

A Liturgy for Peace – Diocese of Limerick (March 2022)

Opening Hymn

Peace – Bethel Music and We the Kingdom

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uW6xcmqfiY4>

We gather in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

In this liturgy we are focusing on peace. Obviously what is happening in Ukraine is to the fore in all our hearts and minds. Peace is something we are all seeking and searching for. It is something we all need, peace of mind, peace in our hearts, peace in our homes, in our workplaces, in our country and of course in our world, especially in Ukraine. While we long for peace and search for it in so many places we are often guilty of not working for peace and strengthening habits that would help us to find peace and to bring peace. Someone once said that peace isn't an absent of wars and struggles, peace is the presence of God in the midst of whatever we go through. In this short prayer we pray in a special way for peace, a sense of the presence of God in the midst of whatever we are going through. To begin we are going to listen to an instrumental piece of Ukraine's national anthem. As we do this we might breath ourselves into the moment. Sit comfortably, become aware of our breathing and just breath more deeply and mindfully as we try to find peace within and send love and peace to our brothers and sisters in Ukraine.

Ukraine National Anthem and Candles <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3t2SpQVRses>

Scripture

A Reading from St Paul's letter to the Philippians

"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done. If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."

The Word of the Lord

Story about Peace

There once was a King who offered a prize to the artist who would paint the best picture of peace. Many artists tried. The King looked at all the pictures, but there were only two he really liked and he had to choose between them.

One picture was of a calm lake in a beautiful setting with a beautiful sky. All who saw this picture thought it was a perfect picture of peace.

The other picture seemed totally different. It was an angry sea beating against a cliff. It did not look peaceful at all. But when the King looked closely, he saw nestled on a branch on the rock a mother bird had built her nest. There, in the midst of the storm, sat the mother bird on her nest.

The King chose this picture and he said, "peace does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. Peace means to be in the midst of all those things and still be calm in your heart. That is the real meaning of peace."

Sadly, there will always be storms and challenges in our lives. We are praying that God will help us to know that peace is possible in the midst of struggle and to trust that Jesus is the greatest source of peace for us all.

Prayers of the Faithful

1. Pope Francis said that 'Peace is more than absence, it is presence, God's presence in us and us bringing God's presence to others.' May growing in a sense of God's presence within us give us peace and may we share this peace with others. Lord hear us
2. For those whose homes and lives aren't peaceful. For those areas of our lives where there is division and hurt and violence. May we find healing and peace and when we can't find peace at home, may we draw on the peace of others. Lord hear us
3. For those who struggle to find peace of mind. For those who are struggling on a mental wellbeing front. May we trust that it is okay not to be okay and in these difficult moments may we have the courage reach out to others, trusting that a burden shared is a burden halved. Lord hear us
4. For the people of Ukraine who are suffering. For those who have had to leave their homes and families and beloved country. For those who are scared and alone. May those in positions of leadership strive to bring about peace and reconciliation. Lord hear us

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5. Jesus doesn't bring peace, he is our peace. May we strive to find our peace in Jesus and may we in turn become instruments of peace at home, at school and in our community. Lord hear us

Communal Prayers – together we pray

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be,

Prayer of St Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

(If we were in person we would probably offer the sign of peace or light a candle for peace at this point)

Reflection

Relief – Robert Langley

So much filled with tension
Pain and disbelief
Then the moment comes
And we breathe sighs of relief

Not that there is victory
Or even bits of joy
But survival of a spirit
That hate cannot destroy

Perhaps we will be wiser
In future steps we take
Knowing we are all connected
By decisions that we make

This little bit of progress
May start the world to heal
And put us on a path of peace
As we share in what we feel

Closing Words/Prayer

Virginia Woolf once said, "You cannot find peace by avoiding life." Ultimately peace is about entering more fully into life confident of God's presence within us.

And so we finish our prayer and we pray, Lord, gift us with your peace, a peace that surpasses all our understanding. Lead us to peace, keep us in peace and help us to be peacemakers wherever we find ourselves. And as we carry our Ukrainian brothers and sisters in our prayer, may we also carry your peace with us into the rest of this day. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

May almighty God bless us with his peace and love, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen
May we go peace to love and serve the Lord and each other. Thanks be to God.

Closing Song: See the Love by the Brilliance <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYW1xBTksEM>