

CATHOLICS

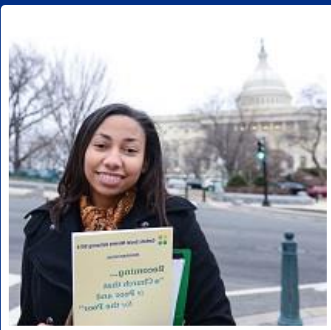
CONFRONT

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WORLD DAY OF PEACE 2019

At Xavier University of Louisiana, working to build a more just and humane society is at the heart of their mission. The CRS Student Ambassadors, who have received training in advocacy, coordinate visits to help students bring their concerns about issues such as migration to their elected officials. They see how global issues impact local issues. They seek justice locally for those who are marginalized and displaced—those who are homeless, and immigrants. Read more about how Xavier University and others are [using politics to promote peace in their communities](#).



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GOOD POLITICS AT THE SERVICE OF PEACE

How can we use our political and social systems to seek peace?

In announcing the theme for this year's World Day of Peace on January 1, 2019, the Vatican made note of the call to all of us to engage with our civic systems saying, "Everyone can contribute his or her stone to help build the common home." Instead of indifference, cynicism or thinking our voices do not matter, we believe the Gospel calls us to raise our voices for the common good, knowing that "political life can indeed become an outstanding form of charity."

Advocating for and with communities who are oppressed, disadvantaged, or excluded is a response to our baptismal call to love all members of the Body of Christ, in imitation of Christ's love. God created human beings as social and relational creatures, made in his own image. We are called to reach out and build relationships of love and justice, making love visible in structures and policies through political engagement. Pope Francis tells us, "Today more than ever, our societies need 'artisans of peace' who can be messengers and authentic witnesses of God the Father, who wills the good and the happiness of the human family."

We must work to ensure that the dignity of "each person, whatever his or her background" is protected through our political, social, and economic systems. As Pope Francis teaches us in his World Day of Peace Message, these systems must always work to promote peace in our communities. Catholic Social Teaching demands that politics must have a preferential option for the poor and vulnerable, and not be used to promote violence or marginalize those in poverty. Instead we know that "good politics is at the service of peace."

Pope Francis' message is the most recent in a long history of messages for the World Day of Peace beginning with Pope Paul VI in 1968. Find out more at bit.ly/jan-1-peace-day.

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At St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church in Texas, [the pro-life team organizes prayer for their community](#) whenever an execution is taking place in the state. How can you pray for victims of violence in your community?



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WHAT YOU CAN DO

- 1. Pray.** Pray for the grace to approach all political and social issues from a starting point of faith, love, and a spirit of generosity.
You may also try one of the prayer practices at bit.ly/9WaysPray to enrich your experience of prayer for peace.
- 2. Learn.** Civic participation and faithful citizenship requires us to understand the political and social issues that [impact our brothers and sisters](#) throughout the world. Visit USCCB resources on [Catholic Social Teaching](#) and [civic engagement](#) to further your knowledge. Read [stories of hope](#) to learn how faith communities are answering the call to work for peace and justice.
- 3. Act.** Join tens of thousands of Catholics to advocate for policies that support justice and peace in the U.S. and those experiencing poverty or conflict around the world. Take action today by visiting confrontglobalpoverty.org. Join 500+ Catholic Advocates on Capitol Hill for the [Catholic Social Ministry Gathering \(Feb. 2-5, 2019\)](#).

POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord God of peace, hear our prayer!

We have tried so many times and over so many years to resolve our conflicts by our own powers and by the force of our arms. How many moments of hostility and darkness have we experienced; how much blood has been shed; how many lives have been shattered; how many hopes have been buried . . .

Now, Lord, come to our aid! Grant us peace, teach us peace; guide our steps in the way of peace. Open our eyes and our hearts and give us the courage to say: "Never again war!" . . . Instill in our hearts the courage to take concrete steps to achieve peace.

Keep alive within us the flame of hope, so that with patience and perseverance we may opt for dialogue and reconciliation. In this way may peace triumph at last, and may the words "division", "hatred" and "war" be banished from the heart of every man and woman. . . . Renew our hearts and minds, so that the word which always brings us together will be "brother", and our way of life will always be that of: Shalom, Peace, Salaam!

Amen.