

Prayers for Canadian Forces **is offered as a resource** for possible use by communities and individuals when there is occasion to pray publicly for those who serve our nation, especially in security and peace keeping missions. It provides: (1)

Scripture Readings on the Imperative for Peace

, for use in Prayer Services; (2)

Prayers of the Faithful

or

General Intercessions

, which may be used at Mass or in other liturgical celebrations; (3)

Prayers

, to be used in various circumstances, either individually or in groups. This resource has been issued with the approval of Most Reverend Donald Thériault, Bishop of the Military Ordinariate of Canada, and in part is based on materials made available by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

1. Scripture Readings on the Imperative for Peace

From the Old Testament:

Genesis 13.6-9;

Numbers 6.24-26;

Psalms 34.15;

Psalms 85.7-13;

Psalms 122;

Isaiah 2.2-4;

Micah 4.1-5;

Proverbs 3.13-18.

From the New Testament:

Matthew 5.1-11, 21-24, 43-44;

Luke 6.32, 35-36;
John 17.20-21;
Romans 14.19;
Ephesians 2.13-14; 6.12-17;
Hebrews 12.14.

2. Prayer of the Faithful (general Intercessions)

Prayer of the Faithful I

Invitation to Prayer:

My brothers and sisters,
conscious of the dangers our troops face,
let us implore from God their safety,
the precious gift of peace and the pursuit of reconciliation.

One or more of the following petitions may be added to the Prayer of the Faithful:

A) For the Canadian Armed Forces:

- For those who are serving this country,
abroad or at home, by land, by sea, or in the air;
for their mission to bring peace and security in other lands;
and for God's protection from all perils and injury,
we pray to the Lord.

- For the Canadian Armed Forces and all peacekeepers;
and for wisdom and justice as they carry out their duty
for God and country, we pray to the Lord.

- For the Canadian troops and all peacekeepers;
for the people they strive to protect;
and for God's care upon all who serve,
we pray to the Lord.

- For peace with justice throughout the world and in our own land;
for those engaged in military action;
and for the safety of the personnel of the Canadian Armed Forces,
we pray to the Lord.

- For those engaged in military service;
for those who combat war and violence daily,
and risk their lives that our world may know peace,
we pray to the Lord.

- For all Canadian soldiers;
for those who risk their lives for the good of others;
and for all who serve the common interest of our country,
we pray to the Lord.

- For the Canadian Armed Forces;
for the military personnel who have gone overseas,
and for all who long for their safe return,
we pray to the Lord.

B) For Their Families:

- For those in the service of our country and of peace;
for their families and children at home;
and for God's strength and assistance in this time of separation,
we pray to the Lord.

- For families separated from their loved ones in the military;
and for the strength they need to face this time of isolation and uncertainty,
we pray to the Lord.

- For families who have lost loved ones in war or conflict;
and for God's consolation for those who mourn,
we pray to the Lord.

C) For Those Who Support Them:

- For the Church and all military chaplains,
for preachers and counsellors,
and for all who bring guidance and support to our troops and their families,
we pray to the Lord.

- For all who support our troops in this time of trial;
for doctors, nurses and care-givers;
and for all who need to see the face of a loving God,
we pray to the Lord.

- For those who aid the process of recovery for all wounded troops;
for counsellors and chaplains,
and for all volunteers who continue to help them and their families,
we pray to the Lord.

D) For Victims of War:

- For all prisoners and combatants;
for victims of conflict or oppression;
and for God's mercy upon all who suffer,

we pray to the Lord.

- For all victims of war or terrorism;
for refugees who seek safety and shelter;
and for the families of the Canadian Armed Forces who have lost a loved one,
we pray to the Lord.

- For those whose trust in God has been shaken by war or world events;
and for all victims of war or terrorism,
we pray to the Lord.

- For all who engage in terrorism,
blinded by the pride and the desire for vengeance,
we pray to the Lord.

- For those who walk in the midst of trouble,
and those victimized by the wrath of others,
we pray to the Lord.

- For all whose lives are invaded or marked by evil,
and those who fail to forgive,
unable to communicate to others the mercy granted by God,
we pray to the Lord.

- For all those whose lives are touched by war or terror:
for aid-workers in war-torn countries;
and for refugees and citizens of nations under attack,
we pray to the Lord.

E) For Government Leaders:

- For wisdom, compassion and peace within our government and nation,
for a recognition of the dignity of every human person;
and for the safety of all Canadian peace-keepers,
we pray to the Lord.

- For leaders of nations and peoples,
as they work to implement lasting and just solutions to war, hunger and poverty,
we pray to the Lord.

- For our troops engaged with higher authorities,
in searching for the common good and security of people,
we pray to the Lord.

F) For All Oppressors and Enemies:

- For those whose lives give birth to evil;
for those who pervert the truth and turn to violence,
and for all people who seek the ways of justice and peace,
we pray to the Lord.

- For those who walk in darkness;
for those who subvert the truth of God's love;
and for all who seek the light of understanding and tolerance,
we pray to the Lord.

- For those who believe that violence is a means to a better world
or a way to equality or justice,
and for those who seek revenge for injustice,
we pray to the Lord.

- For all who, by love and mercy,
make visible God's Kingdom,

we pray to the Lord.

Closing Prayer:

Lord our God,
hear our prayers for peace
and grant that your Spirit
will move in the hearts of all people
to work for an end of violence.
May our prayers and works of penance
unite us with those who are deprived of liberty,
with all who pursue the cause of justice and peace,
and with those separated from their homes and families.
We make our prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Or:

Lord God,
according to your law of love
we wish to love sincerely all who oppress us.
Help us to follow the commandments
of your new covenant,
that by returning good for the evil done us,
we may learn to bear the ill-will of others
out of love for you.
Grant this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Other prayers may be used from the *Roman Missal (Sacramentary)*, from the Masses for Various Needs and Occasions: For Peace and Justice; In Time of War or Civil Disturbance, ...

Prayer of the Faithful II
for Deployed Military and Department of National Defence Personnel

One or more of the following petitions may be added to the Prayer of the Faithful:

Invitation to Prayer:

My brothers and sisters,
let us pray for the members of the Canadian Armed Forces
and for all who are involved in the service of Canada at home or abroad.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Another appropriate response may be used.

A) For the Canadian Armed Forces:

- For the members of the Canadian Armed Forces;
for those who serve with them:
that the Lord may preserve them from all harm,
we pray to the Lord.

- For all of our military and Department of National Defence personnel
deployed throughout the world:
that they may discharge their duties with honour and dignity
as they labour to bring peace and comfort in places torn by war or disaster,
we pray to the Lord.

- For all military personnel deployed throughout the world,
in particular, those deployed from here:
that the Lord will guide and protect them in the fulfillment of their duties,
so that through their actions, peace may be achieved,
we pray to the Lord.

- For all military and peacekeepers:
that, even in war, all may remain ever mindful to defend all human rights,
especially for the most vulnerable,
we pray to the Lord.

B) For Their Families:

- For the families, relatives and friends of our military personnel:
that their concerns and anxieties may be relieved,
we pray to the Lord.*

- For the families of men and women in the Canadian Armed Forces;
for those who serve with them to cope with daily challenges
in the absence of their loved ones:
that the Lord may help them all,
we pray to the Lord.*

- For the families and friends of our deployed military
and Department of National Defence personnel:
that they may be comforted by the Holy Spirit during their time of separation
and be filled with joy when their loved ones return,
we pray to the Lord.

- For the families and friends of those who are deployed:
that the Lord may grant them strength and perseverance
in their separation from them
and bring them the fullness of joy when their loved ones return,
we pray to the Lord.

C) For Those Who Support Them:

- For the chaplains and the Military Ordinariate;
for all ministers of various faith communities who serve the Canadian Armed Forces:
may they experience God's favour in their service,
we pray to the Lord.

- For all who support our troops in this time of trial;
for doctors, nurses and care-givers;
and for all who need to see the face of a loving God,
we pray to the Lord.

D) For Victims of War:

- For the members of the Department of National Defence community
who have been killed for the cause of peace:
that their deaths may not be in vain,
that they may be gathered into God's kingdom,
and that their afflicted families and friends
will experience the solace and strength of the Holy Spirit,
we pray to the Lord.

E) For Nations and Government Leaders:

- For the Governor General, the Prime Minister and our political and military leaders:
that they may tirelessly seek peaceful settlements to international disputes,
we pray to the Lord.*

- For all nations:
that they may be preserved from violence or terrorism,
we pray to the Lord.*

- For the nations of the world:
that they may come to work together in harmony and peace for the good of all,
we pray to the Lord.*

F) For All Oppressors and Oppressed:

- For all men and women involved in conflict areas:
that all hearts may be moved to pursue justice and peace,
we pray to the Lord.*

- For all oppressors and all oppressed:
that violence may be overcome by peace;
that weapons of destruction be transformed into tools of justice;
and that hatred give way to mutual charity,
we pray to the Lord.*

Closing prayer

You order all things in wisdom, O God,
and your loving care embraces our lives and our work.
Look with kindness on the members of the Canadian Armed Forces
[and those who serve with them].
Give them courage, hope and strength.
Strengthen their resolve to promote peace and security in every land
and enlighten their minds with the Gospel values.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Or, when a death has occurred:

God of our salvation,
we honour those who died
in defence of country and freedom.
Grant them eternal rest
and peace to us who keep faith with them.
Lead us to abhor the violence and hatred of war
and imitate the example of your Son,
who peacefully gave his life
to be our peace and reconciliation
and who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

3. Prayers

Prayers in a Time of War or Conflict

1. For the Military

All-powerful and ever-living God,
when your servant David [facing Goliath]
was to defend your people [against the Philistine army],
you assisted him
and you kept him safe through all his journeys,
while leading your people in difficult times.
Protect the members of the Canadian Armed Forces.
Be their constant companion and their strength in battle,
and their refuge in every adversity.
Guide them, O Lord, that they may return home in safety.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.*

2. Prayer of a Spouse for a Military Member

God of power and might,
at every moment and in every place
you are near to those who call upon your name in faith.
In marriage you have blessed us with a share in your divine love.
Look upon my husband/wife and keep him/her in your safekeeping,
no matter where the road may lead.
And after his/her tour of duty,
bring him/her safely home to his/her loved ones.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.*

3. Prayer of a Son or Daughter for a Parent

Loving God,
you watch over each and every one of your children.
Hear my prayer for my father/mother.
Be his/her constant companion.
Protect him/her no matter where he/she goes,
and bring him/her safely and quickly home to his/her loved ones.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.*

4. Prayer of a Parent for a Military Member

Father all-powerful and ever-loving God,
from before we were born,
your love has nurtured and sustained us.
Hear my prayer for N., my son/daughter.
Keep him/her safe in areas of conflict
and faithful to you, day in and day out.
Bring him/her safely home to his/her loved ones.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.*

5. For Those who Await a Member's Return

God of all goodness,
look with love on those who wait
for the safe return of their loved ones
who serve in the armed forces of their country.
In faith and hope, we turn to you for comfort.
Grant that we may trust in your mercy
and send an angel to sustain us as we await their safe return.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.*

6. For Government Leaders

O God,
whose providence orders all things

and whose governance guides their progress,
look with kindness on the leaders of this nation;
as they gather, fill them with the spirit of your wisdom,
so that their decisions may accord with your will,
fostering peace and the common good.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.**

Or:

Almighty and eternal God,
whose hand upholds the rights and aspirations of all,
guide those in authority,
that people everywhere on earth
may enjoy prosperity, freedom of worship,
and the security of being.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.**

7. For the Safety of Service Men and Women

Almighty and eternal God,
those who take refuge in you will rejoice
and will ever sing for joy.
Protect these service men and women
as they discharge their duties.
Cover them with favour as with a shield
and keep them safe from all evil and harm.
May the power of your love bring them home in safety,
that with all who love them,
they may ever praise you for your loving care.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.* (cf. *Ps 5.11-12*)

8. For our Oppressors and Enemies

Jesus, Prince of Peace,

you have asked us to love our enemies
and pray for those who persecute us.
We pray for our enemies and those who oppose us.
With the help of the Holy Spirit,
may all people learn to work together
for that justice which brings true and lasting peace.
To you be glory and honour for ever and ever.*

Or:

O God,
whose great commandment enjoins us
to show true love even to those who afflict us,
grant that we may fulfill the law of Christ
by returning good for evil
and by bearing one another's burdens.
We ask this through the same Christ our Lord.**

Or:

O God,
who alone can judge rightly
the motives of the human heart,
hear us as we pray
for those at whose hands we suffer
and for those who would do us harm.
Turn them from the path of oppression and cruelty,
and deliver us from the desire of vengeance.
Break the cycle of evil which entraps us all,
that together we may give thanks
in the peace of your kingdom.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.**

9. For Strength in Time of Trial

Lord God,
we turn to you in all our troubles
and praise you in all our joys.
Hear our prayer this day and see our need,
as we humbly ask your protection
for all our men and women in military service.
Give them the strength and courage
that flows from your Spirit
to defend with honour, dignity and devotion,
the rights of all who are imperiled
by injustice and evil.
Send them your support
and let them experience it
in the generosity and support of others.
Glory and praise to you, God of mercy,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

See: Blessings and Prayers for Home and Family (CCCB - Concacan Inc., Ottawa 2004) page 139.

Or:

To set the earth ablaze, O God,
your Son was sacrificed on the Cross
and from his cup of suffering
you called the Church to drink.
Keep our eyes fixed on Jesus
and give us strength in time of trial
to run the race that lies before us.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

10. For Those who Survived Combat

Lord God, we give you thanks
for the lives of those who survived the atrocities of war,
and especially for our soldiers who have returned home.

Keep them in your merciful love.
Heal them from their wounds:
being either physical, emotional, psychological or spiritual injuries.
Give them your strength and wisdom.
May their lives be for us
a living testimony of justice and peace in our world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

11. For Victims of Violence

O God,
in your silence every anguished cry is heard;
each person is created in your image,
all peoples are precious in your sight.
Receive into your peace the victims of persecution
and hear the lament of those who mourn their killing.
Keep their memory always before us
and rid every heart of violence and vengeance,
that hatred may be banished from the face of the earth
and the family of nations brought together in peace.
Grant this through Christ our Lord. **

Or, in time of death and difficulty:

In our fear and doubt, we turn to you, O God,
and seek your presence.
Welcome those who were killed into your loving embrace,
and give them eternal peace.
Comfort the families of those who lost loved ones,
and give them strength.
Be with those who have suffered pain,
and grant them healing.
Guide those who care for the injured,
and be their strength.
Lead our country through this grief,
and comfort us in the knowledge of your love.
Bring justice to those responsible for this terror,
and give them conversion of heart.

Do not abandon your people in their time of need.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

12. For Deceased Veterans

O God,
by whose mercy the faithful departed find rest,
look kindly on our departed veterans who gave their lives
in the service of their country.
Grant that through the passion, death, and resurrection of your Son
they may share in the joy of your heavenly kingdom
and rejoice in you with your saints forever.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.*

13. For Refugees and Exiles

Lord God,
to whom no one is a stranger
and from whose loving care no one is ever distant,
look with compassion on refugees and exiles,
on displaced persons and abandoned children.
Restore them to family and home
and fill our hearts with your own kindness
toward the outcast and the needy.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.**

14. For Social Justice

God ever just,
you who hear the cry of the poor,
you scatter the proud in the thoughts of their hearts
and let the oppressed go free.
Give us, we pray, a new heart.
Change indifference to compassion,

and let the desires of those with abundance
make place for the needs of those who are poor.
Turn our feet on the way of the Gospel,
that peace may triumph over discord
and our justice mirror your own.
Grant this through Christ our Lord. ** alt.

Or:

By your will, O God,
all peoples have a common origin
and have been called to form a single family.
Fill the hearts of all with the fire of your love
and enkindle in them a desire for true human progress,
that through your rich gifts
each person may be brought to fulfillment,
all division overcome,
and justice and equity firmly rooted in society.
Grant this through Christ our Lord. **

15. For Human Rights

God of justice,
you adorned the human race
with a marvellous diversity,
and you clothed each of its members
with a dignity
that may never be diminished.
Instill in us respect for that dignity,
care for each other,
by doing to our neighbours
as we would have them do to us.
Grant this through Christ our Lord. ** alt.

Prayers for Use by Members of the Canadian Armed Forces

1. For Families and Friends Left At Home

O God, protector of all people and nations,
protect my family and friends at home
from the violence and evil of others.
Keep them safe from the weapons of hate and destruction
and guard them against the deeds of evildoers.
Grant them your protection and care
in tranquility and peace.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.*

2. In Areas of Conflict

God of power and mercy,
maker and love of peace,
to know you is to live,
and to serve you is to reign.
Through the intercession of Saint Michael, the archangel,
be our protection in areas of conflict and against all evil.
Help me [us] to overcome war and violence
and to establish your law of love and justice.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.*

3. For Hope in the Midst of Destruction

God of mercy,
you know the secrets of all human hearts,
for you know who is just and you forgive the repentant sinner.
Hear my prayer in the midst of destruction;
give me patience and hope,
so that under your protection and with you as my guide,
I may one day be reunited with my family and friends
in peace, tranquility, and love.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.*

4. Prayer to be used by Officers in Command

God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ,
hear my prayer for those under my command.
Grant that I may bring the spirit of Christ
to all my efforts and orders
as I exercise my authority over those entrusted to my care.
Inform my judgment with your Holy Spirit
so that I may make decisions
in conformity with your law and for the common good.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.*

5. For Fellow Combatants

Lord God,
remember Christ your Son who is peace itself
and who has washed away our hatred with His blood.
Because you love all men and women,
look with mercy on all who are involved in conflicts.
Banish the violence and evil within all combatants
so that one day, we may all deserve to be
called your sons and your daughters.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.*

6. For the Innocent Victims of War

Lord God,
your own Son was delivered into the hands of the wicked,
yet he prayed for his persecutors
and overcame hatred with the blood of the Cross.
Relieve the sufferings of the innocent victims of war;
grant them peace of mind, healing of body,
and a renewed faith in your protection and care.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.*

7. For Refugees and Victims of War

Lord God,
no one is a stranger to you
and no one is ever far from your loving care.
In your kindness, watch over refugees and victims of war,
those separated from their loved ones,
young people who are lost,
and those who have left home or who have run away from home.
Bring them back safely to the place where they long to be
and help us always to show your kindness
to strangers and to all in need.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.*

January 1,
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
World Day for Peace

Queen of Peace, pray for us!
To you we turn our gaze with stronger trepidation,
to you we hasten back with more insistent trust
in these times scarred by a multitude of doubts and fears
for the present and future destiny of our planet.
To you, the first-fruits of humanity redeemed by Christ,
set free at last from the slavery of evil and sin,
we raise together our heartfelt, trusting plea:
listen to the cry of pain of the war victims,
of the victims of the many forms of violence
that bathe the earth in blood.
Dispel the shadows of sorrow and of loneliness,
of hatred and of revenge.
Open to forgiveness the minds and hearts of all!

Queen of Peace, pray for us!
Mother of mercy and of hope
obtain for the men and women of the third millennium the precious gift of peace;

peace in hearts and families, in communities and among peoples;
peace above all for those nations where people fight and die every day.
Obtain that every human being
of every race and culture
may encounter and accept Jesus,
who came down to earth in the mystery of Christmas [the Incarnation]
to give "his" peace to us.
O Mary, Queen of Peace,
give us Christ, the world's true Peace!
John Paul II (2003)**

November 11

1. Saint Martin of Tours, bishop

Patron of the Military Ordinariate of Canada

O God,
the life and death of the holy bishop Martin
proclaimed your glory;
renew in our hearts the wonders of your grace,
so that neither death nor life may separate us
from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. **

2. Remembrance Day

Scripture Reading

From the Book of Wisdom (3.1-8)

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,
and no torment will ever touch them.
In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died,

and their departure was thought to be a disaster,
and their going from us to be their destruction;
but they are at peace.

For though in the sight of others they were punished,
their hope is full of immortality.

Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good,
because God tested them and found them worthy of himself;
like gold in the furnace he tried them,
and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them.

In the time of their visitation they will shine forth,
and will run like sparks through the stubble.

They will govern nations and rule over peoples,
and the Lord will reign over them for ever.

Prayer

Loving God,
have mercy on your people,
and open our hearts to peace and love.
Reward all who have died for our country,
and grant that Canada and all nations
may continue to work for justice and peace.
Bless us in our service,
and help us to follow your Son, Jesus Christ,
who is our Saviour and our Lord
for ever and ever.

Or:

Blessed are those who have died in the Lord;
let them rest from their labours
for their good deeds go with them. (See *Revelation* 14.13)

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.
And let perpetual light shine upon them.

May they rest in peace.

Amen.

Or:

We bow our heads in prayer,
and pray to God for peace.

All pause for a moment of silent prayer.

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
have mercy on all the world.
Pour the Spirit of peace into the hearts of all,
and help us to become peacemakers
eager to work for harmony and love
between individuals, everywhere.
Grant this through the same Christ our Lord.

See: Blessings and Prayers for Home and Family (CCCB - Concacan Inc., Ottawa 2004) page 108.

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*** John Paul II, excerpt from "Tribute to the Statue of the Immaculate Conception of the

Blessed Virgin Mary in Piazza di Spagna" (December 8, 2003). <http://www.vatican.va/> .
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