



# PEACE BEGINS WITH GOD



On the 24th anniversary of 9/11 our faith community hosted a Holy Hour and Mass for Peace as a response to recent political, social, and school violence as well as for the war torn countries around the world.

This is the text of Fr. Blair's homily.  
The audio version is available at:  
[www.catholicgators.org/campuspadre](http://www.catholicgators.org/campuspadre)



**Date: September 11, 2025**

**Time: 4 PM - 6:30 PM**

**Location: St. Augustine Catholic Church  
& Student Center**



# *Overcoming 'man's inhumanity to man' with Supernatural Faith, Hope, & Charity*

Today we are mindful in reflection and prayer, of the 9/11 attacks in our country 24 years ago. The consequences of which continue to reverberate in the lives of those who lost loved ones, those who were injured and their families, the first responders and their families, and in the geopolitics of the world. Today we are also moved to reflection and prayer as witnesses in the past few years and in recent events, to incidents of increased social disorder and the consequential rise of violence in western countries around the world. In our own country, there is a growing pattern of political, sectarian, and people suffering from unaddressed mental illness - all leading to violent attacks.

Today we are moved to pray for peace, particularly mindful of the most recent political assassination on a Utah University Campus, the deadly attack at a Catholic Church filled with parochial school students attending Mass, at a High School in Colorado, and the August killing in Charlotte of Ukrainian refugee Iryna Zarutka. We entrust all the victims, their families, and others affected by this violence to God, our Heavenly Father and author of every human life, through his son Jesus Christ, the reason for our supernatural hope.

We are also witnesses to wars and conflicts throughout the world. Today we also pray for peace in Europe, the middle east, the African continent, and south and central America; where political, sectarian, ideological, and ethnically motivated violence continues to affect millions of people, most of whom are innocent. What we see unfolding is the rise once again of vicious patterns of hatred rooted in the embrace of the false prophets' messages proclaiming ideologies that promise salvation. It is rooted in the rejection of the authentic nature, dignity, and value of the human person.

We pray for peace, in our families, our Churches, Communities, Countries, and the world. But the peace we pray for and the love we all desire in the depths of our souls can never be realized without authentic faith. The peace we truly need cannot be legislated without authoritarian tyranny. It cannot be realized through social contracts. The peace we seek must be the peace we need, not the peace we might want to fabricate through the empty and impossible call to coexistence. We can only overcome 'man's inhumanity to man' with supernatural faith, hope, and love.

Within the soul of every human being is our primary desire and our fundamental orientation: to know, love, and serve God in this world and be with God in the next. The truth that we must come to understand and believe, is that God calls every human being to salvation in Christ and thereby to realize the fullness of their humanity as intended by our creator; to become saints. The good things in this world are gifts of God, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily. We must come to appreciate and make use of them, as authentic stewards of creation. God pours out grace upon grace, for the salvation of the world.

I firmly believe with primary and singular focus, that uncompromisingly responding to the universal call to holiness is the remedy for that which ails the people of God and the world. That, as the source and summit of Christian life, the Eucharist is essential therefore to realizing the holiness and perfection to which we are called - and for the salvation of the world. I believe it to be the answer in every generation since the last supper of Christ and made possible in his passion, death, and resurrection. I am certain that the Church must be radically faithful to the mission of Christ, to make the salvific truths known and understood within the Church and that doing so the Church, the universal sacrament of salvation, will indeed be the light of God into which all are drawn out of the darkness.

In North America, compounding the errors of understanding, the difficulties experienced and the fundamental

opposition to the challenging divine truths that demand transformation, is the preaching of the leaders of the secular world 'church' which are effective at apologetics and evangelization for their secular beliefs and synthesized secular / Christian beliefs. They are exceedingly adept at using the powerful modern tools of communication by which they promote these beliefs and indoctrinate the masses. The entertainment industry provides excessive brutality and violence as entertainment, consumed by millions of people of all beliefs and none. Who do so at great cost, not only financially but to their psychological and spiritual well-being. Can we imagine that such an increasingly violent world suffering from so many psychological distortions has nothing to do with the violent media and music we consume.

Young people, to whom most of the violent media is aimed, are particularly susceptible to this kind of secular evangelization and indoctrination, and so much more today as personal devices deliver these doctrines directly into your pocket in addictively inescapable forms. The message of the secular world united with those who lean toward a Christian lite version of the faith, advocate vigorously against, and misrepresent the moral and spiritual teachings of the Church which they argue are repressive, unrealistic, intolerant, non-inclusive, outdated or are fundamentally opposed to an enlightened modern understanding of what it means to be human - which includes their dogmatic reframing of the love and mercy of Jesus. As well, those who hold to such views often tend to believe that the Church ought to be more democratic in its approach to determining its teachings. That the church should abandon these truths from the very creator of humanity in the world to the truths that we create for our own selfish good over and against the needs of others. It's an automatic setup for conflict, for war, for battling, for supremacy. My will, we say to each together. Not yours. No, my will, not yours. There's no winning in that. We all lose.

This exponentially growing number of folks who don't believe the basic moral teachings of the Catholic Church are also increasingly active in their opposition to the efforts of the Church which stress the importance of these truths for the good of the whole human person, which are therefore essential to the health of families and the proper ordering of society. There is ample evidence that this 'war' of beliefs is raging within the minds of Christian clergy, and lay persons, even among the governing hierarchy in some parts of the western world. There seems to be a debilitating disbelief that the moral and spiritual teachings of the Church enable the human person to experience fully their humanity and true freedom. The sentiments of discontent borne primarily from rejection or ignorance of the truths of God are multiplying with the speed of weeds and are ever more loudly broadcast through a world wide web of emotional, intellectual, and psychological entanglements that make truth hard to find amid the lies which are everywhere, like wolves masquerading as sheep.

Amidst the calls for peace and prayer, we hear that we must never allow America to become a country that confronts disagreement with violence. The truth is America and every tribal gathering of human beings since creation has confronted disagreement with violence. This is the human condition. This is the consequence of original sin. This is the consequence of the rejection of the truths of God. There is only one authentic remedy. People of good will can pray for peace all day long. And the answer from God will be the same. Peace will come when you give your heart to me. Peace will come into you in the name of my son. Peace will be inflamed in you by my Holy Spirit. Then you will become the instrument of peace in the world. Passing that fire one to another, drawing others into the heart of Christ. This is the only peace that can save us. This is the only path to the end. of violence. God is our refuge and strength. This is what Charlie's wife quoted. Psalm 46. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Together let us raise our eyes to heaven and humbly surrender to the will and wisdom of God that transforms us. Let us petition God to pour out the graces we need to become instruments of God's peace that surpasses understanding. ~ **Father Blair Gaynes - September 11, 2025**