

Vigil for Peace – 21 September 2007

Welcome to a time of meditation in five movements or stations which has been prepared for the International Day of Prayer for Peace. Two formal times of prayer and meditation are planned at 8.30 and 12.15, the gathering point is at the foot of the African cross in the main entrance foyer. You can however, also participate other times of the day, moving from the African cross to the stations in the chapel.

The **first movement**, *gathering before God to pray for peace*, is at the foot of the African cross in the entrance foyer.

The **second movement**, *listening to the call of Christ*, is in the chapel standing in the waters of baptism in front of the mosaic of Christ's baptism.

The **third movement**, *contemplation and confession*, is in front of the icon of St Stephen.

The **fourth movement**, *forgiveness and transformation*, is in the Coventry cross side-chapel.

The **fifth movement**, *becoming living stones*, is in the rainbow area.

We hope that the information on this sheet will help you as you move, reflect and pray from one station to the next, either alone or as a group. Others may arrive before or after you and be at different stages of their journey of praying for peace.

1. Gathering before God to pray for peace

We gather at the foot of the African cross, trusting that God, one in three and three in one, will hear our prayer. As we gather we pray through the psalms, we sing and we look upon the images of joy, of hope and of violence carved into the face of the cross.

As a symbol of violence each of us is invited to pick up a stone from the foot of the cross.

Psalm 145.14-19, 21

The Lord is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

The Lord is good to all,
and his compassion is over all that he has made.

All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord,
and all your faithful shall bless you.

They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom,
and tell of your power,

to make known to all people your mighty deeds,
and the glorious splendour of your kingdom.

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

The Lord is faithful in all his words,
and gracious in all his deeds.

The Lord upholds all who are falling,
and raises up all who are bowed down.

The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food in due season.

You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing.
The Lord is just in all his ways, and kind in all his doings.
The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.
My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord,
and all flesh will bless his holy name for ever and ever.
Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning is now and shall be forever, world without end Amen.

As we gather to pray for peace we contemplate the burden of war and violence in our world. As the beginning of our prayerful journey you are invited to take up a stone as a symbol of violence and we sing “Senzenina” What have we done?

Sing :- Senzenia “ What have we done ?”

2. The call of Christ ~ Blessed are the peacemakers

As we stand in the waters of baptism at the entrance to the chapel and look towards the mosaic of Christ’s baptism in the Jordan we seek to open our ears to Christ’s call to us. The Beatitudes will be read, silence will be kept as we reflect on what being baptized with Christ may mean for our own commitment as we pray for peace.

The Beatitudes (Matthew 5 3-12)

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Sing ~ Jesus Christ is waiting (verses 1 and 5)

3. Contemplation and confession

We remember the story of St Stephen as we contemplate this icon, the religious intolerance which led to his stoning. We are invited to reflect not only on the wounded victims of war but also to remember those sent to war against their will and those suffering violent oppression. In praying for our enemies we recognize too the “enemy” we may be to others, the stones we hold in our own hands, the violence we do to others with our words ... we confess our sin.

Sing ~ Agios o Theos

Prayer of confession

Sing ~ Agios o Theos

4. Forgiveness and transformation

We gather to listen to words of forgiveness in the side chapel. The Coventry cross on the altar is a powerful symbol of transformation and reconciliation, the cross is formed from pieces of bombs which fell on Coventry and Dresden during the second world war. As we listen to listen to words of forgiveness and transformation from the Bible, we lay down our weapons, our stones. Forgiveness transforms our heart of stone, in Christ God calls us to be living stones.

Come to Christ, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (*1 Peter 2.4-5*)

Silence

For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you. (*Isaiah 54.10*)

Silence

He shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid; (*Micah 4. 3-4*)

We lay down our stones and rise as forgiven and transformed people to sing as we make our way to the rainbow chapel.

Sing ~ El Senyor és la meva força

5. Becoming living stones

We remember the rainbow is the sign of God's promise and covenant with all humanity. In humility and simplicity we offer our prayers for peace, praying for the building of God's peaceable kingdom, committing ourselves to becoming living stones of peace ...in our families, work places, societies and world.

After formal prayer and the blessing you are invited to take a brush and paint the word peace in your own language as part of our commitment to peace. Please paint on the paper provided!

Prayer

Silence and time for free prayer

The Lord's prayer – said by each in their own language.

Blessing

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God.