



A Simple Prayer

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.

○ 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,
It is in dying..... that we are born to
eternal life.

St. Francis.

*“Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon...”*

What is commonly known as the **“Peace Prayer,”** has been used everywhere, even in speeches by Mother Teresa, Margaret Thatcher, Bill Clinton, and at the funeral of Princess Diana. But even while naturally embodying the spirit of St. Francis’ simplicity and humility, this prayer has been mistakenly attributed to him since 1912. In that year an anonymous prayer was printed in the French spiritual magazine, *La Clochette*. In 1915, the same prayer was offered to Pope Benedict XV by the Marquis La Rochethulon, believing it to have been inspired by the testament of William the Conqueror (although the style also reflects prayers written by Sts. Benedict, Aquinas, Loyola, etc.). The pope published the gift in the *L’Osservatore Romano* on January 20, 1916 as a prayer for peace in the midst of the First World War. The attribution of St. Francis as the author probably came about shortly afterward when the Capuchin visitorator of the Secular Franciscans of Reims, France, Fr. Etienne, had the prayer printed on the back of a holy card of St. Francis and then distributed it widely. The text was only called “A Prayer for Peace,” but it is easy to understand how people would attribute the authorship to the saint pictured on the reverse side of the devotional holy card. Even German prisoners-of-war carried the holy card home with them, and were sure by then that St. Francis was the author. And in 1949 when Cardinal Spellman of New York distributed millions of copies of the prayer, the attribution of St. Francis’ mistaken authorship would be forever imprinted in people’s minds.

Egidio Picucci. L’Osservatore Romano, Jan 19, 2009

Frieder Schulz. Greyfriars Review, 10.3, 1996