

# Prayers for Peace in Israel and Palestine



**Christ under the rubble  
Christmas in Jerusalem 2023**

## **A Reading from an Angelus Homily of Pope Francis**

Today, dear brothers and sisters, I wish to add my voice to the cry which rises up with increasing anguish from every part of the world...

from the one great family which is humanity.

It is the cry for peace!

It is a cry which declares with force:

We want a peaceful world; we want to be men and women of peace ...

and we want in our society, torn apart by divisions and conflict, that peace break out!

There are so many conflicts in this world which cause me great suffering and worry, but in these days my heart is deeply wounded by what is happening in Syria and by the dramatic developments which are looming.

I appeal strongly for peace ...

How much suffering, how much devastation, how much pain has the use of arms carried in its wake ...

I think of many children who will not see the light of the future!

With utmost firmness I condemn the use of chemical weapons.

There is a judgment of God and of history upon our actions which is inescapable!

Never has the use of violence brought peace in its wake.

War begets war; violence begets violence.

What can we do to make peace in the world?

As Pope John said, it pertains to each individual to establish new relationships in human society under the mastery and guidance of justice and love.

All men and women of good will are bound by the task of pursuing peace.

I make a forceful and urgent call to the entire Catholic Church, and also to every Christian of other confessions as well as to followers of every religion and to those brothers and sister who do not believe:

Peace is a good which overcomes every barrier, because it belongs to all of humanity.

I repeat forcefully:

It is neither a culture of confrontation nor a culture of conflict which builds harmony with and between peoples, but it is a culture of encounter and a culture of dialogue; This is the only way to peace.

May the plea for peace rise up and touch the hearts of everyone so that they may lay down their weapons and let themselves be led by the desire for peace.

## **Pope Francis**

**God of mercy and compassion,**

of grace and reconciliation,

pour your power upon all your children in the Middle East:

Jews, Muslims and Christians,

Palestinians and Israelis.

Let hatred be turned into love, fear to trust, despair to hope, oppression to freedom, occupation to liberation, that violent encounters may be replaced by loving embraces, and peace and justice could be experienced by all.

## **Almighty God!**

After almost a century of mistrust and fratricide,  
you inspired Jews, Christians, and Muslims  
to take the path of reconciliation in the Middle East...

We ask for your forgiveness, O God,  
yet we find it hard to forgive our past enemies.  
May Your Words touch those who still stray  
in the wilderness of vengeful violence,  
forgetting your command to "forgive and overlook,  
till God accomplish His Purpose;  
for God hath power over all things."

**God of all creation**, bring justice and peace to our world.  
Teach us to be peacemakers. Guide us in our pursuit of  
justice and the common good. Inspire us to welcome all,  
forgive all, and love all. Direct us as we walk in the shadow  
of Jesus: the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Inspire us to  
perceive the world through your eyes, that we might find  
hope and joy each day, supportive of each other, for the  
sake of your Kingdom.

**O God Source of Life**, Creator of Peace. . . Help Your  
children, anguished and confused, to understand the futility  
of hatred and violence and grant them the ability to stretch  
across political, religious and national boundaries so they  
may confront horror and fear by continuing together in the  
search for justice, peace and truth. . . . With every fibre of  
our being we beg You, O God, to help us not to fail nor falter.

**In the name of God**, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful: Guide us on the straight way, the way of those whom thou has blessed. Help us so that we do not transgress the bounds of what is right and lawful. Take us out of deep darkness into light. Make us not bear burdens which we have no strength to bear. Help us bring about mutual affection and understanding between us. Grant us Thy forgiveness and blessings, O Our Sustainer, for with Thee is all journeys' end.

**Father of all mercies**, we pray for the families who have fled their homes in fear. We lift up the mothers and fathers who have escaped with only their children, leaving everything else behind. Their country has changed, their lives will never be the same and they are afraid of the future.

***Lord, you are the God who heals. Please bring your comfort and healing to those who are hurting.***

We lift up the communities who have taken in refugees and displaced people, even though they may be struggling themselves. We thank you for their generosity and compassion towards those in distress.

***Lord, you are the God who provides. We pray that timely help and support will reach all who are in need.***

Father, there is so much pain and conflict across the Middle East. We pray for leaders throughout the region and ask you to turn their hearts towards peace. As our leaders and those around the world consider how to respond, please grant them wisdom and insight.

***Lord Jesus, you are the Prince of Peace. We pray for an end to the violence and bloodshed, and ask you to bring a new dawn of peace across the Middle East.***

**Lord God**, we turn to you in these trying hours when conflict is a daily reality for our sisters and brothers in Israel and Palestine. We promise you to work to our utmost for peace and reconciliation in the region. But we know we cannot do it alone. We very much need the strength of your presence in our midst if we are to overcome the obstacles before us. So our prayer at this moment is that you add your support to our efforts, that you show yourself as a tower of strength in those moments when the barriers seem impassable. Together we can become beacons of hope for just and peaceful societies in the land so very dear to the peoples of your covenant.

### **Two Peoples, One Land**

Two peoples, one land,  
Three faiths, one root,  
One earth, one mother,  
One sky, one beginning, one future, one destiny,  
One broken heart, One God.

We pray to You: Grant us a vision of unity.

May we see the many in the one and the one in the many.

May you, Life of All the Worlds, Source of All Amazing Differences help us to see clearly.

Guide us gently and firmly toward each other, toward peace.

**Dear God**, give us strength

and know that there is nothing more sacred than peace.

Grant us dear God, Faith. Courage. Wisdom.

Spirit of the living God,

Come afresh on your holy land.

Help your people to restore broken relationships.

Give them patience to break down barriers of suspicion and mistrust; ability to discern personal prejudices and the courage to overcome fear. Teach them to respect each other's integrity and rights so that your kingdom may be established on earth. For Jesus' sake.

**O God of peace**, you have established Jerusalem as the Lord's House and a place of peace, and you have called on all who live there to love you and prosper. Instill in her inhabitants - Jews, Christians and Muslims - a hunger for justice and dignity and a resolve to end the distrust that culminates in violence. Grant them the wisdom and patience to build a city where Israeli and Palestinian reside in safety, free from oppression and committed to the good of all. In this endeavor, make every one of us agents of your peace, O God. Forgive us our indifference and stamp out the prejudices that lead to hatred. Fill us with the reconciling spirit of your presence. So may we join people of good will - in the Middle East and throughout the world - who raise before Jerusalem's gates their insistent Shalom and Salaam: "Peace be within your walls. . . .Peace be within you."

**O God of Hope**,

sustain those who labour for peaceful and just solutions. Inspire leaders and decision makers to choose the way of peace over the way of violence.

Deliver all your children from the threat of war and teach us to encounter one another with reverence and love.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ who came to bring to peace on earth and who abides with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.



Sustain together in undiminished hope, O God of hope, those who continue to labour with undiminished determination to build peace in the land from which, of old, out of brokenness, violence and destruction, nevertheless hope emerged for so many of faith. . . . Bless all the spiritual seed of Abraham together with the light of your Presence. For in the light of your Presence we have found a way of justice and mercy and a vision of Peace. We praise you O God, Giver of Peace, who commands us to Peace.

### **Loving God**

I see the news and I am afraid.

Violence is spiralling out of control.

I don't know what to think or feel.

The temptation to fall into hatred, or despair feels very close at hand.

Help me to remember that nothing in all creation can separate me from your love that I know in Jesus.

May your perfect love for me cast out my fear and free me to discern what is mine to do amidst the chaos of this suffering world. Amen

**God of the poor**, the widow and the orphan,  
Why do we kill husbands and parents and hope?

God of life and love and longing

Why do we woo death, hatred and despair?

We are like lost children, who want our inheritance

At the expense of our relationships.

As you wait for us to come to our senses

Forgive us that we have squandered peace



Our own and yours, for the sake of our anger and greed.  
Show us how to walk humbly, love mercy and desire justice  
for all people in all places and with all people cause our  
pride to step aside for the poorest, the most desolate and  
the displaced, because amongst them you are walking too.  
Amen

### **Oh sacred head now wounded...**

Today, as every day, you are wounded again by the sins of  
the world.

Today the wounded of Gaza cry to you and we lift our cries  
with them.

How long, we wonder, will it be until your promised reign of  
peace comes.

How long before the captives will be released.

O sacred head, when the wounds seem too hard to bear, too  
awful to see, teach us not to turn away but instead remind us  
that in you all trauma can find healing and long years of  
hatreds be transformed.

Oh, make us yours forever

And should we fainting be

Lord, let us never, never

Outlive our love for thee. Amen

### **In a world that God made good**

let us pray

for people seeing things no human being should see

for people seized by terror no human being should  
experience

for people whose depths of suffering no human being  
should know.

God of unquenchable hope  
Confirm our belief that this is not how things should be;  
Affirm our belief that things can and will be different;  
Strengthen our belief in Jesus who opens the way from  
death to resurrection, and help us, as his disciples to be your  
agents for change in our broken world. Amen

### **How can we call a land “Holy”**

when a festival site becomes a killing ground  
and a hospital becomes a grave?

Christ, have mercy  
upon the land of your birth  
and all who know it as home.

May the prophecy of Isaiah find fruition  
in this time and place:

No more shall infants live but a few days  
or the lives of older people be cut short.

No more shall weeping and distress  
echo across the plains.

No more shall children be borne for calamity.

Let houses be built and lived in.

Let vineyards be planted and enjoyed.

Let enemies come and eat together  
and the days of hurt and destruction  
be over.

In Jesus' name we pray Amen

(Isaiah 65 v.17-25)

**Oh Jerusalem**, how we long for all peoples to be gathered up under the wings of peace and yet your heart is shattered and your sides pierced by swords of grief. Beloved city, may mercy and justice walk in your streets and markets, show us how to look into each other's eyes with love and equity so that all humanity might die to violence and live to trust our neighbours once again. Amen.

### **Merciful God**

We cry out to you, in anguish and horror, at the situation in Israel - Palestine

The images we are seeing, the stories we are hearing, of homes, hospitals, places of sanctuary, healing and care, destroyed.

We know that there are so many more stories which have not yet been told, and perhaps never will be, Of precious lives lost, of grief and trauma beyond that which most of us can imagine.

**Compassionate God**, you came and dwelt among us; you know and understand the suffering of this world.

There is no place beyond your reach; you are everywhere, even in places where we fear there is no hope left.

Where we are tempted to despair, your spirit brings mercy, and justice, and healing.

You call us, again and again, in times of conflict and destruction, to be attentive to those who are most vulnerable.

Give us the compassion to weep with those who weep, and mourn with those who mourn. The discernment to recognize the limits of our own wisdom, and to avoid those actions and words which may cause further harm.

Inspire in us a renewed commitment to walk humbly with you, seeking the peace and flourishing which you desire for all of your beloved children, Amen

**Father God,**

We see images and hear stories from the unfolding violence in Israel and Palestine. Our heads are full and our hearts are heavy.

We watch the unfolding brutality and violence, sectarianism and hatred.

Lord, have mercy.

We choose not to turn away but to turn to You as we pray the words of Simon Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

Jesus, You love these places and these people. Speak Your words of eternal life over them today.

Make Your presence known.

Creator of this earth, a world with no guns or bombs or borders, You walked these lands with compassion and grace. Prince of peace, would You walk there again today.

We echo the words of psalmists and prophets: hear the cries of orphans and widows; swiftly bring justice and healing.

Heal these lands.

You died and rose from the dusty earth outside Jerusalem.

Today, may Your shed blood bring healing. May Your resurrection power bring life.

We dare to hope to see new images and hear new stories of transformation. Hatred to hospitality, swords to ploughshares and mourning to dancing.

Hear our prayers. May Your kingdom come, in Israel and Palestine as it is in Heaven. Amen.

## **Christ, Prince of Peace,**

hear our prayer and lament,

for our suffering sisters and brothers.

Our hearts are heavy as we witness lives torn apart,

as we see the faces of frightened children

and hear the pleas of those without water or food.

We pray for the dead and the grieving,

for the injured and the afraid.

We pray for courage and perseverance,

for those working for healing and to bring aid.

We pray for world leaders,

that they may strive for a just and lasting peace.

God of new beginnings,

in your ways are compassion and hope.

Open our hearts to dialogue and understanding.

Lead us all to answer your call

to become peacemakers

today, and all the days of our life. Amen.

## **God of peace and compassion,**

We pray for all impacted by the escalation in conflict in

Israel-Palestine

For all who are mourning

For all who are fearful, today, and for what may lie ahead

For all traumatised and re-traumatised by what they have experienced.

Enable us to stand in solidarity with people of peace

May your Spirit bring peace and healing to your troubled

world .Amen

**O God of all justice and peace**, we cry out to you in the midst of the pain and trauma of violence and fear which prevails in the Holy Land.

Be with those who need you in these days of suffering; we pray for people of all faiths - Jews, Muslims and Christians and for all people of the land.

While we pray to you, O Lord, for an end to violence and the establishment of peace, we also call for you to bring justice and equity to the peoples.

Guide us into your kingdom, where all people are treated with dignity and honour as your children, for to all of us you are our Heavenly Father.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**Heavenly Father,**

We bring this situation before you Lord and ask for a swift end to violence. Our hearts are breaking for the children and families in Israel and the Occupied Territories who have and continue to experience the unspeakable horror of attacks and war all around them. We pray for peace and ask that you will guide the hearts and minds of those in leadership. We especially pray for those children who have been physically and emotionally injured, and for those who have lost loved ones, that you will provide the right people with the right resources to help them, and that you will protect each person.

Lord, we ask for your wisdom for all those involved and for the wider international community. Amen.

**God of justice and compassion,**

We cry out to you for the people of Gaza, particularly for the children. We pray for an unequivocal ceasefire and the resumption of aid and food deliveries.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for the release of hostages and continue to pray for those still in captivity. We pray that those released may find healing and the restoration of hope in the months ahead. We pray for the unconditional release of all hostages held by Hamas.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We continue to pray for a safe and prosperous tomorrow for Palestinians and Israelis, a future of equal rights for all and an end to the occupation.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We lift Embrace's partners and their staff before you. We ask that they remain safe and know your peace and protection.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for ourselves, that we may resist hatred, stand for justice, and open ourselves to be channels of your peace. We ask all of this in Jesus' name. Amen.

**God of mercy,**

we lay before you the hearts, minds and bodies of all those suffering from violence in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel. Shower upon all the people of this holy land the spirit of justice and reconciliation.

And so we pray:

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.



In you, Lord, all life is connected  
and all the Earth and its land are to be cherished, not  
controlled.

Your gifts are for all.

Yet as we see the violence and hatred in the land called  
Holy,

and see the signs of climate breakdown,  
help us all to work to live in communion.

And so we pray:

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.

As people of many religions remind us:

All humanity is connected, no one is really free until all are  
free.

Help us to pray for all in Israel and all in the Palestinian  
territories.

We pray for those who live in fear of the other;

For all who consider violence to be the way forward.

We pray for all who by acting in hate dehumanise  
themselves.

And so we pray:

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.

**O God of life and love and peace,**

We witness the violence and injustice in your Holy Land  
And our hearts break.

Our hearts break for the people of Israel—

For the victims of violent attacks by Hamas

For those who live with fear and insecurity

For those who suffer from the inter-generational trauma of  
violence.

Our hearts break for Palestinians—  
For the victims of violent attacks by the Israeli military  
For those being denied water, electricity and medical care  
For those who are refugees, long displaced from their  
homes.

We especially pray—  
That weapons of war be laid down  
That walls of separation be dismantled  
That prisoners be released  
That demonizing of “the other” cease  
That political leaders seek the good of all people in Palestine  
and Israel.

**O God, whose heart breaks for the world,**  
May your justice dwell in the land  
May your righteousness abide in fruitful fields  
May the effect of righteousness be quietness and trust  
forever  
May the effect of justice be peace—enduring peace. Amen

**Lord, You said “Peace, be still,”** and the storm was stilled.  
We confess that at times, we feel overwhelmed by the  
storm. But today, we lift our eyes to you — the Maker of  
heaven and earth. And we ask for a miracle... let your peace  
fill Israel and Gaza.  
We lift our prayer to you,  
Lord, hear us.

God, let violence cease in the region. Let there be no more  
bloodshed. We know your heart breaks for those killed and

those left behind — for the orphaned child, the injured elderly, those abducted and families desperate for safety. Lord, speak into this crisis.

We lift our prayer to you,  
Lord, hear us.

We pray for those who have lost loved ones. Let your peace and love wash over them. Please protect and provide for those who have been abducted and bring them home safely. Let them be reunited with their loved ones — let them feel the comfort of their embrace.

We lift our prayer to you,  
Lord, hear us.

God, we pray that you open doors that allow food, essentials and medical supplies to reach those in need. May first responders be able to rescue the injured, comfort the grieving and help rebuild many lives.

We lift our prayer to you,  
Lord, hear us.

God, we pray for your peace and reconciliation to overcome conflict. We ask that you give wisdom and discernment to our global leaders and those in positions of power who have the ability to impact the course of this war. Help us to be bold advocates and agents of peace in our own communities.

We lift our prayer to you,  
Lord, hear us.

We pray for people scattered around the globe whose friends and family members have been caught in the crisis. We know you are with them. Help us to express your love to those affected in our communities, churches and workplaces.

We lift our prayer to you,  
Lord, hear us.

Lord, we raise Israel and Gaza to you, and pray for those suffering. We ask that you provide peace in this crisis, and protection and comfort for all those who have been impacted.

We lift our prayer to you,  
Lord, hear us. Amen.

