

Prayer for Families Seeking Peace from Violence in Schools

Families are invited to put away all distractions like phones, etc. and focus their time together by lighting a candle in memory of those who have lost their lives to school violence.

Scripture (*one family member reads*):

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John

“When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” John 20:19-22

Reflection (*a different family member reads*):

Merciful God, we come together around our concern for the safety of our young people, especially in their schools. There are too many stories of violence that threaten to turn a place of learning into a place of suffering. We know that we too, much like the disciples, may be tempted to lock ourselves behind doors because of this fear. But we also remember that you have given us your Holy Spirit of peace and of mission. We are called to pray and to act. Believing in that promise and calling on the strength of the Spirit we pray:

Prayer (*each family member reads the first part, and the family prays the bold part together*)

- For an end to all violence in our schools, we pray... **Lord, fulfill your promise of peace**
- For solace and comfort for all families who have lost a precious child of God to senseless violence in our schools and communities, we pray... **Lord, fulfill your promise of peace**
- For a renewed commitment of concern for the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual lives of all of our young people, we pray... **Lord, fulfill your promise of peace**
- For the courage and strength of all those who serve our communities through the schools, for administration, staff and teachers, we pray... **Lord, fulfill your promise of peace**
- For the response of our young people, that their devotion to taking action against the fear they are experiencing be grounded in peacebuilding, we pray... **Lord, fulfill your promise of peace**
- For our own intentions which we bring before you now (*here you can encourage members of your family to say out loud their own prayer requests. When enough time has passed and everyone has had a chance to share close by saying:*),
we pray... **Lord, fulfill your promise of peace**

Closing Prayer (*read by a member of the family*):

God of suffering and of peace, you entered into our world to give us the gift of your very self, which brings peace and refuses to accept violence. Be with us now as we seek to pray and act on this gift. Inspired by how you gave your life to set us free from sin, may we too be missionary disciples who give away our lives to see our neighborhoods, our communities and our schools free from the sins of fear and violence. We pray these things through Christ our Lord, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is injury, let me sow pardon.

Where there is doubt, let me sow faith.

Where there is despair, let me sow hope.

Where there is darkness, let me sow light.

Where there is sadness, let me sow joy.

Master, grant that I may never seek

So 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 pardoning that we are pardoned.

And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.