

NOTE: IN MAY 2008 THE DIOCESE OF ORLANDO CELEBRATED ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY. THIS LETTER PROMOTED AN “INTERFAITH PRAYER SERVICE”. THIS LETTER WAS IN LARGE PACKET DESCRIBING PROGRAMS ETC TO CELEBRATE THE 40 TH ANNIVERSARY.

To the Greater Orlando Interfaith Community:

In February 2002, Pope John Paul II sent the enclosed *Assisi Pledge of Peace*, developed with religious leaders of different faiths, to political leaders around the world in the hope that it would “inspire... political and social action.”

The Diocese of Orlando Florida is celebrating its’ 40th anniversary in 2008. In solidarity with our brothers and sisters of this community – this letter is written to invite you to an *Interfaith Pray Service for Peace* in whatever form is yours.

The Interfaith Prayer Service will take place on Saturday, May 10 at 10:00 am at The Orange County Convention Center – South Concourse.

A reception will follow immediately with nationally recognized Guest Speaker - Hedley Abernathy – Peace building Education Advisor for Catholic Relief Services’ US Operations.

To be a person is to have a story – an identity and a struggle and to express the inexpressible. In 2008, it seems that Peace is inexpressible and very elusive at best.

Perhaps it has been this way forever. However, the world is filled with stories of people of all faiths who have struggled against all odds in the cause of peace and justice... here are a few examples from our own time, who in their search for peace and solidarity within the human family have gone down in history as Nobel Laureates.

- Yasser Arafat (1929 – 2004) Nobel Peace Prize Laureate of 1994. He received the Nobel Peace Prize together with Shimon Perez and Yitzak Rabin whose efforts toward peace culminated in The Oslo Accords. Associated with the right of Palestinians to form a government and to live in peace with Israel.
- Shirin Ebadi (1947-) Nobel Peace Prize Laureate of 2003 for her efforts to promote democracy and human rights. Her main focus is the struggle for the rights of women and children. Ebadi, a conscious Moslem, sees no conflict between Islam and fundamental human rights.
- Mahamta Gandhi (1869 – 1948) a major political and spiritual leader of India. He was the pioneer of resistance through total non-violence. He inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the globe. He was assassinated in 1948.
- Reverend Billy Graham (1918 -) Evangelist and member of the Southern Baptist Convention. He was number seven on Gallup’s list of most admired people of the 20th century. As of 2002, Graham’s life time audience topped 2 billion people.
- Fethullah Gulen (1941 -) Turkish Islamic Scholar whose sermons, books, articles and lectures have inspired a transnational interfaith community in Turkey and around the world. The goal is tolerance by promoting a dialogue between people with vastly different worldviews.
- Dr Martin Luther King (1929 – 1968) One of the main leaders of the American civil rights movement. A Baptist Minister who in 1963 lead the March on Washington where he delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech. He was assassinated in 1968.

- The 14th Dalai Lama (1935 -) In his struggle for the liberation of Tibet, the Dalai Lama has consistently opposed the use of violence. He has instead advocated peaceful solutions based upon tolerance and mutual respect in order to preserve the historical and cultural heritage of his people.
- Albert John Lutuli (1898 – 1967) Nobel Peace Prize Laureate of 1960 – As Chairman of the South African Board of the Congregationalist Church of America and President of the African National Congress, he worked to bring a peaceful and nonviolent solution to the injustices faced by black South Africans.
- Nelson Mandela (1918 -) Nobel Prize Laureate in 1993. Spent 27 years in prison due to his struggle against apartheid. Following his release from prison in 1990 – he followed a policy of reconciliation which helped to lead to a multi-racial democracy in South Africa. Mandela has received more than one hundred awards over 4 decades
- Philip Noel-Baker (1889-1982) Nobel Peace Prize Laureate of 1959 - Remaining true to the pacifist ideals of the Quakers, he strove to build a world in which violence and arms would no longer be necessary in the struggle for existence, either among men or among nations.
- Shimon Peres (1923 -) Nobel Peace Prize Laureate of 1994 – He was a two term Prime Minister and President whose efforts toward peace culminated in The Oslo Accords. He received the Nobel Peace Prize together with Shimon Perez and Yasser Arafat.
- Yitzak Rabin (1922 – 1995) Nobel Peace Prize Laureate of 1994 – He was a two term Prime Minister whose efforts toward peace culminated in The Oslo Accords. He received the Nobel Peace Prize together with Shimon Perez and Yasser Arafat. He was assassinated in 1995.
- Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997) Nobel Peace Prize Laureate of 1979 – A Roman Catholic Nun who founded the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta. They are devoted to working among the poorest of the poor, the loneliest and the dying – who always receive compassion based on reverence and dignity for all people. The Missionaries of Charity operate in 123 countries.
- Desmond Tutu (1931 -) Nobel Peace Prize Laureate of 1984 - As General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches he is committed to a nonviolent struggle for liberation. The goal is for black and white South Africans to unite for the common good of South Africa
- Elie Wiesel (1928 -) Nobel Peace Prize Laureate of 1986. A Holocaust survivor who has emerged as one of the most important spiritual leaders and guides in an age when violence, repression, and racism continue to characterize the world.

Along with the Assisi Pledge of Peace is a flyer that you may post to let people know who are interested in attending this *Interfaith Prayer Service for Peace*. All are welcome.

The Diocese of Orlando gratefully acknowledges the support of the following interfaith organizations that assisted with organizing this Interfaith Prayer Service... without their efforts and prayers this would not be possible.

Annunciation Catholic Church – Altamonte Springs, FL
 The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints
 The Nile Foundation – Orlando, FL
 Northland Community Church – Longwood, FL
 Seventh Day Adventist Florida Hospital

Please join your brothers and sisters in Central Florida – and pray for peace!

***No Matter Who We Pray to
 No Matter How or When We Pray
 We all Pray to Someone
 For The Same Thing***

Peace!