

CULTIVATING COMPASSION: MOVING TOWARD PEACE

Community Gathering



Leader: Welcome to this gathering celebrating twenty-five years since spiritual leaders from around the world assembled for the first time in Assisi, Italy to pray for peace. We are joined by the global learning community of Spiritual Directors International, whose Coordinating Council is currently meeting in Boston to commemorate this historic event.

First, let us pause for a moment of silence, remembering that peace begins within our own hearts.

[Pause.]

Reader A: Let us begin with the words of the Dalai Lama, spiritual leader of the Tibetan people:

“As human beings we all want to be happy and free
from misery.
We have learned that the key to happiness is inner
peace.
The greatest obstacles to inner peace are disturbing
emotions such as
anger and attachment, fear and suspicion,
while love and compassion, a sense of universal
responsibility
are the sources of peace and happiness.”

Leader: Together, we pray for a release of anger and fear in our hearts and minds, giving over our struggles, our attachments, and our deepest desires.
[Pause.] Also, we pray to embrace love and compassion, giving way to peace.

[Light candle.]

May this candle remind us that we too are illuminated, that we too are vessels of light, sent to cultivate compassion in our families and communities.

Reader B: Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke repeatedly about the “beloved community” while engaging in the civil rights movement. In *The Role of the Church in Facing the Nation’s Chief Moral Dilemma*, he says: “But the end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the beloved community. It is this type of spirit and this type of love that can transform opposers into friends. The type of love that I stress here is not *eros*, a sort

of esthetic or romantic love; not *philia*, a sort of reciprocal love between personal friends; but it is *agape* which is understanding goodwill for all... It is an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return.”

Leader: Empowered by the peace we cultivate within our hearts, may we be bold in realizing this ‘beloved community.’ Let us pray for the grace of forgiveness to transform opposers into friends as we cultivate peace in our families, communities, and countries.

At this time, I invite each of you to name a place in your life where you seek to cultivate peace, be it a relationship, a part of your daily routine, or how you engage with people who are not yet your friends.

[Pause, allowing for communal sharing.]

Leader: We ask you, Holy One, for strength and encouragement as we cultivate peace in our lives by actively turning toward peace. Help us to choose peace. Help us to be peace. Help us to continually turn toward peace.

Reader C: In closing, let us turn now to the words of Rumi, a thirteenth century Sufi Muslim:

“If you could untie your wings
and free your soul of jealousy,

you and everyone around you
would fly up like doves.”

[Pause.]

Leader: We pray together, in the name all that is holy.

All: Amen.

Leader: May we move into the next activities of our days and evenings filled with peace, ready to share peace in our world.

[Note: You may choose to sing a concluding song together. Please visit www.sdiworld.org for more resources.]

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Resources for Community Gathering



Music Resources:

Dona Nobis Pacem:

<http://bit.ly/SDIDonaNobisPacem>

The Jewish-Arab Peace Song:

<http://bit.ly/SDIJewishArabPeaceSong>

Music by Yusef Islam (Cat Stevens):

Peace Train <http://bit.ly/SDIYusefIslam>

Music by Peter Mayer:

Earth Town Square <http://bit.ly/SDIPeterMayerEarthTownSquare>

My Soul <http://bit.ly/SDIPeterMayerMySoul>

Music by David Roth:

Earth <http://bit.ly/SDIDavidRoth>

A Peace Song: Selam Salam Shalom Shlomo:

<http://bit.ly/SDIPeaceSong>

Peace Prayer Resources:

“Peace” by Jennifer (Jinks) Hoffmann:

<http://bit.ly/SDIJenniferHoffmann>

Prayers for Peace:

<http://bit.ly/SDIPrayersforPeace>

Quotes on Peace:

<http://bit.ly/SDIQuotesOnPeace>

World Religion Prayers for Peace:

<http://bit.ly/SDIWorldReligionPrayersforPeace>