

**ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI**  
**IN THE**  
**PEACE PRAYER & OUR FATHER**



Luke 11:1-2 “Lord, teach us how to pray... And he said to them,  
“When you pray, say: ‘Father...’”

St. Francis is now where we hope to be one day, at the eternal banquet of heaven. Let us pray as he prayed, allowing his faith life to be our guide. Let us ask St Francis to take us into Christ’s school of prayer by meditating on prayers that welled up in his soul.

In 1912, an anonymous writer, attributed to Francis The **Peace Prayer: Lord Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace**, from which we have the hymn *Make Me a Channel of your Peace*.

For Francis, the **spreading of peace**, the giving of peace, the imparting of Christ’s peace, is another name for the coming of the kingdom of heaven. The heavenly Jerusalem is the city of peace, Shalom. The petition for peace, the giving of peace meant a great deal to Francis. He had been a soldier in a terrible battle, been taken as a prisoner of war, became ill in prison, and returned to Assisi a broken man.

Christ called him and chose him to be a disciple for peace marked with the cross of Christ through whom God had reconciled to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Francis instructed his brothers to do the same, to **greet others with a word of peace**, to take the Lord’s command as their rule of life:

“Whatever house you enter, first say,  
‘Peace be to this house!’

And if a son of peace is there,  
Your peace shall rest upon him;  
But if not, it shall return to you.” (Luke 10:5-6)

In his prayer: “**Make me**” – the petition *honours God*, the creator of heaven and earth, since we are made out of nothing we cannot petition God to make us before our conception in our mother’s womb. We cannot will our own existence. But after we have been given life, we may petition - - *make me*. We can freely ask to be transformed, to be recreated in Christ, to be made God’s instrument, God’s servant.

‘**Instrument**’ may sound strange, thinking of a lifeless tool, but God uses free-living agents as His instruments. They have died to their own selfish desires and risen to new life in Christ. *United* to God in love, *surrendered* to his holy will, *receptive* to God’s Holy Spirit; these instruments share in God’s abundant life that overflows through them to others. *Make me an instrument of your peace*.

The full text of the Peace Prayer has three parts.

1<sup>st</sup>, the speaker, let’s name him Francis, **petitions for the gift of being used as Christ’s instrument.**

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me bring love.  
Where there is offence, let me bring pardon.  
Where there is discord, let me bring union.  
Where there is error, let me bring truth.  
Where there is doubt, let me bring faith.  
Where there is despair, let me bring hope.  
Where there is darkness, let me bring your light.  
Where there is sadness, let me bring joy.”

We can easily compare this prayer to the opening petitions of the Lord’s prayer.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

The Father’s Kingdom is a place of love, pardon, unity, truth, light and joy.

Francis wants to be an instrument for the coming of THIS kingdom.

**Peace** is the very meaning of the tranquility of order that joins heaven to earth, uniting then the will of God to form one kingdom. Thy kingdom come.

The repeated petition, '*let me bring*', announces a coming, an advent, an intervention. The Francis who prays this prayer wishes to be like the angels on Christmas eve who announce to the shepherds:

*I bring you tidings of great joy ... peace on earth.* Lk2:10

The intervention of the Prince of Peace in one's life may be something seemingly small, almost unnoticeable, a tiny seed, a little word or deed of kindness, that changes a situation.

Sometimes the petition is translated: *let me sow*

*Where there is hatred let me sow love.*

The sower went out to sow his seed. We too are invited to sow God's seeds.

**2<sup>nd</sup> part of Peace Prayer:** closely resembles a known saying of Giles of Assisi, one of Francis' close companions. The pattern changes. The speaker begs the Lord to guide him so that he does not ask for the wrong favours, but for the right ones.

*"O Master, let me not seek so much  
To be consoled as to console,  
To be understood as to understand  
To be loved as to love."*

This second part, which seeks an ordering of our priorities and desires, may be compared to the petition in the Lord's Prayer for our daily bread.

*Give us this day, our daily bread.*

As Jesus instructs his disciples, the heavenly Father knows how to give good gifts to his children. He does not give a serpent to a child who begs for a fish, a scorpion to one who asks for an egg. *He teaches his children to ask for the good gift, the Holy Spirit, whom God wishes to give them.*

*"Let me not seek so much to be loved as to love."*

**3<sup>rd</sup>, last part of the Peace Prayer**, Francis delivers a mysterious resolution of seeming opposites.

“For it is in giving that one receives,  
It is in self-forgetting that one finds,  
It is in pardoning that one is pardoned,  
It is in dying that one is born to eternal life.”

This last part of the prayer draws inspiration from petitions of the Lord’s Prayer.

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.

The joining in the prayer of these opposites, of giving and receiving, losing and finding, pardoning and being pardoned, dying and rising **symbolize the very meaning of Christ’s peace as a reconciliation only grace can affect.**

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God. Mt. 5:9

Together with St Francis let us pray: **Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.**

## PRAYER GUIDE

Dedicate 20 minutes each day to prayer, preferably at the same time each day.

1. Pray one “Our Father”
2. Slowly pray “The Peace Prayer,” focusing on each petition
  - ◆ Select one petition from “The Peace Prayer” to repeat throughout the day at various times.
  - ◆ Select a new petition to repeat each day.
3. Pray the “Our Father” again, focusing on each petition

## The Peace Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me bring love.  
Where there is offence, let me bring pardon.  
Where there is discord, let me bring union.  
Where there is error, let me bring truth.  
Where there is doubt, let me bring faith.  
Where there is despair, let me bring hope.  
Where there is darkness, let me bring your light.  
Where there is sadness, let me bring joy.

O Master, let me not seek as much  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in self-forgetting that we find,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

## OFFERING YOUR WEEK OF PRAYER

*At the conclusion of the week of prayer, offer both the fruits and the struggles of your prayer to the Lord.*

At the Sunday Eucharist or as part of an act of spiritual communion, offer your week of prayer to Christ with the following prayer (or one you yourself compose):

Jesus, my only desire:  
I thank you for the gift of prayer.  
You know my heart:  
accept from me my love and devotion;  
take from me my fear and my doubt;  
restore in me my trust in you;  
and listen kindly to all my prayers.

Receive my prayer this week  
as a pleasing offering.  
Make up for what I lack  
and increase in me only what you find beautiful.

I thank you for the witness of your saints  
and beg you to send them to my aid  
so that I may become one with you  
as they are one with you.

Draw me into your communion with the Father  
through the love of the Holy Spirit. Amen.