

A Franciscan Blessing

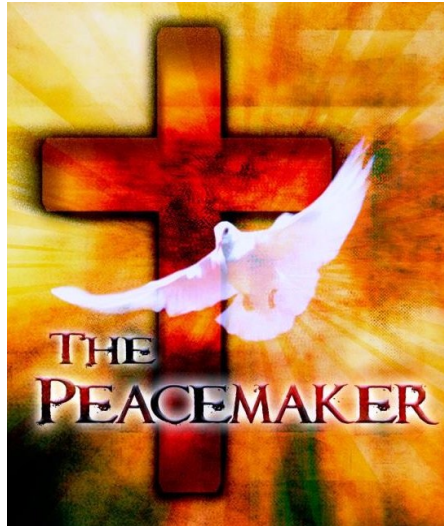
At the heart of Francis' Gospel vision is delight in the Lord. However Francis understood most clearly that if our joy in the Lord is to be authentic it must lead to compassion that flowers into action for peace and justice. May the following uncomfortable invocation open us to a more profound Gospel life.

May God bless you with discomfort,
At easy answers, half-truths,
And superficial relationships
So that you may live
Deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger
At injustice, oppression,
And exploitation of people,
So that you may work for
Justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears,
To shed for those who suffer pain,
Rejection, hunger and war,
So that you may reach out your hand
To comfort them and
To turn their pain to joy

And may God bless you
With enough foolishness
To believe that you can
Make a difference in the world,
So that you can do
What others claim cannot be done
To bring justice and kindness
To all our children and the poor. Amen



Reflections on Franciscan Spirituality
Communications Committee
Franciscan Province of Ireland
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THE LORD GIVE YOU PEACE

“Francis of Assisi - for me, he is the man of poverty, the man of peace, the man who loves and protects creation. He is the man who gives us the spirit of peace, the poor man. St Francis tells us we should work to build peace. But there is no true peace without truth! There cannot be true peace if everyone is his own criterion, if everyone can always claim exclusively his own rights, without at the same time caring for the good of others, of everyone, on the basis of the nature that unites every human being on this earth.”

Pope Francis

Since you speak of peace,
all the more so
must you have peace
in your own hearts.

Let none be provoked
to anger or scandal by you,
but rather may they be drawn
to peace and good will,
to kindness and unity
through your gentleness.

We have been called
to heal wounds,
to unite what has fallen apart,
and to bring home those
who have lost their way.

St Francis speaks to the friars.



Pace e Bene!

Francis greeted everyone "May the Lord give you peace." The peace he wished came from his own inner peace and his deep reverence for all of God's creatures. He allowed Christ's presence within to bring peace to those he met. He urged the friars to be gentle, peaceful, unassuming, courteous and humble in their dealings with others.

Francis was able to challenge and confront injustice, but he did it non-violently, respecting all those involved. He negotiated peace between the people of Gubbio and the wolf who was terrorizing them and between the bishop and mayor of Assisi. The Sultan of Egypt treated him kindly because he was seen as a man of peace.

"Pace e Bene!" (Peace and Good!) is a greeting used on all continents by millions of Franciscan men and women since the time of Francis. It has grown to be an unofficial motto of the Franciscan family. Intuitively and simply, "Peace and Good" expresses the Franciscan approach to life. Faith in the crucified and risen Lord strengthens us to work for the peace and good of all, even in a violent and unjust world.



We believe that peace is built on the recognition of the unity and goodness of created existence, the oneness of humanity, and the dignity of every person. Peace is difference in unity. It requires both respect for the uniqueness of others and acknowledgement of a common humanity. We advocate a peace that builds on freedom and responsibility, encourages compassion, and embraces justice and care of the earth. If you want peace work for justice!

We know that we 'must not kill' – but we can do violence by hand, heart, or word, by signs or gestures, or by aiding and abetting. Violence begins in the human heart and spills out into our words and actions. Words have real power; they can harm or heal, tear down or build up. Speak words of peace, live in a spirit of peace, build a culture of peace

Blessed are the Peace Makers

The heart that is turned to the Lord receives the gift of peace promised by Christ. 'Peace I leave with you, my own peace I give you.' This peace flows from deep communion with the Spirit of the Lord and cleanses our souls of the pride, greed and anger that shatter peace.

Peace Prayer Inspired by St Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
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 pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

