

## **Prayers For the International Day of Peace**

September 21 has been the International Day of Peace since 1981 when the UN declared it so. The World Council of Churches also declared the 21<sup>st</sup> a day of prayer for peace. In 1982 the first ever worldwide moment of silence was observed. Many people around the world continue to mark Peace Day with a moment of silence for prayer and meditation for peace. Each year the UN names a theme or focus for the observance. This year it is "End racism. Build Peace." UN Secretary-General António Guterres reminds us we all "have a responsibility to contribute to tranquility and unity for a better world for all." "Racism robs people of their rights and dignity. It inflames inequalities and mistrust. And it pushes people apart, at a time when we should be coming together, as one human family, to repair our fractured world." Spend time in prayer. Take part in a community gathering, erect or rededicate a Peace Pole. Spend time getting to know the people who live in your community – especially those you do not know well. Educate yourself about the realities of racism. Pray and work for peace.

- **Victims of Gun Violence** – 32,190 people died in gun violence this year, including 1,209 children. 28,839 people have been injured including 3,281 children. There have been 496 mass shootings in 2022.
- **Migrants & Refugees** – especially those who are exploited by smugglers or politicians. Remember those who are returned to their countries where they will continue to face abuse & death.
- **All those dealing with natural disasters. Among them:** excessive heat, drought, fires, flooding, earthquakes, & storms. A third of Pakistan is under water from flooding & are dealing with extreme poverty and hunger. Turkey is experiencing flooding. Japan, Alaska, & the Caribbean are dealing with storms.
- **Countries Dealing with Major Political and/or Economic Upheaval** including Sri Lanka, Venezuela, the Philippines, South Africa, Nigeria, South Sudan, Myanmar, Democratic Republic of Congo, Columbia, Syria, Afghanistan. . .
- **Women & Girls** – who are treated as second class citizens in many countries including Afghanistan.
- **Ukraine where the war continues** as does hunger, the risk of epidemic disease, & the risk of nuclear disaster. At least 8 million people are still refugees outside their country.
- **The continuing COVID Pandemic.** Some states have dropped reporting requirements so official case numbers are probably low. A new vaccine booster covering current strains, is out. Long COVID is a continuing problem.



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