

International Peace Day

21st September

Resource for Parishes



Learn:

The International Day of Peace falls on 21 September. Every year on this day, the United Nations calls on the people of the world to remember their common humanity and join together to build a future free of conflict.

The theme for 2016, "The Sustainable Development Goals: Building Blocks for Peace", highlights how ending poverty, protecting the planet and ensuring prosperity for everyone, all contribute to global harmony.

This vision of global harmony is at the heart of Catholic Social Teaching on Peace. If we look to the words of Pope Paul VI in his encyclical *Gaudium et Spes* "Peace is not merely the absence of war; nor can it be reduced solely to the maintenance of a balance of power between enemies; nor is it brought about by dictatorship. Instead, it is rightly and appropriately called an enterprise of justice." we can see that peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon right order among human beings.

Working together, we can creatively overcome inaction and indifference and work toward peace and respect for the lives and dignity of all people.

Nirangini's Story: The Security Of Home



Nirangini, 31, remembers her childhood fondly, growing up in a family of nine siblings during peacetime in Veravil. From 1983 to 2009 a civil war affected Sri Lanka. When the conflict impacted Veravil, the entire community was forced to leave. Nirangini, her 67-year-old mother and her son, who was seven-years-old at the time, were constantly on the move with no permanent home.

"We were displaced 11 times before we came back to Veravil in the Kilinochchi district," said Nirangini. "My mother and son were with me, but the other members of my family were separated as the war escalated. One of our brothers went missing."

During those years, poverty and the trauma of constantly being on the move took a toll. There was little food or water and Nirangini's son became undernourished.

"I survived by selling some of my personal belongings. At every place we stayed before moving again we had to erect a hut with the help of other people. Some relief assistance was given to us and this helped us to survive."

In December 2009, in the hope that a familiar environment would offer a safe setting for her son, Nirangini and her family moved back to her childhood village. In Veravil, a Caritas Sri Lanka program, supported by Caritas Australia, was assisting families to resettle.

In March 2012, the Caritas program supported Nirangini to build her own permanent home.

"We had survived a war and just managed to return to our home with virtually nothing. Now with the support of Caritas my family lives in a proper house. I am so relieved. The state of uncertainty we were living in is now over. We still have to walk large distances to get water for drinking, bathing and washing clothes, but having a house has provided greater security," she said.

Thanks to a livelihood grant, Nirangini was able to start a home garden and small poultry business. These give her a good income and provide her family with nutritious food. A permanent home and an income source are also beneficial as it means her son can attend the village school and gain a good education.

Learn more about [The Sustainable Development Goals](#)
Learn more about [Catholic Social Teaching on Peace and Conflict](#)



Pray:

On 8 June 2014 Pope Francis' shared the following Invocation for Peace during his address to the President of Israel and the President of Palestine. It is a powerful pray which calls on us all to be instruments of peace.

Lord God of peace, hear our prayer!

We have tried so many times and over so many years to resolve our conflicts by our own powers and by the force of our arms. How many moments of hostility and darkness have we experienced; how much blood has been shed; how many lives have been shattered; how many hopes have been buried... But our efforts have been in vain.

Now, Lord, come to our aid! Grant us peace, teach us peace; guide our steps in the way of peace. Open our eyes and our hearts, and give us the courage to say: "Never again war!"; "With war everything is lost". Instil in our hearts the courage to take concrete steps to achieve peace.

Lord, God of Abraham, God of the Prophets, God of Love, you created us and you call us to live as brothers and sisters. Give us the strength daily to be instruments of peace; enable us to see everyone who crosses our path as our brother or sister. Make us sensitive to the plea of our citizens who entreat us to turn our weapons of war into implements of peace, our trepidation into confident trust, and our quarrelling into forgiveness.

Keep alive within us the flame of hope, so that with patience and perseverance we may opt for dialogue and reconciliation. In this way may peace triumph at last, and may the words "division", "hatred" and "war" be banished from the heart of every man and woman. Lord, defuse the violence of our tongues and our hands. Renew our hearts and minds, so that the word which always brings us together will be "brother", and our way of life will always be that of: Shalom, Peace, Salaam!
Amen.

Source: Pope Francis, [Invocation for Peace](#), 2014

**Download Pope Francis' Prayer for Peace [PowerPoint](#)
Download International Day of [Peace Liturgy](#) and [Leader Notes](#)**

"A true builder of peace is one who takes the first step toward the other. This is not weakness but strength, the strength of peace. How can the wars in the world end if we are not able to overcome our small misunderstandings and quarrels? Our acts of dialogue, forgiveness, reconciliation, are the "bricks" needed to build the framework of peace."

Pope Francis, 2015

Prayers of the Faithful

For global leaders:

That they follow the leadership of Pope Francis, opening their eyes and hearts to realise that "with war everything is lost" and that they may have the courage to say "Never again War!".

For those suffering the impacts of war:

That the flame of hope may be kept alive within all those who suffer the impacts of war, so that they may have the courage to continue to strive for a brighter future for themselves and their families.

For our community:

That we may have the strength daily to be instruments of peace, by viewing everyone who crosses our path as our brother or sister.

Act:

Pray: Use Pope Francis' Prayer for Peace to pray with your family, school, faith community, etc.

Children's group: Share with the children Nirangini's story and discuss: Why is it important to have a home? What is needed to make a home? How might not having peace affect our home? Invite the children to draw a house and ask them to write inside the house all the things that make it a home.

Youth/Adult group: Reflect and discuss how to be an 'instrument of peace'. Where and how might we 'take the first step toward the other' and build peace at home... in your neighbourhood... at work... at uni?

Social Media: Declare your support of SDG 16. Simply a [quote](#) or [support](#) sign... write I/We or your communities name at the top... take a selfie and share via social media [#CaritasAustralia](#) [#Global Goals](#) [#PeaceDay](#) [@CaritasAust](#)



Donate: Support communities such as Nirangini's by donating to the [Sri Lanka Humanitarian Crisis Appeal](#)



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