

## Pray for Peace with Old St. Joseph's Church, Philadelphia, PA

### Week #2

We gather to pray for peace in the world, particularly for a swift end to the conflict between Israel and Gaza, for the release of all the hostages taken on October 7, for an immediate and definite end to the war in Ukraine, for peace in Africa, Asia, and all the nations of the world. And as we pray for peace, we also pray for an end to terrorism, for an end to the slaughter of civilians, and an end to the use of civilians as shields of war. We pray for a time when we can all live in peace with one another.

**Reflection:** Adapted from *A Prayer for Ukraine*, by Kayla Craig

*O God of peace, our hearts are heavy*  
And our brains can barely keep up with the breaking news.  
We don't know what to say or what to do in a world so wounded.  
So we come to you with hearts heavy for  
All who sit in the crossfires of violence and acts of war.

*O God of peace, be with the people of Ukraine, Israel, and Gaza.*  
With the mothers who carry babies to subway shelters, or away from destroyed homes.  
With the fathers who hold their heads in their hands.  
With the children who absorb the traumas.  
Of violent acts of powerful men.

*O God of peace, we don't know the words to pray*  
For a warring world and all who are vulnerable in it.  
We don't pretend to know the extent of the damages  
Or what tomorrow (or today) will bring.  
But we know that you are a God of peace  
And we can't bomb our way to shalom.

*O God of peace, comfort the crying and heal the hurt.*  
Tend the aching and soothe the fearful.  
Make us instruments of your peace  
Creating a sacred symphony where  
Rhythms of grace are danced upon  
And evil has lost its sting, now and forevermore.  
*O God of peace, hear our prayer.*

**Music:** [Let There be Peace on Earth at 9/11 Memorial, Youth Choir, 2015](#)

### **Blessing:**

Lord Jesus Christ, You said to your apostles, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.” Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your church and the world’s people, and grant us peace and unity in accordance with your will. We pray in a very special way for our brothers and sisters in Ukraine and Russia; Israel and Gaza; the many warring nations in Africa; and all peoples engaged in war and armed conflict. We pray for the swift release of the remaining Israeli hostages, and for civilians whose homes, families, and livelihoods have been destroyed in Gaza, Israel, and Ukraine. Bless all those caught in the vise of war.

Holy Spirit, visit the hearts and minds of those leaders who have chosen the path of war and terrorism for their people, to enlighten their souls and soften their hearts with the seeds of love instead of wrath. Open our eyes and the eyes of all people to see our similarity with one another, our common humanity, and not our differences. Lord, Bless us as family – as brothers and sisters, as your sons and daughters. And help us to see that the road to peace begins with each one of us.

**Music:** [Make Me a Channel of Your Peace](#) performed by Susan Boyle