community to be active and creative peacemakers?

### **Witnesses for peace and nonviolence**

**Leader:** Loving Creator and giver of all life, we thank you for the many people who have gone before us:

**Reader 2** For those who have lived out Jesus' example of love

**Reader 1** For those who have worked tirelessly to make sure that all people are treated with dignity

**Reader 2** For those who have taught us how to pray

**Reader 1** For those who have shown us how to forgive

**Reader 2** For those who helped us to cross boundaries

**Reader 1** For those who have tried to live your way of nonviolence

**Reader 2** For those who have lived out your kingdom of justice, love and peace

**Reader 1** We name them now before you...

*(People can be invited to come forward to light a candle and, if they wish, name out loud a person who has been an example of peacemaking for them.)*

**Leader:** We know that we do not go alone, for the path is brightened by those who have gone before us. May our lives also be a shining example to others. We ask the Incarnate Word to give us courage, strength and wisdom to be artisans of peace and nonviolence. When we are afraid, help us to remember your words, 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.'

### **Closing Prayer - PRAYER FOR CONVERSION TO GOSPEL NONVIOLENCE:**

Blessed are the peacemakers, you said, O Lord, for they shall be called children of God. We ask you, Lord, to forgive us for the times we've caused division or misunderstanding in our communities. We know that communion is not achieved through violence, but through constant conversion. We ask the grace to not speak ill, not criticize, not to be sowers of strife, so that peace can reign in our hearts. From this conversion of the heart, Lord, lead us to a conversion in actions. First in our hearts, then in our world incarnate the power of gospel nonviolence. Give us the imagination to overcome all forms of violence with creative nonviolence. Revive in our church's theology of peace the nonviolent message of Jesus, that once again our churches may be centers of learning for nonviolence and just peace, centers of conversion from violence to peace, and from loneliness to joy. **Amen**

**Closing Song: Let There Be Peace on Earth** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57-0i7qghhU>