

FRANCISCAN, HOLY LAND PEACEMAKING: LITURGICAL RESOURCE



Opening prayer: God of Abraham, Hagar, and Sarah, you desire to bless all your children - Jews, Christians, and Muslims – with the gift of peace. You, who lead the blind on their journey, give new sight to those blinded by fear, indifference and hatred. Help us all to realize that the authentic peace you desire for us cannot come down, until we are ready to listen deeply to the pain and suffering of both Israelis and Palestinians, and to commit ourselves to ensuring basic justice and security for all your children. Help us to be like St. Francis of Assisi, who always listened to the cry of the poor and stood in solidarity with those who suffer. Illuminate those who selectively use religion to justify violence, oppression, and hatred. Raise more prophetic voices from within Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities that would not be afraid to speak truth in love. Teach your children, O Lord, how to forgive and have compassion for one’s enemies. Make us instruments of your peace, and courageous prophets of hope in our world. We make this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Possible scripture readings: Isaiah 65:17-25; Psalm 122; Gospel of Matthew 5:1-12.

Prayers of Petitions:

- + For our Jewish brothers and sisters that they may live in security, free from fear of suicide or rocket attacks, and in lasting peace with their neighbors. We pray to the Lord.
- + For the Palestinian people living under the military occupation in the West Bank and under a blockade in Gaza. May their basic human needs be satisfied, including having a viable state of their own. We pray to the Lord.
- + For the Jewish people that they may grow in the covenant obedience to the God who hears the cry of the poor and to the call of the ancient Hebrew and modern prophets that summons them to pursue justice and be a light to all nations. We pray to the Lord.

- + For the day when Jerusalem is a secure and lasting home for Jews and Christians and Muslims. We pray to the Lord.
- + For a shared Jerusalem as a home to the two nations and the three monotheistic religions. We pray to the Lord.
- + For the day when the mothers of Israelis and Palestinians can see their children grow up without fear. We pray to the Lord.
- + For an end to the expansion of the Israeli settlements that undermines efforts to achieve peace. We pray to the Lord.
- + For the rapidly declining native Christian community in the Holy Land that with our help they may continue to live and worship there. We pray to the Lord.
- + For Jewish, Christian and Muslims groups that work together for a just and lasting peace in the Holy Land. We pray to the Lord.
- + For the Holy Father, Benedict XVI that his recent trip to the Holy Land would commit us to a greater solidarity with Arab Christians who live there. We pray to the Lord.
- + For our faith community, that at this critical moment of the conflict in the Holy Land, both Israelis and Palestinians would find in us a true friend: affirming, but always willing to say “No.” We pray to the Lord.
- + For Catholic communities throughout our country, that following our bishops lead, we would stand ready to support the Administration’s bold peacemaking efforts to achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace. We pray to the Lord.
- + For God’s gift of courage and fortitude. That our efforts to help bring about a just and lasting peace in the Holy Land could witness to the transformative power of hope. We pray to the Lord.

“It’s time”

- It's time for Palestinians and Israelis to share a just peace.
- It's time to respect human lives in the land called holy.
- It's time for healing to begin in wounded souls.
- It’s time that we fully recognize and repent of our long history of anti-Semitism.
- It's time to end 60 years of conflict, oppression and fear in the Holy Land.
- It's time for freedom from occupation.
- It's time for equal rights.
- It's time to stop discrimination, segregation and restrictions on movement.
- It's time for those who put up walls and fences to build them on their own property.
- It's time to stop bulldozing one community's homes and building homes for the other community on land that is not theirs.
- It's time to do away with double standards.
- It's time for Israeli citizens to have security and secure borders agreed with their neighbors.
- It's time for the international community to implement 60 years of United Nations resolutions.
- It's time for Israel's government to complete the bargain offered in the Arab Peace Initiative.

- It's time for those who represent the Palestinian people to all be involved in making peace.
- It's time for people who have been refugees for 60 years to regain their rights and a permanent home.
- It's time for self-determination.
- It's time for foreigners to visit Bethlehem and other towns imprisoned by the wall.
- It's time to see settlements in their comfort and refugee camps in their despair.
- It's time for people living 41 years under occupation to feel new solidarity from a watching world.
- It's time to name the shame of collective punishment and to end it in all its forms.
- It's time to be revolted by violence against civilians and for civilians on both sides to be safe.
- It's time for both sides to release their prisoners and give those justly accused a fair trial.
- It's time to reunite the people of Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.
- It's time for all parties to obey international humanitarian and human rights law.
- It's time to share Jerusalem as the capital of two nations and a city holy to three religions.
- It's time for Muslim, Jewish and Christian communities to be free to visit their holy sites.
- It's time in Palestine as in Israel for olive trees to flourish and grow old.
- It's time to honor all who have suffered in the Holy Land, Israelis and Palestinians.
- It's time to learn from past wrongs.
- It's time to understand pent-up anger and begin to set things right.
- It's time for those with blood on their hands to acknowledge what they have done.
- It's time to seek forgiveness between communities and to repair a broken land together.
- It's time to move forward as human beings who are all made in the image of God.
- All who are able to speak truth to power must speak it.
- All who would break the silence surrounding injustice must break it.
- All who have something to give for peace must give it.
- For Palestine, for Israel and for a troubled world.

All: It's time for peace.

(The above prayer - slightly adopted – is taken from Education for Justice)

Another a very creative resource from Education for Justice is “marathon-pilgrimage” for peace in the Holy Land. To access this resource, you would need to become a member of Education for Justice – it is a an excellent resources for on justice and peace.

Closing Prayer

Merciful God, accept our prayer and yearning. Remove all injustice and violence and fill your Holy Land with a just and lasting peace. Give us new ears to hear the cries of those living under the military occupation, of farmers whose land has been confiscated, of parents whose children have been killed, wounded, or terrorized on both sides of this tragic conflict.

Embrace with your compassion those who bear the scars of the Holocaust, and those who lost their loved ones in the present conflict. Hear us as we pray that you bless our Jewish brothers and sisters with a true and lasting security and peace. Pour out your loving mercy upon all your Palestinian that they may struggle against their occupation only through peaceful non-violence. Let hatred be turned into love, fear to trust, despair to hope, oppression to freedom, occupation to liberation. May violent encounters be replaced by loving embraces, and your land be truly holy. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



**“Everyone shall sit under his own vine
and under his own fig tree
and no one will make them afraid.”
- Micah 4:4**