

## Prayer Services for International Day of Nonviolence

### Opening Song of peace

**Leader:** In the name of the God of peace, the nonviolent Jesus, and the Holy Spirit of love.

Let us take a minute in silence to give thanks for all the blessings of love and peace that we have received throughout our lives from the God of love and peace. Let us ask God to forgive us for all the ways we have rejected those blessings of love and peace, all the ways we have chosen violence instead of nonviolence, all the ways we have hurt others and supported the culture of violence and war. Let us repent of our violence and ask for the grace to become people of Gospel nonviolence.

*(Silence)*

Please respond: ***“God of Peace, have mercy on us.”***

Jesus, you renounced violence, loved everyone, practiced nonviolence, embodied peace, resisted injustice, and gave your life in perfect nonviolent love for humanity. God of peace, have mercy on us.

***“God of Peace, have mercy on us.”***

Jesus, you call us to renounce violence, love everyone, practiced nonviolence, oppose war, dismantle nuclear weapons, resist injustice, embody peace and love our enemies. “God of Peace, have mercy on us.”

***“God of Peace, have mercy on us.”***

**(all recite) Prayer**

God of peace, be with us now as we repent of our violence and hear your word of peace. Help us to become your holy people of Gospel nonviolence, that we might follow the nonviolent Jesus, love one another, love our enemies, reconcile with everyone, resist injustice and pursue a new world without war, poverty, nuclear weapons, global warming or violence. We ask this in the name of the nonviolent Jesus, our brother and our peace.

**First Reading:** *a selection from the words of Mahatma Gandhi.*

“Nonviolence is the greatest force at the disposal of humanity. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of humanity. Nonviolence is not passivity in any shape or form. It is the most active force in the world. Nonviolence is the supreme law. Just as one must learn the art of killing in the training for violence, so one must learn the art of dying in the training for nonviolence. One person who can express nonviolence in life exercises a force superior to all the forces of brutality. We are constantly being astonished these days at the amazing discoveries in the field of violence, but I maintain that far more undreamt of and seemingly impossible discoveries will be made in the field of nonviolence. My optimism rests on my belief in the infinite possibility of the individual to develop nonviolence. The more you develop it in your own being, the more infectious it becomes till it overwhelms your surroundings and by might over sweep the world. We have to make truth and nonviolence not matters for mere individual practice, but for practice by groups and communities and nations. That, at any rate, is my dream. When the practice of nonviolence becomes universal, God will reign on earth as God reigns in heaven.” (*Mohandas Gandhi: Essential Writings*)

*Silent reflection*

## **Second Reading:** Luke 6:27-36

“But to you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic. Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, and get back the same amount. But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as also your Father is merciful.

*Silent reflection*

### **Lord's Prayer**

#### **A Pledge of nonviolence**

**Leader:** I invite all those who are ready to recite together this pledge of nonviolence; we will try to practice and live the nonviolence of Jesus for the rest of our lives:

In the name of the God of peace and the nonviolent Jesus,  
I pledge today to live, practice and teach the nonviolence of Jesus,

-  To renounce violence and not to cooperate with the world's violence;
-  To love every one as my sister and brother;
-  To respond with love and not to retaliate with violence;
-  To forgive those who have hurt me and to reconcile with everyone;

- ✚ To accept suffering as I work for justice, rather than inflict further suffering;
- ✚ To live more simply, at one with all creation;
- ✚ To work with others for the abolition of war, poverty, nuclear weapons, global warming and all violence;
- ✚ To follow the nonviolent Jesus on the way of the cross into the new life of resurrection, knowing that my life is in God's hands, that life, love and peace are stronger than death, hatred, and war;
- ✚ To seek God's reign of nonviolence for the rest of my life;
- ✚ And to promote and teach the Gospel message of nonviolence.

May the God of peace give me the grace and strength to fulfill this pledge and make me instrument of God's peace.

### **Closing prayer**

**Leader:** Let us pray. (*Moment of silence*)

God of peace, thank you for calling us to follow the nonviolent Jesus on the road to peace. Help us to become your holy people of Gospel nonviolence. Disarm our hearts that we might be instrument of your disarming love. Make our church a community of Gospel nonviolence that rejects war and radiates our love and peace. Bless us to love one another and our enemies, to reconcile with everyone, to resist injustice and spread the practice of nonviolence. Give us a new world without war, poverty, nuclear weapons, global warming or violence. Give us your reign of nonviolence, here and now. We ask this in the name of the nonviolent Jesus, our brother and our peace.

**Closing blessing** (*all bless themselves and one another*)

**Leader:** May the God of peace who loves you infinitely bless you abundantly, the Creator of peace, the Christ of peace, and the Holy Spirit of peace. **Amen.**

**Closing song of peace**