



A Holy Hour for Peace in Sudan: Notes for Planners

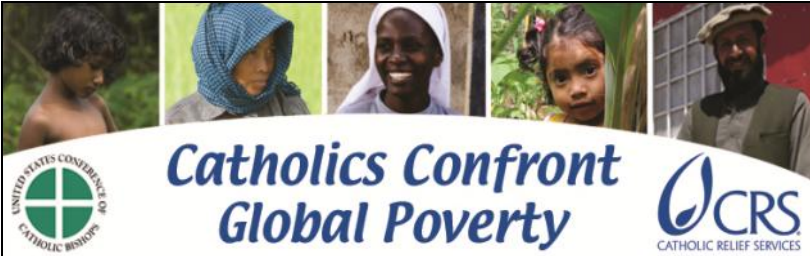
This holy hour for peace in Sudan uses the structure, prayers and scriptures of the Holy Hour for Peace, found on the website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) at <http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/holyhourpeace.shtml>. It includes the following adaptations:

- Homily notes that tie the scriptures of the Holy Hour for Peace to the current situation in Sudan.
- Additional intercessions for continued peace in Sudan.
- An alternative reading following the intercessions.

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A Holy Hour for Peace in Sudan: Intercessions

Intercessions for continued peace in Sudan

- For those in Sudan who have worked to ensure that the referendum and its aftermath have been peaceful, may the Lord continue to grace them with the peace of Christ....
- For the people of southern Sudan as they form a new nation, that the Holy Spirit will bless them and their leaders with wisdom, understanding and right judgment...
- For all the people of northern and southern Sudan as the regions transition to two nations, that they may work out the remaining issues without conflict and exist as peaceful neighbors...
- For all who would bring Christ's peace to the world, may the Lord grant us the courage to stand in solidarity with all working to create structures that promote and sustain peace...

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A Holy Hour for Peace in Sudan: Homily Notes

Based on the scriptures included in the Holy Hour for Peace:
James 3:13-18 and John 14:23-29

- Take a moment and ask yourselves: In your heart of hearts do you think that one day there will be world peace? Do you believe that people are capable of peace? Do you think that one day the powerful will put down their power and open a permanent door to peace?

By the world's standards peace is ridiculous.

But by the world's standards, so are we who would follow Christ. As Christians, we know that the Kingdom of God can only be fully realized at the end of time. But that does not lessen our responsibility to begin *now* to make the Kingdom of God present on this earth.

- We are engaged in the foolish practice of peace, in the middle of a ritual that to the world must look very strange. We're gathered around a disc of bread that we insist is Jesus. We place it in a golden monstrance and kneel before it in worship. We treat it with utmost reverence.
- In your heart of hearts do you believe this is Jesus? Do you believe that this piece of bread, along with the people of God, have been transformed into Christ's body? Do you believe that one day the Reign of God will replace the Reign of the Media or the Reign of Consumerism or the Reign of War?

The question that accompanies God's peace and God's salvation and God's presence is always the same: do you believe this is true?

- The peace process in Sudan is a good test of such a question. In January the people of southern Sudan voted on whether to remain united with northern Sudan or to form their own country. For 101 days before the start of this vote, people the world over, including Catholics in the U.S., dedicated themselves to prayer for a peaceful process. And even before that, organizations like CRS were conducting peacebuilding efforts on the ground, to strengthen the will for peace and the techniques that foster peace and dispel violence.

Then we held our breath as the people of southern Sudan voted. An unprecedented number did, and they made a very dangerous decision. In a country that has known decades of civil war over resources and power and religious differences, they voted to become their own country. And the peace has held. Not a perfect peace, not a divine peace, but a human peace bolstered by prayer and faith and a deep desire for decades of violence to end.

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Now the people of southern Sudan face an even more difficult task: they must establish a new country, a civil society, one that is wise in its treatment of its people, and its use of its resources and its distribution of its wealth. One that is at peace with itself and with its neighbors. And the people of northern Sudan will likewise have to establish a new nation and engage with their southern brothers and sisters to work out the remaining issues that stand in the way of a lasting peace and long-term stability in the region.

- This takes supreme faith – and not just the faith of the Sudanese people. It requires our faith too. Because when you believe in something, you act like it’s possible, you insist that it’s on its way even when it’s not there yet. And you do everything to prepare the way.

Making peace happen in Sudan requires us gathered here to work for justice there, to ensure that the resources are available to support a civil society, to insist that those with power to support the effort do so. We are citizens of the world’s most powerful country. We have something to contribute to peace in Sudan—if we believe that peace in Sudan is included in the peace that God gives.

- As Christians we believe in the power of prayer. And we believe in the power of practice. And even when that belief gets thin and the practice weak, we continue to gather as we are doing this evening, and we practice the impossible: belief in an incarnate God--God made human, God in bread, God in us. We cry out to the Holy Spirit to teach us once again and remind us once again who we are and whose we are.
- In a holy hour spent before the Eucharist, we pray and we praise and we insist that it is so. And we open ourselves wide to the powerful and transformative peace that Christ leaves with us, the peace Christ gives to us. Not as the world gives it, but in the way that Jesus does.

And it comes with a question: if we really believe that this is true, what changes?

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A Holy Hour for Peace in Sudan: Reading

Peace and Education

By Dr. Ben Katoro, educational consultant for the archdiocese of Juba, southern Sudan.

Peace education encompasses transmission of knowledge and skills, as well as the accepted basic values and norms. One of the focuses for Catholic education is to create a society inspired by the Gospel values of service in love and peace rooted in justice and fellowship. It means human harmony and promises a more human future where a more harmonious society lies.

Positive peace involves the development of a society free from structural violence or social injustice. Peace education takes a more proactive approach unlike a reactive approach of conflict resolution. This is the foundation for building trust, as well as developing awareness of interconnectedness and uniqueness of others.

In-group bias based on tribal groups is the foundation of prejudices and discrimination that, in many cases, leads to deep injustice and sometimes to violence. For peaceful co-existence, we need to have the ability to advocate for the rights of others when such rights are threatened. This motivating element is the foundation of shared responsibility for building peace.

Conflict is a part of life, and its nature is neither good nor bad. Conflict describes an imbalance between the needs and interests of two sides. It becomes negative only when the answer to a conflict is aggression. "A good person draws what is good from the store of his heart." [Luke 6:45]. We all have the potential to be good and to do good things if we focus our minds and hearts on the good things. It is possible to resolve differences positively, by recognizing the problem and one's own and others' needs and interests.

Peace is the ideal for the future. Children have the potential to learn about peace and the need for peace in the safe protected environments of the schools. We need to strengthen these individuals' abilities to resist the majority that discriminates. Your lives will produce all kinds of good deeds and you will grow in your knowledge of God." [Colossians 1:10] Life becomes so much more pleasant and smooth, when relationships are warm; when the rights and needs of others are attended to.

*Dr. Ben Katoro, educational consultant for the archdiocese of Juba in southern Sudan.
From "Reflections for 101 Days of Prayer towards a Peaceful Referendum in Sudan."*

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