

# **A Witness to Peace:** *A Multi-Religious Gathering with Pope Francis*

[At the National September 11<sup>th</sup> Memorial and Museum:  
September 25, 2015, 11:30 am—12:45 pm.]

## **Entrance of the Holy Father**

*Instrumental music is played as the Holy Father enters Foundation Hall.*

## **Welcome of the Holy Father**

[Cardinal Timothy Michael Dolan, Archbishop of New York;  
*Submitted by His Eminence to the Holy See back in July.*]

## **Reflections of a Rabbi and an Imam**

[Rabbi Elliot Cosgrove (EC), Park Avenue Synagogue, Imam from a New York City mosque and Imam Khalid Latif (KL), Muslim Chaplain, New York University]

(EC) In this place, where horrendous violence was committed falsely in the name of God, we, representatives of the world religions in this great city of New York, gather to offer words of comfort and prayer. With love and affection, we recall the victims of the 9/11 attacks. We pray that their souls, and the souls of those serving the FDNY, NYPD, PAPD and NJPD, are forever remembered for an eternal blessing. Today and

everyday, may we understand our shared mission to be, in the words of Pope Francis, “a field hospital after battle” - to heal the wounds and warm the hearts of a humanity in so desperate need of comfort.

(KL) Intolerance and ignorance fueled those who attacked this place. The courage of today's gathering distinguishes us from the opponents of religious freedom as we stand together as brothers and sisters to condemn their horrific acts of violence and honor each life that was lost unconditionally, as we read in the Qur'an that "one life lost is like all mankind" and "one life saved is like all mankind." To God all life is sacred and precious. Where others fail, let us be the peaceful reminders of that notion to His creation.

(EC) The book of Psalms teaches us that we should love peace and pursue peace. Let us honor those killed in this place by becoming, in the words of St. Francis, “instruments of peace.” Where there is hatred, let us sow love. Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is doubt, faith. Where there is despair, hope. Where there is darkness, light and where there is sadness, joy.

(KL) Men and women from all walks of life ran to this place in hopes of saving lives. The sole intent of those first responders was the protection of others, regardless of the cost to them as individuals. As the worst of humanity sought to take life, they exemplified the best of humanity through their selflessness, willing to give their entire life in hopes of saving another. Their story is one that each of us should carry forward with us, both in thought and in action, as we move

forward from this place. The Qur'an declares that "Allah is with those who are righteous and those who do good." Let us embody their unconditional love, their continued strength, their unwavering hope, and their pursuit of good, as we seek to build a much needed peace.

(EC) Let us learn to share this "Big Apple" we call home – in all its diversity and flavor. Through friendship and dialogue, may the timbre and tonality of each of our faith traditions be heard in the great symphony of our city and nation. In the words of Your Holiness "May we respect and love one another as brothers and sisters. May we learn to understand the sufferings of others." May we live to see the day, as envisioned by the prophet Micah, that everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree and no one shall make them afraid, for the Lord Almighty has spoken. (Micah 4:4)

(KL) The Quran states "Oh Mankind, we have created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes so that you might know one another." We have gathered here today as men and women who seek to meet ignorance with understanding. Through our knowing of each other today, let us move beyond a mere toleration of our differences and work towards a much-needed celebration of them. Let us be bold enough to build partnerships with new friends and allies and together be the reason that people have hope in this world, not the reason that people dread it.

# Prayer of Remembrance

[Holy Father]

O God of love, compassion, and healing,  
look on us, people of many different faiths  
and religious traditions,  
who gather today on this hallowed ground,  
the scene of unspeakable violence and pain.  
We ask you in your goodness  
to give eternal light and peace  
to all who died here:  
the heroic first-responders:  
our fire fighters, police officers,  
emergency service workers, and  
Port Authority personnel,  
along with all the innocent men and women  
who were victims of this tragedy  
simply because their work or service  
brought them here on September 11, 2001.

We ask you, in your compassion,  
to bring healing to those  
who, because of their presence here fourteen years ago,  
continue to suffer from injuries and illness.  
Heal, too, the pain of still-grieving families  
and all who lost loved ones in this tragedy.  
Give them strength to continue their lives  
with courage and hope.

We are mindful as well

of those who suffered death, injury, and loss  
on the same day at the Pentagon and in  
Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

Our hearts are one with theirs  
as our prayer embraces their pain and suffering.

God of peace, bring your peace to our violent world:  
peace in the hearts of all men and women  
and peace among the nations of the earth.

Turn to your way of love  
those whose hearts and minds  
are consumed with hatred  
and who justify killing in the name of religion.

God of understanding,  
overwhelmed by the magnitude of this tragedy,  
we seek your light and guidance  
as we confront such terrible events.

Grant that those whose lives were spared  
may live so that the lives lost here  
may not have been lost in vain.

Comfort and console us,  
strengthen us in hope,  
and give us the wisdom and courage  
to work tirelessly for a world  
where true peace and love reign  
among nations and in the hearts of all.

**Meditations on Peace**

*Each meditation is read first in the sacred tongue and then in English. After each prayer, a bell will toll.*

### *A Hindu Meditation*

Om sahanaav-avatu, sahanaav bhunaktu.  
Saha veeryam karavaa-vahai.  
Tejaswinaa-vadheetam-astu,  
ma vid-vishavahai.  
Om shantih, shantih, shantih.  
Asati ma sad-gamaya;  
tamaso am jyotir-gamaya;  
mrttyorma amrutam gamaya.  
Om..shantih, shantih, shantih”

Om...May He protect us both (gug and disciple).  
May he cause us to enjoy (the Supreme).  
May we both work with great energy.  
May our study become brilliant.  
May we not hate each other.  
Om.. peace, peace, peace.  
Lead me from unreal to real;  
lead me from darkness To light  
lead me from death to immortality.  
Om..peace, peace, peace. *[A bell tolls.]*

### *A Buddhist Meditation*

Jayam veram pasavati  
dukkham seti parajito

upasanto sukham seti  
hitva jayaparajayam.  
Na ca khuddam samacare kinci  
Yena viññu pare upava-deyyum  
Sukhino va khemino hontu  
Sabbe satta bhavantu sukhitatta

Victory begets enmity;  
the defeated dwell in pain;  
the peaceful live happily  
Discarding both victory and defeat.  
One Should not do any slight wrong  
Which the wise might censure,  
May all beings be happy and secure!  
May all beings have happy minds!  
PEACE! [*A bell tolls.*]

#### *A Sikh Meditation*

Waheguru saanu saade aachaar ton jaanda hai, naa ki saade bhes ton. Sachahu ouari sabh ko, oupar sach aachaar. Waheguru da milap aapsi piar vich hai, kion ki sirf ohee jit sathaaee hai jis vich kise di vi haar naa hovai.

God judges us according to our deeds, not the coat that we wear: that Truth is above everything, and the highest deed is truthful living. Know that we attain God when we love, and only that victory endures, in consequence of which no one is defeated. [*A bell tolls.*]

#### *A Christian Meditation*

Μακάριοι οί πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. μακάριοι οί πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται. μακάριοι οί πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσι τὴν γῆν. μακάριοι οί πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται. μακάριοι οί ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται. μακάριοι οί καθαροί τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν Θεὸν ὄψονται. μακάριοι οί εἰρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ Θεοῦ κληθήσονται. μακάριοι οί δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν..

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [*A bell tolls.*]

### *A Muslim Meditation*

Allahumma antassalamu, wa minkas salaamu wa ilaika yarjaus-salaamu; haiyinna rabbana bis-Salaami, wa adhkilna dar us-Salaami, tabarakta rabbana wa taalaiyt, ya dhal Jalaali wal Ikraam.

O Allah! You are Peace, and All Peace is from You; and all Peace returns to You. Grant us to live with the salutation of



peace, and lead us to your abode of Peace. You are blessed,  
our Lord, and Exalted, O Owner of Magnificence and Honor!  
*[A bell tolls.]*

## Jewish Prayer in Honor of the Deceased (sung)

O G-d, full of compassion, Who dwells on high,  
grant true rest upon the wings of the Shechinah,  
in the exalted spheres of the holy and pure,  
who shine as the resplendence of the firmament,  
to the souls of Victims of September 11th  
who [have] gone to their eternal home;  
may their place of rest be in Gan Eden.  
Therefore, may the All-Merciful One  
shelter them with the cover of His wings forever,  
and bind their souls in the bond of life.  
The Lord is their heritage; may they rest in peace;  
and let us say: Amen!

## Reflection by the Holy Father

### Choral piece

[Performed by the Young People's Chorus of New York City]  
*Let There Be Peace on Earth* (Copyrighted lyrics by Jill Jackson & Sy Miller)

Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.  
Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.  
With God our Creator, family all are we;  
Let us walk with each other, in perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me, let this be the moment now.  
With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow:  
To take each moment and live each moment in peace  
eternally,  
Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.

## Sign of Peace

*His Eminence, Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan invites all present to exchange a sign of peace to those nearest them. Ten religious leaders on the stage exchange a brief sign of peace with the Holy Father.*

## Departure of Holy Father

*After the exchange of peace, the Holy Father exits Foundation Hall as a joyful instrumental piece is played. He is escorted to a room in which is kept the piece of steel recovered by firefighters that is in the form of a cross and a bible found at the site. The Holy Father then departs the museum.*