

Social Justice Week 2023 Reflection Booklet

**Te Pukapuka Āta Whakaaro mō ngā Whakaritenga
Tika ā-Pāpori 2023**



REFLECTION BOOKLET

Imagine Peace for All: Peace Begins with You!

**Pohewatia te Rangimārie mō te Katoa: Ka tīmata
tonu te rangimārie i roto i ā koe!**



**SOCIAL JUSTICE WEEK
TE WIKI O TE WHAI TIKI
3-9 SEPTEMBER**

 **Caritas**
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Peace Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as
to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.



Te Īnoi a Hāto Werahiko o Assisi mō te Rangimārie

Meatia au hei kaimahi mō tō rangimārie
mehemea he mauāhara, waiho mai au hei kairuirui i te aroha;
me he wharanga, hei kaimuru i te hē;
me he rangirua, hei kairuirui i te whakapono;
me he pōkaikaha, hei kairuirui i te tūmanako;
me he kerekere, hei kairuirui i te māramatanga;
me he pāpōuri, hei kairuirui i te harikoa.

E te Ariki i te Rangi, tukua au kia kaua e whai i te awhinga a ētahi,
engari kia awhi,
kia kaua e whai kia mārama ētahi ki ahau, engari kia mārama,
kia kaua e whai kia arohaina mai au, engari kia aroha ki ētahi atu.
Nā te mea kei te hoatutanga ko te whiwhinga mō tātou,
kei te murunga i te hē ka murua ō tātou hē,
kei te matenga rawatanga ko te whānautanga ki te oranga tonutanga.
Āmene

What is Social Justice Week?

He aha tēnei mea te Wiki Whakaritenga Tika ā-Pāpori?

Social Justice Week was established by the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference (NZCBC) in 1997. It serves as an ongoing commitment in the Catholic calendar to consider, reflect and act on a particular current social justice issue through the lens of Catholic social teaching. Social Justice Week falls during the liturgical season of Ordinary Time, when the liturgical readings teach us about discipleship. Our liturgical gathering on Sunday reminds us of the Church as a community and as a family united in prayer. The mercy and compassion we receive from God flows out into the rest of our week and into our relationships in our wider community.

The new three-year focus for Social Justice Week

Te arotahi toru tau hou mō te Wiki Whakaritenga Tika ā-Pāpori

This year we are introducing a new structure for Social Justice Week. Our focus on peace and conflict will span three years, with the resources each year expanding on the previous year's material. This year, as the first year, we will be introducing our key ideas, and encouraging reflection on building peace in our personal lives to foster peace in our wider world.



Why Peace? He aha i whāia ai ko te Rangimārie?

Catholic social teaching sees peace as an essential component of social justice, which is based on the principles of respect for human dignity, the pursuit of the common good, and the protection of human rights. It calls for a transformation of social structures and systems that perpetuate violence, inequality and injustice, and for the promotion of a culture of peace that values dialogue, reconciliation, and nonviolent conflict resolution. Personal peace with ourselves and with God is the first step on the path to building peace in our communities and in the world.

This year's focus Te arotahi mō tēnei tau

Pope Francis has a lot to say about peace. He indicates that there are two levels on which the commitment to peace is carried out – the political and the personal. He often talks about the natural human desire for “peaceful co-existence” and the fact that true peace is found in Christ alone. He identifies the impact of the Holy Spirit in our lives: “One of the distinctive signs of the good spirit is the fact that it communicates a peace that lasts in time. A peace that brings harmony, unity, fervour, zeal.” When making good decisions one has a peace that is felt through the Spirit.

Searching online you can find lots of useful tips for finding this personal peace, or inner peace as it is sometimes termed. These include meditation, taking a break from social media, working on your breathing, being kind, laughing, connecting with nature, expressing yourself and being mindful. These are all useful, but they miss the one essential ingredient to finding true personal peace, as Pope Francis identifies: this is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Personal peace is the focus of this year's resources because like the Social Justice Week 2023 tagline states, ‘Peace begins with you.’ We cannot promote peace effectively until we understand and experience peace ourselves. Coming back to Pope Francis again, he points out that the peace that we can give to others does not come from our own abilities but is rather a manifestation of the grace of Christ.

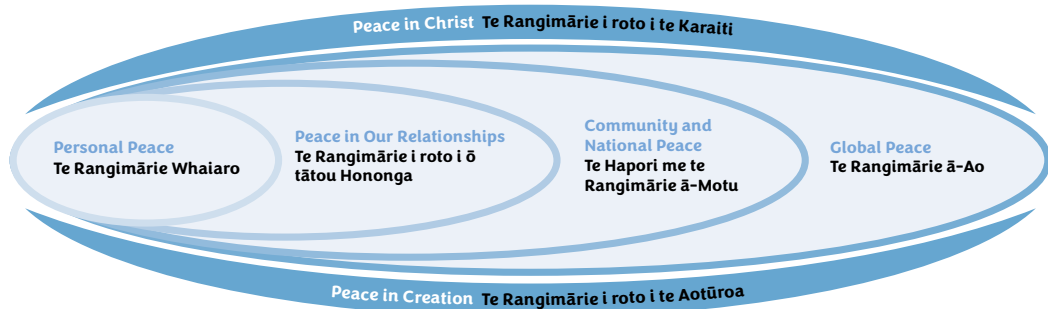
Circles of Peace Ngā Porohita Rangimārie

True peace comes through Christ. ‘Circles of peace’ are a way to describe the areas where peace is shown. As the diagram below shows, building peace starts with ourselves then extends to our immediate circle of relationships, and then to the wider world. Christ and creation are present in all these circles.

Finding personal peace involves balancing different aspects of our lives, including spiritual, social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing. These dimensions are shown in the diagram below. Developing healthy coping mechanisms for stress and conflict will help with the next circle.

The second circle of peace is our immediate relationships, such as family, friends, and people we spend lots of time with. By cultivating peace within ourselves, we are better able to communicate and empathise with those around us, creating a positive and peaceful environment.

The third circle of peace is the wider community and our nation extending then to the fourth circle which is the world. As we extend peace to our immediate relationships, we are better equipped to promote peace and reconciliation in the wider world. This can be done through volunteering, advocacy, or simply being a positive influence in our communities.



How to use this booklet

Me pēhea te whakamahi i tēnei pukapuka

This booklet can be used to guide you or your study group through a seven-session reflection on peace, conflict, and the different ways we can build personal peace.

Each session begins with the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, forming a common link which reminds us of the peace of Christ being fundamental to all other aspects of peace. After this, each session starts with a reflection question to open discussion and contemplation as a group. Sessions will typically include an exploration of the key theme, a case study or example of that theme playing out in the world, and a discussion of how we can put this into practice through our actions. Further questions for individual or group reflection are found throughout each section.

The materials and case studies in this booklet are simply a guide to provide direction and prompts for individuals or groups to think and share about their experiences of their faith and how it can be put into action building peace.

Outline of booklet Te anga o te pukapuka

The first and last sessions are the most important, as they will explore what peace means and how we can build it in our personal lives. The middle five sections explore personal peace in different contexts:

- **Peace in our hearts** relates to our spiritual wellbeing. This involves peace in our relationship with Christ and with ourselves.
- **Peace in our relationships** relates to our social wellbeing. This involves peace in our encounters with those close to us.
- **Peace in our communities** relates to our cultural wellbeing. This requires just and peaceful relationships between groups in society.
- **Peace in creation** relates to our environmental wellbeing. This involves both the benefits we receive from nature, and our role in caring for it.
- **Peace in our work** relates to our economic wellbeing. This involves balancing work with the other parts of our lives.

Session 1: What is Peace?

Wāhanga 1: He aha tēnei mea te Rangimārie?

Opening Prayer: Peace Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi (see pages 2–3)

To begin this reflection on building personal peace, take some time to reflect on and/or discuss the following question:

What does peace mean to you?

The word ‘peace’ can mean different things to different people. Often, it is taken to mean the absence of violence or chaos – essentially the opposite of war. This concept is known as **negative peace**. Negative peace is often a first step to peace, but it can conceal a wide variety of underlying problems, and when people are working only to achieve negative peace, there will always be unrest and cycles of violence and conflict. **Positive peace** is the presence of attitudes and practices that move past conflict and build a more just society. Positive peace can be the next step to peace, and requires an active effort to maintain and build. Building positive peace includes addressing injustices, systems of inequality within our communities, advocating for those not given a voice.

In the Christian tradition I te ao Karaitiana

Peace is often understood as a state of harmony and wholeness that comes from being in right relationship with God, oneself, others, and the natural world. The Christian conception of peace aligns with positive peace, stressing the importance of building healthy relationships. It is often associated with the biblical concept of **shalom**, which encompasses not only the absence of conflict or violence but also the presence of justice, righteousness, and flourishing.

Shalom can be described as an inward sense of completeness or wholeness. It functions as a peace-filled greeting – when people greet each other in Israel saying ‘Shalom’, they are basically saying, “may you be full of well-being” or, “may health and prosperity be upon you.”

“In Hebrew, when one says *shalòm*, one is wishing a beautiful, fulfilled and prosperous life, but also in terms of truth and justice that will find fulfilment in the Messiah, the Prince of Peace” – Pope Francis, General Audience April 2020.

In Arabic, the word **salaam** shares the same root as *shalom*. The greeting “*As salamu alaykum*” means “peace be upon you” and is a ubiquitous peaceful greeting in the Muslim world; it is also commonly used by Arab Christians.

Think of things in life that make you feel at peace.

Why are these peaceful for you?

Are they a temporary peace, or do they reflect shalom, the peace of Christ?



In te ao Māori I te ao Māori

The Māori word **rangimārie** combines the terms *rangi* (outward expanding, like the sky) and *mārie* (peace, harmony, completeness, tranquillity). Rangimārie aligns with the concept of positive peace, with a meaning of radiating an aura of peacefulness. The greeting “Ata mārie!” means “Good morning!” and is another example of a peace-filled greeting.

This aligns with positive peace, conveying an understanding that personal peace is not something we can keep to ourselves, but which can only exist when we share it with the world around us through our relationships.

In what ways do you experience or pursue peace in your life, relationships, and community?

In Catholic social teaching

I roto i ngā akoranga pāpori Katorika

The Catholic social teaching principle **promotion of peace** calls on us to work together for the common good and actively commit to building a better world. Therefore, instead of shying away from or ignoring our differences to avoid conflict, we should be open to understanding them and actively building peace with others. As said in Pope Francis's encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, "*Integrating differences is a much more difficult and slow process, yet it is the guarantee of a genuine and lasting peace.*" Based on these teachings, it is important that we acknowledge differences with others, and even conflict within ourselves, and be willing to work through it.

We know that the promotion of peace is a clear Catholic social teaching on peacebuilding. How do the other CST principles align with being a peacebuilder?

CST Principles – in a nutshell



Participation

"Taking part"



Common Good

"Thinking of everyone"



Distributive Justice

"Sharing fairly"



Preferential Option for the Poor & Vulnerable

"Putting people in most need first"



Human Dignity

"Everyone is special"



Promotion of Peace

"Being peacemakers"



Stewardship

"Caring for God's gifts"



Solidarity

"Showing we care"



Subsidiarity

"Everyone should have a say"



Closing Prayer: Prayer for Peace, Pope St. John Paul II

Karakia Whakakapinga: He Īnoi mō te Rangimārie, nā Pāpā Hāto Hōani II

Lord Jesus Christ, who are called the Prince of Peace, who are Yourself our peace and reconciliation, who so often said, “Peace to you” – please grant us peace.

Make all men and women witnesses of truth, justice, and brotherly love. Banish from their hearts whatever might endanger peace. Enlighten our rulers that they may guarantee and defend the great gift of peace.

May all peoples on the earth become as brothers and sisters.

May longed-for peace blossom forth and reign always over us all.

Amen.

Session 2: Peace in our hearts

Wāhanga 2: Te rangimārie i roto i ō tātou ngākau

Opening Prayer: Peace Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi (see pages 2–3)

To begin this reflection on building personal peace, take some time to reflect on and/or discuss the following question:

How would you describe the peace of Christ?

Peace is a common theme throughout scripture. In John 14:27, Jesus says to his disciples *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”* This peace that Jesus gives is the promise of God’s love, something that is bigger than the peace that we may find by ourselves.

The peace of God is not the absence of hard times or conflict. Jesus does not give any pretence that we won’t face tribulations in life. But the peace of God – *shalom* – is the assuredness and wholeness we find when we trust absolutely in the Lord, despite the troubles. Jesus tells us *“In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!”* (John 16:33).

This peace from God is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, a gift given to us to guide us in life. The peace that Jesus leaves with us begins as a personal peace, driven by our relationship with the Lord. The pursuit of this personal peace is an important part of God’s plan for us. *“For no one can leave others peace if they do not have it within themselves. No one can give peace unless that person is at peace.”* (Pope Francis at Regina Caeli, 22 May 2022).

Personal peace is often conceptualised as the realisation of some form of inner tranquillity, but rest and stillness are not the only components of peace. To have a right relationship with God, one cannot shy away from the trials of life, from conflict and opposition.

How do you seek God’s peace in your life?

Case study: St Thérèse of Lisieux

St Thérèse of Lisieux was a French Catholic Discalced Carmelite nun, who lived from 1873–1897. Though she passed at just age 24, her approach to life has significantly impacted the Catholic community, and for many has laid a path for walking with God.



St Thérèse is well known for her acknowledgement of her personal insignificance. In her pursuit of God and hope for sainthood, she truly recognised how big the world's problems are, and how small any contributions she could offer seemed to be. By reckoning with her own smallness, she understood that she had to learn to ask God for help.

When we find ourselves intimidated by or feeling hopeless about the state of the world, we can remind ourselves of St Thérèse of Lisieux's philosophy. To achieve 'peace' is something that seems unlikely, and without God, will certainly never be achievable for more than a short time.

The peace of God, which lies in the Holy Spirit, is the recognition that while you may not be able to solve all the world's problems, or predict where life may take you, you can find assurance that all is right in your soul.

Peace begins with you. Peace is built one action at a time, by the way we choose to live our lives. If we live in the pursuit of God's peace, and find assurance in God's promise to us, we can build a personal peace to share with others. If this seems like a big task, we know that we can turn to God, who knows our capabilities. As St Thérèse of Lisieux wrote, *"You know well enough that Our Lord does not look so much at the greatness of our actions, nor even at their difficulty, but at the love with which we do them"*.

If you ever experience feelings of hopelessness or insignificance, what are some of the ways you bring yourself back to the hope of God?

What are some spiritual practices or habits that help you connect with God and experience his peace in your life?

Actions for this session:

- Make note of any times over the week where you feel troubled or afraid. Turn these to God.
- Be conscious of your attitudes towards things you encounter (e.g., interactions with people, current events, day-to-day challenges). Do they match those of the Spirit of God and the love of God (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)?

Closing prayer: A Prayer for Anxiety

Īnoi Whakakapinga: He Īnoi mō te Āwangawanga

Fortify me with the grace of Your Holy Spirit and give Your peace to my soul that I may be free from all needless anxiety, solicitude, and worry. Help me to desire always that which is pleasing and acceptable to You so that Your will may be my will.

— St. Francesca Xavier Cabrini



Session 3: Peace in our relationships

Wāhanga 3: Te rangimārie i roto i ō tātou hononga

Opening Prayer: Peace Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi (see pages 2–3)

To begin this reflection on building personal peace, take some time to reflect on and/or discuss the following question:

How do you define family?

In this session, we turn our focus to building peace in ourselves and in our relationships with those closest to us. Jesus tells us that the key to eternal life is to “*love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.*” (Luke 10:27). Through the eyes of God, building personal peace does not mean keeping it to yourself but sharing this peace with others through love and the pursuit of justice. Our personal well-being is not solely determined by our individual peace, but also the peace in our relationships with those closest to us. It might seem like a simple fact, but having people around us to share our lives with is very important to personal peace and happiness.

Whakawhanaungatanga is a Māori process for building relationships, growing connections, sharing life, and feeling a sense of belonging. It is an important aspect of life, to build peace and unity within our whānau. Part of whakawhanaungatanga is actively listening to others and embracing our differences, letting them bring us closer together rather than driving us apart. We can also look to Catholic social teaching, which establishes the importance of **solidarity** – recognising that we are all brothers and sisters and should be actively working to build relationships and promote the **common good**. To understand each other, we must be there for each other. But peace begins with each of us, making the decision to build or fix our relationships, and choosing to seek peace with those around us.

What roles might relationships with whānau, family, and friends play in our journeys to seek the peace of Christ?

Case Study: Ruth and Naomi

In the Bible, the story of Ruth provides an example of building family and sharing peace with one another, even in times of hardship. Ruth's story begins with Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law, and the death of Naomi's husband and her two sons. Ruth and Orpah, who were married to Naomi's sons, are now left without husbands as well. Naomi encourages them to return to their families in the Kingdom of Moab, while Naomi returns the Kingdom of Judah, as she knows that life will be difficult for Orpah and Ruth, as unmarried, foreign widows. Although Orpah chooses to return to her home, Ruth insists that wherever Naomi goes is now her home:

"Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. ¹⁷ Where you die, I will die – there will I be buried. May the Lord do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!" (Ruth 1:17).

Ruth chooses to stay with Naomi, who she has built a relationship with, despite having no husband to provide for her or Naomi in what was a very patriarchal society. Naomi is Ruth's family now, and Naomi's God is Ruth's God. Ruth and Naomi are both suffering from loss, which could have easily been a source of conflict. Instead, Ruth and Naomi choose to support each other through pain and uncertainty and celebrate together in times of joy. And although she has followed Naomi to an unfamiliar place, Ruth trusts in Naomi, and in God, to guide her to peace. The story of Ruth is an example of familial love, and the care that God has for us. We know that Ruth's care for and trust in Naomi leads to Ruth's relationship with Boaz, and the birth of Obed, an ancestor of Jesus.



Ruth's Story (1876-7). Thomas Matthews Rooke. Triptych of Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz. Oil on canvas. Left to Right: Naomi, Ruth, and Obed. Ruth and Boaz. Naomi and Ruth. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/rooke-naomi-and-ruth-a00841>

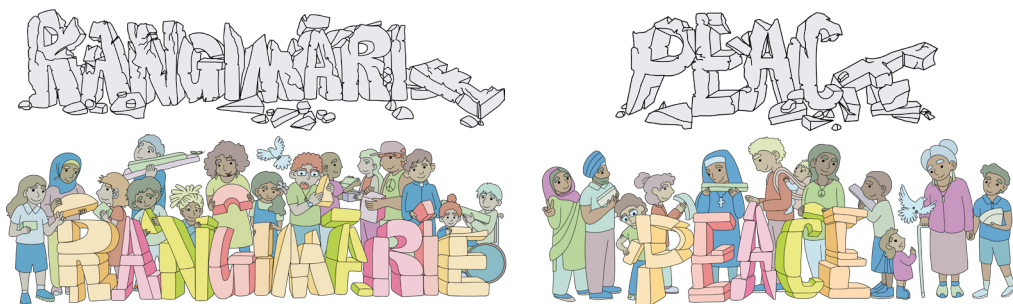
Consider how things might have turned out differently for Ruth and Naomi if they didn't trust in each other and choose to face their hardships as a family.

Maintaining our relationships with our whānau can prove challenging. There are many things that can cause strain in our close relationships, including loss, distance, and differing opinions or values. We also need to recognise that building peace can be a complicated journey, and one person's pathway to building personal peace could be the cause for another person's pain. At times it may seem easier to return to places that are familiar to us, and not pursue change. But the peace that God gives us is an active peace, one that calls for action and unity.

Some steps we can take to grow closer to others around us include making time for one another, taking care to actively listen to what each other has to say, and leaning on each other in times of need.

What are some obstacles in your personal relationships that disrupt peace?

How can you work to overcome these obstacles and promote greater understanding and harmony?



Closing Prayer: Prayer for Harmony Īnoi Whakakapinga: He Īnoi mō te Rangimārie Pūmau

Heavenly Father,

We come before you today asking for your help in bringing peace to our relationships. You know the struggles and conflicts that we are facing, and we ask that you guide us in our interactions with others. Help us to be patient, kind and understanding towards those around us, even when it is difficult. Help us to let go of any anger or bitterness we may be holding onto, and to forgive those who may have hurt us.

Bless our relationships with your love and help us to see others through your eyes. May we always strive to be peacemakers, and to work towards reconciliation and understanding in our relationships with others.

Thank you for your grace and mercy, and for the peace that comes from knowing you. We ask for your continued guidance and protection in all areas of our lives and pray that you will use us as instruments of your peace.

Āmene.

Session 4: Peace in our communities

Wāhanga 4: Te rangimārie i roto i ō tātou hapori

Opening Prayer: Peace Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi (see pages 2–3)

To begin this reflection on building personal peace, take some time to reflect on and/or discuss the following question:

Is there a culture of peace in your community?

The communities we live in play a big part in our lives, and if there is not peace within our community, we cannot have personal peace. God tells us that “*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus*” (Galatians 3:28), making it clear that injustice and inequality have no place alongside the peace of Christ.

If we seek Christ’s peace, we must think about the barriers between people that exist in our society due to culture, ethnicity, religion, and other aspects of identity. To build peace in our communities, we must work to bring down these barriers, improving the cultural wellbeing of everyone in society. This aligns with the Catholic social teaching principles of the **common good** and **human dignity**.

Is everybody in your community treated fairly? Are there barriers based on any aspects of people’s identity?

Case Study: Te Tiriti and the health system

Unfortunately, there are still many people in Aotearoa New Zealand who face barriers in our communities based on their culture, ethnicity, or religion. In 1840, the Crown signed Te Tiriti o Waitangi with Māori in which Māori were guaranteed Ōritetanga (usually translated as “equal rights as British subjects”), yet despite this, today Māori face injustice and inequality in many areas including health and education.



In the field of health, Māori face worse outcomes than any other ethnic group in Aotearoa New Zealand. The WAI 2575 *Hauora* report details how Māori have the most need for healthcare services – they face higher rates of many conditions including cancer and heart disease – while at the same time, they face the most difficulties in accessing healthcare. Often, Māori face direct racism when trying to access healthcare, discouraging, or preventing them from accessing it. The health system itself is designed in line with Western attitudes and approaches to health which ignore important Māori cultural approaches, which can make Māori feel excluded or uncomfortable in the system. Some primary healthcare providers operate in ways that are culturally appropriate for Māori, but these have been chronically underfunded. In areas with large Māori populations (such as Te Tai Tokerau Northland), even government healthcare providers are underfunded per capita compared with the rest of the country.

What would healthcare in this country look like if Te Tiriti had been honoured?

How can we uphold the principle of human dignity for all in healthcare?

If there are barriers affecting large parts of our society accessing basic needs, how does this impact our personal peace as a part of our community?

For further engagement with cultural peace, have a look at the study guide on racism that was produced for Social Justice Week 2022. You can view this online at <https://www.caritas.org.nz/parishes/social-justice-week-2022> or order a copy by emailing caritas@caritas.org.nz

Every day we have opportunities to build a culture of peace in our communities. This is especially true in 2023, an election year. Elections give us an opportunity to come together to try and build a more peaceful country, but they also run the risk of stirring up conflict and driving us apart.

It is a fundamental part of democracy that we will have differences of opinion, and it can be productive to discuss these with other people. The Catholic social teaching principle of **participation** invites all of us to be involved in decision-making. However, it is important to think about *how* we express our views. Many sensitive issues that affect people deeply become ‘political footballs’ during an election.

How would it make you feel if issues affecting your life were debated politically in front of you? How would you want people to talk about you?

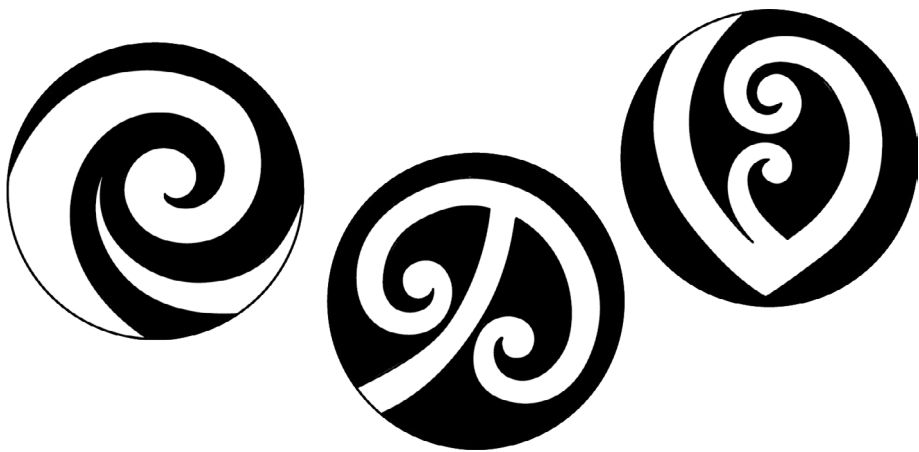
How can we enjoy our own right of participation without affecting other people’s comfort in participating and experience of human dignity?

Closing prayer: Pope Francis's prayer from *Fratelli Tutti* /

Īnoi whakakapinga: Te Reta a Pāpā Werahiko, mai i *Fratelli Tutti*

Lord, Father of our human family,
you created all human beings equal in dignity:
pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit
and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter,
dialogue, justice, and peace.
Move us to create healthier societies
and a more dignified world,
a world without hunger, poverty, violence, and war.

May our hearts be open
to all the peoples and nations of the earth.
May we recognise the goodness and beauty
that you have sown in each of us,
and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects,
and shared dreams. Amen.



Session 5: Peace in creation

Wāhanga 5: Te rangimārie i roto i te aotūroa

Opening Prayer: Peace Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi (see pages 2–3)

To begin this reflection on building personal peace, take some time to reflect on and/or discuss the following question:

Do I play a peaceful role as a part of God’s creation?

In Genesis, God creates the natural world, and creates humanity to be its guardians. There is a clear Christian understanding that we have a responsibility to care for and protect the environment, and in return it is through the environment that God gives us sustenance. When this reciprocal relationship is in balance, we can build peace in creation.

Catholic social teaching tells us we have a duty to practice **stewardship** of the natural world, aligning with the Māori concept of **kaitiakitanga**. This calls on us to respect God’s creation and be conscious of our impacts upon it. Pope Francis writes that “If we approach nature and the environment without this openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs.” Clearly, this is not the way to build peace with nature.

Pope Francis tells us “By contrast, if we feel intimately united with all that exists, then sobriety and care will well up spontaneously.” Catholic social teaching clearly calls us to be mindful of our own connection to nature through God. When we respect this connection, it can become a reciprocal relationship of care wherein we care for the environment, and it provides for our physical and mental wellbeing.

How do you see yourself with respect to nature?

How does your use of natural resources reflect stewardship?

Case Study: Green spaces

Green spaces in cities are a clear example of what this relationship can look like. Studies have shown that the absence of plant life in large cities has terrible effects on people's health and the environment around them.



Concrete absorbs much more heat than soil or plants, which can make city areas 3-4°C hotter.

With no plants to absorb rainfall, stormwater flows are much more extreme. Air pollution is also much worse without plants to filter the air. Lack of time spent in natural spaces also has a direct negative effect on people's mental health and is associated with increased stress.

By encouraging green spaces in cities, we can reduce these health risks. Planting different tree species, opening up access to parks, and establishing green spaces on building rooftops are all ways to increase access to the benefits plants provide. This also provides homes for insect and animal species, encouraging the restoration of nature.

On an individual level, even flowerboxes on a balcony or taking fifteen minutes for a stroll in the park can provide significant health benefits. These stem from our reciprocal relationship with nature – when we take time to appreciate and nurture the natural world, we enhance our health and wellbeing.

Actions for this session:

Think about your own personal relationship with nature. What opportunities do you have to connect with the natural world?

Even when nature and greenery is all around us, we aren't necessarily taking it in. Where do you see God's peace reflected in His creation?

Closing Prayer: Prayer from *Laudato Si'*

Īnoi Whakakapinga: He karakia mai i *Laudato Si'*

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognise that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love, and peace.
Amen.

Session 6: Peace in our work

Wāhanga 6: Te rangimārie i roto i ā tātou mahi

Opening Prayer: Peace Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi (see pages 2–3)

To begin this reflection on building personal peace, take some time to reflect on and/or discuss the following question:

How can we cultivate personal peace amid stress, anxiety, or difficult circumstances in our daily lives?

In modern society, we are under a constant burden to work and earn an income. This is truer than ever in 2023, with a cost-of-living crisis, potential upcoming recession, and continuing recovery from COVID-19. This puts pressure on us to give more and more time and energy to our work. To achieve peace in our work, it is important to balance it with the other aspects of our life.

‘Work’ doesn’t always mean paid employment. For many people, particularly the young and the elderly, work can mean study, hobbies, or the duties we feel to our friends and family.

Work is clearly important in our lives, and has its place. Jesus says, “render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Mathew 22:21). This tells us that a balance between work and other parts of our life is necessary. When we are struggling to achieve this balance, it can be useful to think about *why* we are working.

Many people work to earn the money we need to care for ourselves and those around us. If we forget this end goal, we run the danger of becoming caught up in our work and losing the time and energy to care for ourselves and our loved ones. Remembering the end goal can help motivate us when we are at work, and ensure we maintain balance between work and the rest of our lives.

Why do we work? How does work help us meet the other needs in our lives?

Case Study: Pope Francis on work

On 19 August 2015, Pope Francis delivered an address regarding work at the Paul VI audience hall (a link to the full transcript can be found at the end of the booklet). In this message, Pope Francis reflected on the importance of work in our lives, and the way that its meaning has been lost in modern society.



Pope Francis tells us that “work is sacred” and “when work is detached from God’s covenant with man and woman, and it is separated from its spiritual qualities, when work is held hostage by the logic of profit alone and human life is disregarded, the degradation of the soul contaminates everything.” This is a strong message. We must be careful not to lose sight of the spiritual aspect of our work – are we doing it for the right reasons, and are we happy with ourselves for what we are doing?

We may feel powerless to achieve this balance, faced with economic pressures controlling what we do. But Pope Francis says “Commitment to work and the spiritual life, in the Christian conception, are not at all at odds with one another. It is important to understand this properly! Prayer and work can and must be in harmony.” Therefore, instead of feeling overwhelmed by the work ahead of us, we can remember the purpose for which we are working, and align our work with our faith.

How can we align our work with our faith?

What are the barriers we face in balancing work with other parts of our life?



Closing Prayer: A Prayer for Inner Peace and Calmness

Īnoi Whakakapinga: He Īnoi mō te Rangimārie

Whakaroto, me te Mauritau

Slow me down, Lord! Ease the pounding of my heart by the quieting of my mind. Steady my harried pace with a vision of the eternal reach of time.

Give me, amidst the confusions of my day, the calmness of the everlasting hills. Break the tensions of my nerves with the soothing music of the singing streams that live in my memory.

Help me to know the magical power of sleep, teach me the art of taking minute vacations; of slowing down to look at a flower; to chat with an old friend or make a new one; to pet a dog; to watch a spider build a web; to smile at a child; or to read a few lines from a good book.

Remind me each day that the race is not always won by the swift; that there is more to life than increasing its speed.

Let me look upward into the branches of the towering oak and know that it grew great and strong because it grew slowly and well.

Slow me down, Lord, and inspire me to send my roots deep into the soil of life's enduring values. That I may grow toward the stars of our greater destiny.

— Orin L. Crain

Session 7: Peace begins with you!

Wāhanga 7: Ka tīmata tonu te rangimārie i roto i ā koe!

Opening Prayer: Peace Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi (see pages 2–3)

To begin this reflection on building personal peace, take some time to reflect on and/or discuss the following questions:

How can you pray for peace in the world, and for those who are experiencing conflict, injustice, or oppression?


How can you act on your prayers and work for peace in tangible ways?

Catholic social teaching emphasises that peace is not a passive state but an active commitment to promoting the common good and building a more just and peaceful society. It calls on all people to work together to build a world where every person can live with dignity and in peace.

The Catholic Church teaches that peace is both a gift of God and a human responsibility. Christians are called to be peacemakers, working to create a society where the dignity of every person is respected and where all people have access to the resources necessary to flourish in life. This includes working to address the root causes of conflict, such as poverty, discrimination, and injustice, as well as promoting the conditions necessary for peaceful coexistence and cooperation.

“[St Francis] shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace.” (10) *Laudato Si'*, 2015

Peace begins with you! Each of us has the power to make changes in our personal lives to bring us closer to personal peace, which in turn will help bring those around us closer to peace. Even in a chaotic



world, we have the power to build peace in our lives, and we are never alone. God has called us to be peacebuilders.

The previous sessions of this study resource have explored different contexts where we may build peace in our lives. We can choose to seek negative peace by avoiding conflict or discomfort, or we can look to the concept of positive peace, confront the issues in our lives, and build ways to peacefully resolve them.

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux faced spiritual conflict when reckoning with her own smallness. However, she was able to build peace by focussing on what she could control, and her message of love has built peace throughout the world.

What opportunities do you have to build peace in your spiritual life?

In the Old Testament, Ruth faced loss in relationships after the death of her husband. By building a relationship with Naomi, she was able to regain social peace and build a new life in God's Kingdom.


How can you build peace through your relationships?

In Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori people face cultural differences in crucial areas such as health. Te Tiriti o Waitangi provides the framework for us to build cultural peace within our society by reconciling these differences.

What can you do to build a culture of peace in your community?

Many of us spend time passing through nature, ignoring the impacts of pollution and increasing temperatures, as well as the degradation of the environment, and not acknowledging our role in it. It's important to take time to care for nature and build peace in our environment.

How can you build peace with the environment?



Pope Francis explains that many of us face conflict between our work and our relationships with our loved ones. However, by remembering the purpose of our work, and aligning it with our faith, we can build peace in our work.

How can you build peace through your work?

Next Year's Focus

Building on our development of personal peace in 2023, in 2024 we will focus on responding to conflict around us and reconciling our differences, to build a peace that includes all of God's children.

Everybody has a part to play in building peace for all. We want our resources to represent everybody's journeys towards peace, and so we would love to hear your input. We are looking for prayers, ideas, and stories you may have that relate to responding to conflict and seeking reconciliation, to help us with our 2024 resources. Please send these through to caritas@caritas.org.nz

At the end of this session, we invite you to consider the following question:

How can you be a peacemaker in your community, workplace, or family?



Closing Prayer: Anonymous Prayer for Peace

Īnoi Whakakapinga: He Īnoi Ingoamuna mō te Rangimārie

Dear God,

We give thanks for places of simplicity and peace;
let us find such a place within ourselves.

We give thanks for places of refuge and beauty;
let us find such a place within ourselves.

We give thanks for places of nature's truth and freedom,
of joy, inspiration, and renewal,
places where all creatures
may find acceptance and belonging.

Let us search for these places;
in the world, in ourselves and in others.

Let us restore them.

Let us strengthen and protect them
and let us create them.

May we mend this outer world
according to the truth of our inner life
and may our souls be shaped and nourished
by nature's eternal wisdom.

Amen!

Relevant websites/resources

Ngā rauemi/paetukutuku hāngai

Concepts of peace

Institute for Economics and Peace, Global Peace Index 2022

<https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/GPI-2022-web.pdf>

Daniel C Arichea Jr, Peace in the New Testament

<https://doi.org/10.1177/026009438703800201>

Spiritual peace

St Thérèse of Lisieux, Society of the Little Flower

<https://www.littleflower.org/>

Social peace

The Bible Project, Book of Ruth Summary: A Complete Animated Overview

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0h1eoBeR4Jk>

Cultural peace

Te Ara Hohou Rongo (The Path to Peace): Māori Conceptualisations of Inter-group Forgiveness

<https://www.psychology.org.nz/journal-archive/NZJP-Vol372-2008-3-Rata.pdf>

Hauora: Report on Stage One of the Health Services and Outcomes Kaupapa Inquiry

https://forms.justice.govt.nz/search/Documents/WT/wt_DOC_195476216/Hauora%202023%20W.pdf

Environmental peace

Laudato Si'

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

Why we need green spaces in cities

<https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/why-we-need-green-spaces-in-cities.html>

Economic peace

Pope Francis, General Audience 19 August 2015

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150819_udienza-generale.html

Peace Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.

Te Inoi a Hāto Werahiko o Assisi mō te Rangimārie

Meatia au hei kaimahi mō tō rangimārie
mehemea he mauāhara, waiho mai au hei kairuirui i te aroha;

me he wharanga, hei kaimuru i te hē;

me he rangirua, hei kairuirui i te whakapono;

me he pōkaikaha, hei kairuirui i te tūmanako;

me he kerekere, hei kairuirui i te māramatanga;

me he pāpōuri, hei kairuirui i te harikoa.

E te Ariki i te Rangi, tukua au kia kaua e whai i te awhinga a ētahi, engari kia awhi,
kia kaua e whai kia mārama ētahi ki ahau, engari kia mārama,
kia kaua e whai kia arohaina mai au, engari kia aroha ki ētahi atu.

Nā te mea kei te hoatutanga ko te whiwhinga mō tātou,

kei te murunga i te hē ka murua ō tātou hē,

kei te matenga rawatanga ko te whānautanga ki te oranga tonutanga.

Āmene.



SOCIAL JUSTICE WEEK
TE WIKI O TE WHAI TIKI
3-9 SEPTEMBER

