

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 21st 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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