

PAX CHRISTI USA COMMUNITY LENTEN SERVICE – week 4

Fourth week of Lent – [Readings are from Monday, March 15th](#)

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 Isaiah...

Thus says our God:
Lo, I am about to create new heavens
and a new earth;
The things of the past shall not be remembered
or come to mind.
Instead, there shall always be rejoicing and happiness
in what I create;
For I create Jerusalem to be a joy
and its people to be a delight;
I will rejoice in Jerusalem
and exult in my people.
No longer shall the sound of weeping be heard there,
or the sound of crying;
No longer shall there be in it
an infant who lives but a few days,
or an old one who does not round out their full lifetime;
She dies a mere youth who reaches but a hundred years,
and he who fails of a hundred shall be thought accursed.
They shall live in the houses they build,
and eat the fruit of the vineyards they plant."

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

Gospel reading: From the gospel of John...

At that time Jesus left [Samaria] for Galilee.
For Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honor in their native place.
When he came into Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him,
since they had seen all he had done in Jerusalem at the feast;
for they themselves had gone to the feast.

Then he returned to Cana in Galilee,
where he had made the water wine.

Now there was a royal official whose son was ill in Capernaum.
When he heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea,

he went to him and asked him to come down
and heal his son, who was near death.
Jesus said to him, “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe.”
The royal official said to him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.”
Jesus said to him, “You may go; your son will live.”
The man believed what Jesus said to him and left.
While the man was on his way back,
his slaves met him and told him that his boy would live.
He asked them when he began to recover.
They told him, “The fever left him yesterday, about one in the afternoon.”
The father realized that just at that time Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live,”
and he and his whole household came to believe.
Now this was the second sign Jesus did
when he came to Galilee from Judea.

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

A reflection from this year’s Lenten reflection booklet – Allison Blay: Allison will read her reflection and offer a few additional words to expand it to include the context we’re living in today.

*“No longer shall the sound of weeping be heard there, or the sound of crying; No longer shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not round out his full lifetime.”
(Is 65:20)*

How terrifying it must be, not to be able to feed one’s children. How devastating to live in a place where most children do not grow to maturity, where many infants “live but a few days” and few reach the status of “old man or woman.” Yet this is something our sisters and brothers in many places around the world experience every day. We have come to accept this unacceptable reality; it is just part of the world we live in. The first reading from Isaiah tells us, however, that one of the signs that the world has been renewed and recreated as God intends is that these kinds of tragedies will no longer occur.

In today’s gospel, we see Jesus sensitive to the plight of the royal official whose son was on the brink of death—though this man was part of the occupying force, the enemy. Jesus was able to look past his position and see him as a father searching for hope. Can we learn to demonstrate the same care and concern across borders and divisions?

How might we be called to enter into the suffering of our brothers and sisters around the world, and to see the human plight in those we consider “enemies”? In what ways are we invited to participate in the creation of a world in which there is no more weeping, no more premature and senseless death?

Silent reflection

We invite you to quietly reflect on tonight's readings and reflection, and to consider this Lenten question from Allison’s original reflection: ***How might we be called to enter into the suffering of our brothers and sisters around the world, and to see the human plight in those we consider “enemies”? In what ways are we invited to participate in the creation of a world in which there is no more weeping, no more premature and senseless death?***

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 compassion, hear our prayer.

Closing prayer

*This is the fast that pleases me:
to break unjust fetters,
to let the oppressed go free,
to share your bread with the hungry
and shelter the homeless poor.
If you do away with the yoke,
the clenched fist, the wicked word,
if you give your bread to the hungry
and relief to the oppressed,
your light will rise in the darkness. (Isaiah 58:6-7, 10)*

All praise be yours, God our Creator,
as we wait in joyful hope
for the flowering of justice
and the fullness of peace.
All praise for this day, this season.
By our weekly fasting and prayer
cast out the spirit of war, of fear and mistrust,
and make us grow hungry for human kindness, thirsty for solidarity
with all the people of your dear earth.
May all our prayer, our fasting and our deeds
be done in the name of Jesus. Amen.

(Source: Archdiocese of Chicago, 1983)

(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.)