

PEACELIGHT PRAYERS AND SONGS

THE PEACELIGHT OF BETHLEHEM PRAYER

Almighty God, father of all people
We turn to you in prayer as we hold the Flame of the Peacelight of Bethlehem.
Bless each one of us and our families with the
Gift of Your Peace, because we know that
Peace will come and shall flourish
In our hands
If it finds a place in our hearts.
It will come soon, tomorrow,
If we know how to make our own
The needs of those who live by us or who pass us by,
If we make our own the cry of the innocent,
If we make our own the anxieties of the
Oppressed and humble people.

Peace will come
If we make room for those who do not have
Security, a job, a house or family;
If we have a place in our hearts for those who are lonely and are not loved
And cared for;
If we find time to listen to those who have
No hope and who are desperate.

Peace will come
If we do not give in to provocation,
If we can heal all divisions,
Peace will come and will be the best fruit of
Unity and harmony among people.
Let this flame remind us of God's love and
Mercy for all men and women in the world.

PEACELIGHT PRAYER

You are the light of the world sent from above
Brighten our day with a friendly beam of light
Rejoice with us
Become one with us.
You are a star shining in the darkness
A beacon in the night
A fire burning bright with love, warming all.
The sun turns night into day
After the rain it burns away the mist to bring joy to our hearts
Its light, like the Peacelight of Bethlehem, shows us the way down a new path, the path to Peace.

Peacelight Song - to the tune of "Edelweiss"

Father God, up above
All your blessings surround us
Love and Care, everywhere
In all the world around us
Grant that our service may be of use
Bless the Peacelight endeavor
Father God, up above
Bless us now and forever

Commentary for a Peacelight Ceremony

This is the light of trust where people seek unity and safety where trust and faith live together. This is the light that brings together divisions among men.

This is the light of joy. Life is light: it is bright and full of happiness. You can see its colors - a sunlit field, laughing children.

This is the light of hope. No one can extinguish it because we hope that it overcomes fear and that in fear's place, joy is created. The light burns so that man's heart of stone becomes filled with love. It burns because we must never lose hope.

This is the light of peace. It burns because people love and help one another. The story began a long time ago in a grotto in Bethlehem, which is now the Church of the Nativity, where an oil lamp has been burning for centuries - its flame is the same one we bring to you today.

The flame's journey began in 1986 in Austria where the Radio and TV Network, ORF started the Peacelight of Bethlehem movement to thank the Austrians for donating so much money to the poor and Christmas. A Scout from Austria was expressly sent to the grotto of Bethlehem that year to light a lamp from the original oil lamp and bring it back to Austria where it distributed throughout the country.

From year to year the number of countries participating in the Peacelight movement has grown to where it is now brought to schools, communities, churches and Scout groups throughout Europe and the world as a sign of hope and brotherhood - a light to unite all mankind.

We invite you to become bearers of the "light" and builders of Peace and spread the news to as many people as possible. We particularly hope that the Peacelight will be brought to places of suffering, to the outcasts, to those who see neither hope nor future in their lives. The distribution of the light can be the occasion for us to do a good deed, to visit those who are alone, or ill, to feed the starving...because even a prison is a place where the light should be brought.

The word "peace" brings to mind images of serenity and tranquility: it is not a dynamic concept. Instead peace requires commitment and perseverance.

No one has exclusive rights to the Peacelight of Bethlehem. Whoever organizes its distribution cannot be considered the sole owner of the flame.

Each one of us can give a different meaning to the Peacelight of Bethlehem as long as its value remains the same. We must take care to see that the candle remains lit and this helps us remember that this same care and vigilance must be given so the flame of peace does not go out in our hearts. As long as the Peacelight flame remains lit in our hearts, we will all be bearers of Peace.