

Other Prayers for Peace and Justice

"Peace for the Children of God" - by Archbishop Desmond Tutu

O God, all holy one, you are our Mother and our Father, and we are your children. Open our eyes and our hearts so that we may be able to discern your work in the universe. And be able to see Your features in every one of Your children. May we learn that there are many paths but all lead to You. Help us to know that you have created us for family, for togetherness, for peace, for gentleness, for compassion, for caring, for sharing. May we know that You want us to care for one another as those who know that they are sisters and brothers, members of the same family, Your family, the human family.

Help us to beat our swords into plowshares and our spears into pruning hooks, so that we may be able to live in peace and harmony, wiping away the tears from the eyes of those who are less fortunate than ourselves. And may we know war no more, as we strive to be what You want us to be: Your children. Amen.

(by Desmond M. Tutu, Former Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa; reprinted from the Uniya Jesuit Social Justice Centre in Australia - www.uniya.org)
www.uniya.org/education/peace_prayers.html

"Prayer, Not Despair" - in South Africa (and elsewhere)

"Toward the end of November, I was in a place called Mogopa in the Western Transvaal. We went to pray with the people of that settlement because they were going to be forcibly removed from their homes by the South African government. As I stood there, watching the helplessness of those people who were so vulnerable, so defenseless against this powerful, ruthless government, I asked myself the question, 'Where is the God of justice, mercy and love?' As I saw the people breaking down their homes, I was overcome with nameless and deep despair. Isn't there anything else we could do - as we have been doing all night long - except pray with these people, assuring them that God is just, is love, is on their side?"

"Then I thought about Kaj Munk (Danish Lutheran pastor executed by the Gestapo in 1944), and I knew: Sometimes there is nothing else the church can do. Sometimes there is nothing else that the church must do than to pray with the people, to assure them that God is not aloof but present in their situation, in their pain... sharing their pain and despair... with them - not to bless the lie that was happening to them, but to remind them that the truth that is being crushed to earth shall rise again. But this is subversive piety, which always leads to the resistance of evil, not because of hatred, but because of the protesting presence of the loving God."

(by Allan A. Boesak, South African antiapartheid activist and onetime leader of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches; quoted in *Peacemaking: Day by Day*, Volume 2, Pax Christi USA, 1989, pp. 56-57; published by Pax Christi USA, the national Catholic peace movement, www.paxchristiusa.org, and used with their permission.

"Open My Eyes" - in South Africa (and Elsewhere) by Alan Paton

"O Lord, open my eyes that I may see the need of others. Open my ears that I may hear their cries. Open my heart so that they need not be without succor. Let me not be afraid to defend the weak because of the anger of the strong, nor afraid to defend the poor because of the anger of the rich. Show me where love and hope and faith are needed, and use me to bring them to these places. Open my eyes and ears that I may, this coming day, be able to do some work of peace for Thee."

(by Alan Paton, South African author (*Cry the Beloved Country*, 1948) and political leader, from United Methodist Hymnal #456, <http://www.bwcumc.org/content/discipleship-adventure-detail-page-celebrate?q=content/let-us-pray>; and quoted in *Peacemaking: Day by Day*, Volume 2, Pax Christi USA, 1989, p. 48; published by Pax Christi USA, the national Catholic peace movement, www.paxchristiusa.org, and used with their permission.

"Don't Just Do Something, Sit There... and Pray" - by Thomas Merton

"There is a pervasive form of contemporary violence to which the idealist fighting for peace by nonviolent methods most easily succumbs: activism and overwork. The rush and pressure of modern life are a form, perhaps the most common form, of its innate violence. To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to surrender to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything is to succumb to violence. The frenzy of the activist neutralizes one's work for peace. It destroys the fruitfulness of one's work, because it kills the root of inner wisdom which makes work fruitful."

(by Thomas Merton, from *Confessions of a Guilty Bystander*, quoted in *Peacemaking: Day by Day*, Volume 1, Pax Christi USA, 1989, p. 140; published by Pax Christi USA, the national Catholic peace movement, www.paxchristiusa.org, and used with their permission.

"Pray to See, Hear and Serve" - in Brazil (and Elsewhere) by Dom Helder Camara

"Are we so deaf that we do not hear a loving God warning us that humanity is in danger of committing suicide? Are we so selfish that we do not hear the just God demanding that we do all we can to stop injustice from suffocating the world and driving it to war? Are we so alienated that we can worship God at our ease in luxurious temples which are often empty in spite of all their liturgical pomp, and fail to see, hear and serve God where God is present and where God requires our presence, among humankind, the poor, the oppressed, the victims of injustice in which we ourselves are often involved?"

(by Dom Helder Camara, former Archbishop of Recife in Brazil, quoted in *Peacemaking: Day by Day*, Volume 1, Pax Christi USA, 1989, p. 72; published by Pax Christi USA, the national Catholic peace movement, www.paxchristiusa.org, and used with their permission.

"If We Listen to the Voice of God..." - in Brazil (and Elsewhere) by Dom Helder Camara

"We must have no illusions. We must not be naïve. If we listen to the voice of God, we make our choice - get out of ourselves and fight nonviolently for a better world. We must not expect to find it easy. We shall not walk on roses. People will not throng to hear us and applaud, and we shall not always be aware of divine protection. If we are to be pilgrims of justice and peace, we must expect the desert."

(by Dom Helder Camara, former Archbishop of Recife in Brazil, quoted in *Peacemaking: Day by Day*, Volume 1, Pax Christi USA, 1989, p. 17; published by Pax Christi USA, the national Catholic peace movement, www.paxchristiusa.org, and used with their permission.