

24/7 Peace Vigils

Much of what we see in the world today is more about people who have not learned from the best examples of what-to-do-with-this-gift-of-life that 5,000 years of human history has to offer, than it is about the perversity of religious, spiritual, and moral truths. So the question arises: how can the relevance of attaining advanced levels of wisdom and compassion be made crystal clear—especially since there is so much “wariness” in people’s perceptions about religious, spiritual, and moral practices which they do not in any way understand. This is where “24/7 Peace Vigils” can help.

Here I ask you to imagine sacred spaces in (a town or small city you know best), and around the world, which are dedicated to a “24/7Peace Vigil” —undertaken by members of as many as possible of the different religious, spiritual, and moral traditions within a given local community or region. A possible goal for representatives from participating traditions would be to have one member participating in the Peace Vigil at all times (24/7)(in such time intervals as they choose). *With an emphasis on silence*, participants could silently recite prayers for peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation; silently invoke the “name” of the spiritual personage who is their foremost inspiration; and/or carry on with any kind of silent practice or silent spiritual discipline which is relevant and appropriate for a sacred space dedicated to cultivating world peace.

One inspiration for this idea is the Prayer Room (which I have visited many times to reinforce my own spiritual practices) at Kunzang Palyul Choling, a Tibetan Buddhist Temple in Poolesville, Maryland (USA). Here is a description of that Prayer Room (from <http://www.tara.org/visit-us/maryland-temple/>)—

“The Prayer Room, the main shrine room at KPC, is filled with altars, prayer benches, and an extensive crystal collection. The express wish of KPC Spiritual Director, Jetsunma Ahkon Lhamo, is that a sacred space for meditation and prayer always be available for those who seek it. For that reason, visitors are welcome to use the Prayer Room for prayer and meditation at any time, night or day. (If you come between midnight and 6 a.m., please ring the doorbell.) Cushions and chairs for meditation are available. The Prayer Room is also used by KPC students to maintain the [24 Hour Prayer Vigil for World Peace](#) which began in 1985 and continues unbroken to this day.”

And here are some details about the 24 Hour Prayer Vigil (from <http://www.tara.org/ourprojects/prayer-vigil/>):

“The prayer vigil for world peace is a precious opportunity to participate in something truly meaningful. Participation in the Prayer Vigil requires commitment to training in Buddhist practice, as well as attending a Prayer Vigil orientation. Prayer Vigil orientation provides information about what practices and prayers to do, responsibilities of prayer vigil participants, prayer room etiquette....”

If a non-profit organization unaffiliated with a particular religious, spiritual, or moral tradition were to take a lead role in establishing “24/7 Peace Vigils” of an Interfaith Nature in (a town or small city you know best), and elsewhere, many positive and constructive results could be realized:

a) the discipline required for each tradition to maintain a presence would sharpen the spiritual (and other) practices of many participants

- b) the Interfaith Nature of the Prayer Vigil would bring people from many different traditions together, with an emphasis on silent and respectful cooperation on a most sacred and meaningful project
- c) it would seem likely that, besides the immediate participants, there would be many other people, from various traditions and backgrounds, who would recognize these Prayer Vigil sites as inspiring places to reinforce their own silent spiritual (or other) practices
- d) much good fellowship and friendship could be created by such a project—fellowship and friendship which could result in many more common service-oriented projects, and much improved interfaith relations.

There are many interfaith organizations with international membership which could be partners in such a “24/7 Prayer Vigil” Project. Two in particular: Religions for Peace (at <http://www.religionsforpeace.org/about/>) (“Religions for Peace is the largest international coalition of representatives from the world’s great religions dedicated to promoting peace.”) and United Religions Initiative (at <http://www.uri.org/>) (“URI is a global grassroots interfaith network that cultivates peace and justice by engaging people to bridge religious and cultural differences and work together for the good of their communities and the world”.)