

Environment:

Chapel is dark - in front of lent display are a bunch of unlit candles... After each reading a candle is lit- symbolizing a light in the darkness. Candles will burn for certain amount of time in memory of those killed by violence (war, hated, etc.). 7 candles represent every thousand kids killed since Sandy Hook. (more or less)

Opening Prayer: Loving God, you are the author and sustainer of our lives. You know the anguish of the sorrowful; you are attentive to the prayers of the brokenhearted. Hear your people who cry out to you in their need; strengthen their hope in your lasting goodness.

We pray today for those who have died because of violence, of terrorism. Draw them to yourself; let your face shine upon them. May they be greeted with choirs of angels and experience your eternal peace and joy.

Be near to all those who have been touched by violence: those who have been hurt, lost their loved ones or lost their sense of security. Be for them a steady comfort and safe resting place.

Soften the hearts and steady of the minds of those who would do violence to others. May hate be replaced with love, violence with peace and darkness with your light.

Amen.

What we will hear next is a series of readings, 7 to be exact. After each reading, a candle will be lit, representing how we are called to be light to the world, to work for change, however that may be. As we hear in Matthew's gospel, Jesus says: **14** "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. **16** In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Reading 1. Do not return evil for evil, or insult for insult; but, on the contrary, a blessing, because to this you were called, that you might inherit a blessing. For: Whoever would love life and see good days must keep the tongue from evil and the lips from speaking deceit, must turn from evil and do good, seek peace and follow after it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears turned to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against evildoers.
1 Peter 3:9-11

Reading 2: Catechism of the Catholic Church: Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. And he is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead. (article 357)

Reading 3: From Pope Francis: This dialogue is what creates peace. It is impossible for peace to exist without dialogue. All the wars, all the strife, all the unsolved problems over which we clash are due to a lack of dialogue. When there is a problem, talk: this makes peace. (8/21/13)

Reading 4: Do not repay anyone evil for evil; be concerned for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, on your part, live at peace with all. If possible, on your part, live at peace with all. Beloved, do not look for revenge, rather, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.
Romans 12: 17-21

Reading 6: From Pope Francis: What can we do to make peace in the world? As Pope John said, it pertains to each individual to establish new relationships in human society under the mastery and guidance of justice and love (cf. John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*). All men and women of good will are bound by the task of pursuing peace. I make a forceful and urgent call to the entire Catholic Church, and also to every Christian of other confessions, as well as to followers of every religion and to those brothers and sisters who do not believe: peace is a good which overcomes every barrier, because it belongs all of humanity! (9/1/13)

Reading 5: I have told you this so that you might have peace in me. In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world.” John 16:33

Reading 7: From Pope Francis: I repeat forcefully: it is neither a culture of confrontation nor a culture of conflict which builds harmony within and between peoples, but rather a culture of encounter and a culture of dialogue; this is the only way to peace. May the plea for peace rise up and touch the heart of everyone so that they may lay down their weapons and be let themselves be led by the desire for peace.

Call to Action: Walk up to the kid who sits alone at lunch and invite him to sit with you. Walk up to the kid who sits quietly in the corner, smile and say hi. Walk up to the kid who may be disruptive in class and ask him how he’s doing. Walk up to teachers and school staff and say thank you. Walk up to someone who has different views than you and get to know him/her. Walk up to 14 students and 3 teachers and say something kind. Honor the lives of those lost by walking up.

Dignity/Non Violence/Respect Pledge

Reading: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7

Closing Prayer: Lord, we pray for the power to be gentle; the strength to be forgiving; the patience to be understanding; and the endurance to accept the consequences of holding to what we believe to be right.

May we put our trust in the power of good to overcome evil and the power of love to overcome hatred.

We pray for the vision to see and the faith to believe in a world emancipated from violence, a new world where fear shall no longer lead men to commit injustice, nor selfishness make them bring suffering to others.

Help us to devote our whole life and thought and energy to the task of making peace, praying always for the inspiration and the power to fulfill the destiny for which we and all men were created.