

We start our prayer with the Sign of the Cross

GUIDE: Fasting and Prayer for Peace

Pope Francis made a heartfelt appeal “to everyone, believers and nonbelievers alike” to make March 2—Ash Wednesday—“a day of prayer and fasting for peace.”

“My heart aches greatly at the worsening situation in eastern Ukraine...Like me, many people all over the world are feeling anguish and concern. Once again the peace of all is threatened by partisan interests. I would like to appeal to those with political responsibility to examine their consciences seriously before God, who is the God of peace and not of war; who is the Father of all, not just of some, who wants us to be brothers and not enemies. I pray that all the parties involved refrain from any action that would cause even more suffering to the people, destabilizing coexistence between nations and bringing international law into disrepute.

And now I would like to appeal to everyone, believers and non-believers alike. Jesus taught us that the diabolical senselessness of violence is answered with God’s weapons, with prayer and fasting. I invite everyone to make next 2 March, Ash Wednesday, a Day of Fasting for Peace. I encourage believers in a special way to dedicate themselves intensely to prayer and fasting on that day.

May the Queen of Peace preserve the world from the madness of war.” (Pope Francis, February 23rd 2022)

Could we respond collectively to Pope Francis appeal by deciding on a common prayer to say on Ash Wednesday?
(Spiritual Awakening - Sr Graça)

Hymn: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7O4x0MljasU>

Psalm 26 (27) – I - The courage of faith

Antiphon: The Lord is my light and my help; whom shall I fear?

The Lord is my light and my help; whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

When evildoers draw near, uttering slanders against me,
my adversaries and foes, they shall stumble and fall.

Though an army encamp against me, my heart would not fear;
though war break out against me, even then would I trust.

There is one thing I ask of the Lord, for this I long,
to live in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life,
to savour the sweetness of the Lord, to behold his temple.

For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble;
He hides me in the shelter of his tent; on a rock he sets me safe.

And now my head shall be lifted up
above my enemies round about me;
and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make melody to the Lord.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

Antiphon: The Lord is my light and my help; whom shall I fear?

Psalm 22 – Put your trust in the Lord

Antiphon: Fresh and green are the pastures where the Lord give me repose, alleluia

The Lord is my shepherd;
There is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me,
To revive my drooping spirit.

He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name.
If I should walk in the valley of darkness
no evil would I fear.
You are there with your crook and your staff;
With these you give me comfort.

You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing.

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

Antiphon: Fresh and green are the pastures where the Lord give me repose, alleluia

Canticle: I Chron 29:10-13

Antiphon: Lord our God, we praise the splendour of your name

Blessed are you O Lord,
the God of Israel our father,
for ever and ever.

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power,
and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty;
for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours;

Yours is the kingdom, O Lord,
and you are exalted as head above all.

Both riches and honour come from you,
and you rule over all.
In your hand are power and might;
And in your hand it is to make great and to give
strength to all.

And now we thank you, our God,
And praise your glorious name.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

Antiphon: Lord our God, we praise the splendour of your name

Reader: A reading from the Holy Gospel according Mark 10:17-27

Jesus was setting out on a journey when a man ran up, knelt before him and put this question to him, 'Good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: You shall not kill; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not give false witness; You shall not defraud; Honour your father and mother.' And he said to him, 'Master, I have kept all these since my earliest days.' Jesus looked steadily at him and he was filled with love for him, and he said, 'You need to do one thing more. Go and sell what you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' But his face fell at these words and he went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth.

Jesus looked round and said to his disciples, 'How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!' The disciples were astounded by these words, but Jesus insisted, 'My children,' he said to them, 'how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for someone rich to enter the kingdom of God.' They were more astonished than ever, saying to one another, 'In that case, who can be saved?' Jesus gazed at them and said, 'By human resources it is impossible, but not for God: because for God everything is possible.'

The Gospel of the Lord

Pondering on today's Gospel

- Have we ever asked the same existential question about everlasting life that the man asked to Jesus in today's Gospel? Searching for the perpetual value of life is like a man who *sells everything* and buys the field with precious pearls, as reported in Matthew 13:46.
- Knowledge of the commandments is not enough as it is not enough to practice them.
- The challenge that the man faced when wanting to know about eternal life is our challenge: "*Go and sell what you own and give the money to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me*".
- Heart to heart on the eyes – free to choose: "Jesus looked steadily at him and he was filled with love for him; Jesus looked round and said to his disciples"
- The impossible turned possible: "By human resources it is impossible, but not for God: because for God everything is possible." To be with God who gives eternal life is the gift of putting Jesus at the centre of our lives

From Saint Daniel Comboni writings

Are you willing to follow Christ's way to the cross, or find a wider way instead? Keep St Daniel's words in mind as you pray: *God is mercy and love. I "keep my eyes fixed on Jesus Christ, loving him tenderly and seeking always to understand more fully the meaning of a God who died on the cross for the salvation of souls"*.

Intercessions

1. Lord Jesus, we ask that the leaders of the nations may work together in building peace among countries and continents, we pray particularly for peace in Ukraine at this tragic moment, Lord hear us.
2. We pray for all people of good will who are helping to alleviate the suffering of refugees and displaced people and for all humanitarian workers in the front line, Lord hear us..
3. We pray for health and protection for our family members, relatives and friends, we ask the Lord to guide them towards the fulfilment of their heart's desire, Lord hear us.

Spontaneous Prayers Our Father... A verse each.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord our God, as we come to the closing of this day, we thank you that we have seen yet another day pass, and you have kept us and blessed us from sunrise to sunset. Give us your blessing with a peaceful night and continue to guide our steps each day of our life. We ask this through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

Invocation 2021

Mary, dwelling place of New Life,
Help us to nurture God's newness for us.