

PAX CHRISTI USA COMMUNITY ADVENT SERVICE – week 2

Second week of Advent – [Readings are from the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, Tuesday, December 8th](#)

Welcome

Opening song

Singer will be the only one unmuted but feel free to sing along wherever you are!

Lighting of candles on the Advent wreath

From their home, the Finn-Schultz family in Jacksonville, FL will light tonight's their Advent candles tonight on behalf of us all. We invite everyone on the call to light their own candles wherever they are.



First reading: From the book of Genesis...

After the man, Adam, had eaten of the tree,
God called to the man and asked him, “Where are you?”
Adam answered, “I heard you in the garden;
but I was afraid, because I was naked,
so I hid myself.”
Then God asked, “Who told you that you were naked?
You have eaten, then,
from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat!”
The man replied, “The woman whom you put here with me,
she gave me fruit from the tree, and so I ate it.”

God then asked the woman,
“Why did you do such a thing?”
The woman answered, “The serpent tricked me into it, so I ate it.”
Then God said to the serpent:
“Because you have done this, you shall be banned
from all the animals
and from all the wild creatures;
on your belly shall you crawl,
and dirt shall you eat
all the days of your life.
I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
they will strike at your head,
while you strike at their heel.”

The man called his wife Eve,
because she became the mother of all the living.

The word of God.

Gospel reading: From the gospel of Luke...

The angel Gabriel was sent from God
to a town of Galilee called Nazareth,
to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph,
of the house of David,
and the virgin's name was Mary.
And coming to her, he said,
"Hail, full of grace! God is with you."
But she was greatly troubled at what was said
and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.
Then the angel said to her,
"Do not be afraid, Mary,
for you have found favor with God.
Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son,
and you shall name him Jesus.
He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High,
and God will give him the throne of David his father,
and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever,
and of his reign there will be no end."
But Mary said to the angel,
"How can this be,
since I have no relations with a man?"
And the angel said to her in reply,
"The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.
Therefore the child to be born
will be called holy, the Son of God.
And behold, Elizabeth, your relative,
has also conceived a son in her old age,
and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren;
for nothing will be impossible for God."
Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of God.
May it be done to me according to your word."
Then the angel departed from her.

The gospel of our God.

A reflection from this year's Advent-Christmas reflection booklet by Amy Finn-Schultz. Amy is a member of L'Arche Jacksonville (FL) where she has held a number of roles, including director. She has served on the Pax Christi Florida State Council and is a graduate of the Franciscan School of Theology in California. She and her family live in Jacksonville, FL.

On the day we recognize Mary's inherent grace, we also read about her willingness. As a young woman visited by an angel, she is willing to be troubled and confused. She is also willing to question the possibility of how she is to birth a child when she is yet to be married. Mary is willing to trust what seems impossible and what she knows will be painful, what will seemingly

be a societal downfall to her, to Joseph and her family. Mary's willingness is not that of passive submission, but instead a result of her ability to participate in her own understanding of faith and grace, questioning and trusting. Similarly, we are being asked to engage and to question what we see, what we hear and what we have learned. We, or our parents and grandparents before us, have lived through a time of false histories – about the founding of our nation and the generations of slavery, genocide and systemic racism; about our Church and the wounds of hierarchy, the falsehoods of clerical abuse and even our own identity as Church. We are living through a time in history that is being called a “reckoning,” when we must look at the lies that have been taught to us, strategically baked into our dominant origin stories – and the suffering that results from all of these. Let us be like Mary in our willingness to look at what is troubling and approach it with courage to overcome our fear.

> When we read the signs of the times and ask the question “how can this be?”, how do we respond and react with a willingness like Mary's?

Silent reflection

We invite you to quietly reflect on tonight's reading and the question: **When we read the signs of the times and ask the question “how can this be?”, how do we respond and react with a willingness like Mary's?** After our prayer service is over, we encourage you—if you are with others—to share your answer to tonight's question. If you aren't with others but would like to share in a small group after tonight's prayer, we'll send everyone who stays on the call into breakout rooms with a few other people to share for about 20 minutes immediately following the prayer service.

(In preparation for the Prayers of the Faithful, feel free to enter into the chat any prayers you have that you want those of us on this call to lift up over the coming week.)

Prayers of the faithful

Our response is: God of justice, hear our prayer.

Closing prayer

(In 1-2 minutes everyone who wants to stay on the call will be sent to breakout rooms to discuss tonight's reading, reflection and Advent question. Breakout rooms will automatically close after 20 minutes.)