

PAX CHRISTI USA COMMUNITY ADVENT SERVICE – week 3

Third week of Advent – [Readings are from Tuesday, December 15th](#)

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

As our special guests light 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 prophet Zephaniah...

*Thus says God:
Woe to the city, rebellious and polluted,
to the tyrannical city!
She hears no voice,
accepts no correction;
In God she has not trusted,
to her God she has not drawn near.
For then I will change and purify
the lips of the peoples,
That they all may call upon the name of God,
to serve me with one accord;
From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia
and as far as the recesses of the North,
they shall bring me offerings.
On that day
You need not be ashamed
of all your deeds,
your rebellious actions against me;
For then will I remove from your midst
the proud braggarts,
And you shall no longer exalt yourself
on my holy mountain.
But I will leave as a remnant in your midst
a people humble and lowly,
Who shall take refuge in my name:
the remnant of Israel.
They shall do no wrong
and speak no lies;
Nor shall there be found in their mouths
a deceitful tongue;*

*They shall pasture and couch their flocks
with none to disturb them.*

The word of God. (Response is: Thanks be to God.)

Gospel reading: From the gospel of Matthew...

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people:

“What is your opinion?

A man had two sons.

He came to the first and said,

‘Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.’

The son said in reply, ‘I will not,’

but afterwards he changed his mind and went.

The man came to the other son and gave the same order.

He said in reply, ‘Yes, sir,’ but did not go.

Which of the two did his father’s will?”

They answered, “The first.”

Jesus said to them, “Amen, I say to you,

tax collectors and prostitutes

are entering the Kingdom of God before you.

When John came to you in the way of righteousness,

you did not believe him;

but tax collectors and prostitutes did.

Yet even when you saw that,

you did not later change your minds and believe him.”

The gospel of our God. (Response is: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.)

A reflection from this year’s Advent-Christmas reflection booklet by Isaac Chandler from Jasper, FL, who is also the chair of Pax Christi USA’s National Council. The readings and his reflection are taken from Tuesday, December 15th of this week. In addition to being the chair of the Pax Christi USA National Council, Isaac is a high school biology teacher and has worked with the Pax Christi Anti-Racism Team (PCART) and the Youth and Young Adult Forum. He was a workshop presenter at the 2010 and 2012 PCUSA National Conferences.

These passages speak to the power that comes through humility. Humility is one of our most important concepts in our faith traditions. It is not only one of our 7 virtues, but it can be seen interwoven throughout our seven themes of Catholic social teaching. Humility is about serving. In serving God, it is important that we serve others. We work to meet the most basic needs of those who can’t help themselves: the poor, the sick, the disabled, the marginalized and the uninformed. We make ourselves small to lift them up and respect the dignity of the whole person. God has been teaching us the lesson of humility during this time of the great pandemic. During this time, there has been a sort of paradigm shift in the reframing of who or what can be considered “essential”. While large corporations and institutions shut their doors, it was the humblest of professions that kept our societies maintained. The grocery workers, factory workers, maids, house cleaners, pest control technicians, and garbage collectors have been praised and lauded for their continuous and steadfast attention to details, which continue to keep us healthy and relatively safe.

> *Where in my life can I better serve others and embrace my humility??*

Silent reflection

We invite you to quietly reflect on tonight's reading and the question: **Where in my life can I better serve others and embrace my humility?** 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 15 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 mercy, 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.)