**Reading:**

“The International Day of Peace is a day on which we try to imagine a world quite different from the one we know. We try to picture those who wage war laying down their arms and talking out their differences. We try to picture all governments listening to -- and acting on -- the will of the people. We try to picture hatred turning into respect, bigotry turning into understanding, and ignorance turning into knowledge. And we try to picture the very root causes of conflict -- poverty, marginalization and greed -- giving way to development and justice. We do this because progress in our world does not happen without someone first having a vision or a dream.”

**“The tactic of nonviolence is a tactic of love that seeks the salvation and redemption of the opponent, not [their] castigation, humiliation, and defeat. …True nonviolence … strives to operate without hatred, without hostility, and without resentment. It works without aggression, taking the side of the good that it is able to find already present in the adversary.”**

* **Thomas Merton’s *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, p.81-2.**
* Former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan,

September 10, 2001

**As we reflect on this, the International Day of Peace, let us consider the following questions:**

How do I contribute to a less peaceful world through word, action, or inaction? How do I contribute to a more peaceful world?

How do I support those who work for peace?

How shall I recall in thought and prayer those afflicted by the poverty and lack of hope which cause so much of our world’s violence?

**Let us pray:**

Good and gracious God, we ask you to make us, like St. Francis, instruments of peace.

For those who govern nations and people,

We ask you grant them wisdom;

For those who are faithful to the struggle of justice,

We ask you grant them fortitude;

For those willing to explore the roots causes of conflict,

We ask you grant them understanding;

For the trust You place in us all to bring about Your peace,

We express our gratitude.

Today and always, let me be attentive to the many ways I am able to sow peace in the world. Amen.