

PRAYER SERVICE: PEACE ON EARTH

Leader: In his 1963 encyclical, *Peace on Earth*, Pope John XXIII addressed all people of good will around the world who desire peace built on justice. Peace comes from a global order “founded on truth, built according to justice, vivified and integrated by charity, and put into practice.”

All: Help us on our journey of faith as we open our hearts to the teachings of our Church, including the teachings on human rights and responsibilities.

Reader 1: As Blessed John XXIII declared, respect for the human rights of all human beings is the basis for authentic justice and peace. “First we must speak of man’s rights. Man has the right to live. He has the right to bodily integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life, particularly food, clothing, shelter, medical care, rest, and, finally, the necessary social services. In consequence, he has the right to be looked after in the event of ill health; disability stemming from his work; widowhood; old age; enforced unemployment; or whenever through no fault of his own he is deprived of the means of livelihood.” (*Peace on Earth*, 8)

All: Guide us to recognize the basic rights of every human being and our responsibility to support these rights to basic social needs for all members of the global community

Reader 2: Additional rights include “a right to freedom in investigating the truth, to freedom of speech and . . . the right to be accurately informed about public events.” All people have the right to free association and to take responsible roles in the political life of their country. All people have a right to practice their religion freely. (*Peace on Earth*, 12, 13, 14,15)

All: Guide us to be in solidarity with those who struggle for their rights as citizens and to speak out for them.

Reader 3: Humans have a right to education and to pursue their own vocations. All people have economic rights, and their rights as workers must be respected. (*Peace on Earth*, 18-22)

All: Guide us to affirm the right to education and the rights of workers in our country and in every country so humans may develop their talents and skills and use these for a fulfilling life and for the common good.

Reader 4: “Every human being has the right to freedom of movement. . .He must be permitted to emigrate to other countries and take up residence there. The fact that he is a citizen of a particular State does not deprive him of membership in the human family, nor of citizenship in that universal society, the common, world-wide fellowship of men.” (*Peace on Earth*, 25)

All: Guide us to respect the human rights of immigrants and join our Bishops in their call for immigration reform.

Leader: Let us reflect on Blessed John XXIII’s call for the recognition of human rights and responsibilities as the basis of true peace.

[Pause for a moment of reflection]

Reader 5: We also remember Blessed John XXIII's call to individual nation states to uphold human rights, to create just internal systems and structures that promote the common good and that lessen the inequities among citizens, and to ensure that all have the basic necessities to live with dignity. (*Peace on Earth*, Section II)

All: May justice become a reality in all countries in our troubled world.

Reader 6: Blessed John XXIII challenged all countries to seek right relationships with other countries, to encourage an end to the arms race, to give aid without seeking dominance, to begin to correct the imbalances and inequities between countries, so concern for the common good moves beyond borders. (*Peace on Earth*, Section III).

All: May all countries seek peaceful and just relations with other nations.

Reader 7: *Peace on Earth* ends with a call for the importance of a single global community, a stronger United Nations, and a deeper understanding of the universal common good.

All:

We long for peace in our troubled world,
 And the memory of Pope John XXIII's words
 Are both a blessing and a challenge to us.
 To be true peacemakers, we are called
 To follow the path of justice
 And to see ourselves as co-creators
 Of a global common good.

We must continue to affirm
 That every human being is created
 In the image of our God,
 And to recognize this
 Means we must cherish human rights,
 Without exception, for every child of God.

Move us, Giver of Life, from complacency
 To active commitment, so we may
 See clearly what is happening in the world;
 So we may reflect carefully
 How our faith calls us to respond,
 And so we may act as true disciples
 Participating in the coming of justice
 And peace on earth.

Amen.