

For Ceasefire and Peace in Gaza and Israel



Opening Prayer

O God, Source of Life, Creator of Peace. . . we come to You, seeking your mercy and compassion. We pray that your Spirit will inspire the hearts of those who are now at war among Israel, Gaza, and Palestine. We pray that a cease fire will be initiated, and peaceful solutions will provide for the well-being and safety of all in these regions. We are anguished and so saddened with the hateful and violent actions that illicit horror and fear in the hearts of innocent victims. O God, we believe that through your power, the light of Christ will shine among all people, radiating peace and justice, stretching across all political, religious, and national boundaries. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Let us listen to these reflections with prayerful hearts *(readings provided on the following pages)*

Reading #1 - Pope Francis

Reading #2 - Rabbi Irwin Keller, Sonoma County, CA

Reading #3 - The Leadership Team of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

Intentions: We pray with hopeful hearts as we place these intentions before our God:

...for an immediate ceasefire and an end to the violence in Gaza and Israel. **Response:** We pray with hopeful hearts.

...for world leaders with influence in the regions, that their decisions will lead to lasting peace. **Response:** We pray with hopeful hearts.

...for all victims of violence who are suffering as a result of this conflict, that God's healing power will sustain them. **Response:** We pray with hopeful hearts.

Please add your own intentions.

Closing Prayer

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. Amen.

Closing Song: Let There Be Peace on Earth

Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on earth
The peace that was meant to be.
With God our Creator
We are family
Let me walk with each other
In perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me,
Let this be the moment now.
With ev'ry step I take
Let this be my solemn vow;
To take each moment and live
Each moment in peace eternally.
Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me.



Let us listen to these reflectors with prayerful hearts

(Use as they are helpful)

Reading #1

Pope Francis expressed his “very great concern” at the armed clashes in Gaza and Israel and made an urgent, passionate appeal “to those with the responsibility” to bring a cease-fire and “to walk the path of peace” with the help of the international community. He also denounced the killing of children in this conflict as “terrible and unacceptable.

“In these days, violent armed clashes have taken over between the Gaza Strip and Israel, and risk degenerating into a spiral of death and destruction,”

“Let us pray incessantly so that Israelis and Palestinians can find the road of dialogue and forgiveness, to become patient builders of peace and of justice, opening themselves, step by step, to a common hope and to a coexistence as brothers and sisters.”

Reading #2

POEM: Taking Sides

California Rabbi Irwin Keller pleads for unconditional peace. 12-1-23

Today I am taking sides.

I am taking the side of Peace.

Peace, which I will not abandon even when its voice is drowned out by hurt and hatred, bitterness of loss, cries of right and wrong.

I am taking the side of Peace

whose name has barely been spoken in this winnerless war.

I will hold Peace in my arms,

and share my body's breath, lest Peace be added to the body count.

I will call for de-escalation even when I want nothing more than to get even.

I will do it in the service of Peace.

I will make a clearing in the overgrown thicket of cause and effect

so Peace can breathe for a minute and reach for the sky.

I will do what I must to save the life of Peace.

I will breathe through tears. I will swallow pride. I will bite my tongue.

I will offer love without testing for deservingness.

So don't ask me to wave a flag today unless it is the flag of Peace.
Don't ask me to sing an anthem unless it is a song of Peace.
Don't ask me to take sides unless it is the side of Peace.

Reading #3

From the Institute Leadership Team of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
10-13-2023

We are deeply saddened by the horrific attack on innocent civilians in Israel by Hamas, and the indiscriminate bombing of Gaza by Israel, that already have caused thousands of civilian deaths. Our prayers are with the victims and families devastated by this explosion of brutality.

Our Critical Concerns of nonviolence and women and children demand that we speak out. In all these conflicts, women and children are the most vulnerable and the primary victims of the violence and inhumanity. Human life is sacred, and we pray for all those held hostage by Hamas, and those living in Gaza who are threatened by the Israeli government's decision to cut off their access to water, fuel and electricity.

We condemn all violence and war, which only fuels more violence and represents what Popes John Paul II and Francis lamented as "a defeat for humanity." We urge all parties to continue to participate in good faith in the ongoing diplomatic efforts to end the violence and avoid the escalation of military actions. All world leaders must step back from the brink in this never-ending cycle of bloodshed and work towards an immediate ceasefire.

We cannot allow ourselves to become numb to the constant cycle of attacks and reprisal. These are our sisters and brothers; we share a common faith.

All are children of God, deserving of a chance to live their lives in peace.

In Mercy,

The Institute Leadership Team