

PAX CHRISTI USA COMMUNITY LENTEN SERVICE – week 3

Third week of Lent – [Readings are from Wednesday, March 10th](#)

Welcome

Opening song

Singers will be the only ones unmuted but feel free to sing along wherever you are!

Litany of Repentance

LEADER: We ask forgiveness for our complicity in the violence and suffering present in our world and we repent of the violence and selfishness present in our own hearts.

Our first response will be, “Forgive us we pray.”

For hardness of heart... **ALL: “Forgive us we pray.”** (Repeat after each line.)

For wasting our gifts...

For wanting too much...

For wounding the earth...

For neglecting the poor...

For trusting in weapons...

For ignoring racial injustice...

For refusing to listen...

For exporting arms...

For desiring dominance...

For wanting to win...

For lacking humility...

For failing to risk...

For failing to trust...

For failing to act...

For failing to negotiate...

For failing to hope...

For failing to love...

For our arrogance...

For our impatience...

For our cowardice...

For our pride...

For our silence...

For our complicity...

Our next response will be, “Change our hearts.”



That we learn compassion... **ALL: "Change our hearts."** (Repeat after each line.)
That we embrace nonviolence...
That we act in justice...
That we live in hope...
That we might be strong...
That we do your will...
That we might be peace...

ALL: Amen.

First reading: From the book of Deuteronomy...

Moses spoke to the people and said:
"Now, Israel, hear the statutes and decrees
which I am teaching you to observe,
that you may live, and may enter in and take possession of the land
which the God of your fathers, is giving you.
Therefore, I teach you the statutes and decrees
as my God, has commanded me,
that you may observe them in the land you are entering to occupy.
Observe them carefully,
for thus will you give evidence
of your wisdom and intelligence to the nations,
who will hear of all these statutes and say,
'This great nation is truly a wise and intelligent people.'
For what great nation is there
that has gods so close to it as our God is to us
whenever we call?
Or what great nation has statutes and decrees
that are as just as this whole law
which I am setting before you today?
However, take care and be earnestly on your guard
not to forget the things which your own eyes have seen,
nor let them slip from your memory as long as you live,
but teach them to your children and to your children's children."

The word of God. **ALL: Thanks be to God.**

Gospel reading: From the gospel of Matthew...

Jesus said to his disciples:
"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets.
I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.
Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away,
not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter
will pass from the law,
until all things have taken place.
Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments

and teaches others to do so
will be called least in the Kin-dom of heaven.
But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments
will be called greatest in the Kin-dom of heaven.”

The gospel of our God. **ALL: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

A reflection from this year’s Lenten reflection booklet – Pax Christi USA Ambassador of Peace and Executive Director of Jubilee USA Eric LeCompte: Eric will read his reflection and offer a few additional words to expand it to include the context we’re living in today.

*Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets.
I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. (Mt 5:17)*

With these words, Jesus instills in us that there is one body of teaching and one calling for all who endeavor to follow him. From Genesis through the demands of the prophets and the preaching of the Apostles, we are told to love and walk humbly with our God.

Six years ago, I was invited to join the team of Jubilee USA Network. We were founded by Catholic religious orders, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, most of the big 10 Protestant churches, and groups like American Jewish World Service. We transform the structural debt, tax and trade policies that create inequality and extreme poverty. Our organization is inspired by the fullness revealed in the Hebrew and Christian scriptures.

When we open the Bible, we read that God loves us so much that God created a rich and abundant world for us in 7 days. We see that we are closest to the Creator when we are sharing God’s abundance among us. This lesson is so important to the early Hebrews that they create law books like Leviticus and Deuteronomy to legislate how to share God’s creation. They devised the concept of Jubilee. Every 7 years, debts are forgiven, the land goes fallow, and slaves are freed. A system was created to ensure that there would be equality and a sharing of God’s abundance for all time.

The prophets came to remind the people to return to Jubilee. Jesus’s first public act in the synagogue is to read from Isaiah and declare the year of “God’s Favor”, or the year of Jubilee. This completion of the law, this central theme of the Scripture, invites us to build a world absent of poverty and inequality. We are invited to proclaim Jubilee.

*In this moment, what is God calling you to?
How should your story fit in to the fulfillment of the law?*

Silent reflection

We invite you to quietly reflect on tonight's readings and reflection, and to consider this Lenten question from Eric’s original reflection: **In this moment, what is God calling you to? How should your story fit in to the fulfillment of the law?**

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 into breakout rooms with a few other people to share. We'll take now just about 3-4 minutes of silence to reflect quietly.

(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

O Great God of all creation, hear our plea:

We pray for an end to broken systems, in a world beset by the ravages of poverty and debt.

We pray for rightness, fairness, justice and grace.

We pray for your light to guide us as we seek your will.

Bless us with an economy that is whole and right,

where all can live in dignity and hope

and your light shines brightly in every land, God Most High.

Bless us with your Jubilee. Amen.

(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 Lenten question. Breakout rooms will automatically close after 20 minutes.)