PAX CHRISTI USA COMMUNITY ADVENT SERVICE – week 4

Fourth week of Advent – Readings are from Wednesday, December 22nd

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

We invite everyone on the call to light their own candles wherever they are.

First reading: From the book of Samuel…

In those days, Hannah brought Samuel with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and presented him at the temple in Shiloh. After the boy’s father had sacrificed the young bull, Hannah, his mother, approached Eli and said: “Pardon, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood near you here, praying to God. I prayed for this child, and God granted my request. Now I, in turn, give him to God; as long as he lives, he shall be dedicated to God.” She left Samuel there.

The word of God.
THANKS BE TO GOD.

Gospel reading: From the gospel of Luke…

Mary said:

“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior. For God has looked upon me, a lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is God’s Name. God has mercy on those who fear God in every generation. God has shown the strength of God’s arm,
and has scattered the proud in their conceit.
God has cast down the mighty from their thrones
and has lifted up the lowly.
Has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich sent away empty.
Has come to the help of God’s servant Israel
remembering the promise of mercy,
the promise made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and Sarah and their children forever.”

Mary remained with Elizabeth about three months
and then returned to her home.

The gospel of our God.
PRAISE TO YOU LORD JESUS CHRIST.

A reflection from this year’s Advent-Christmas reflection booklet, by Rev. Joe Nangle, OFM. Joe Nangle OFM is a Pax Christi USA Ambassador of Peace. As a member of the Assisi Community in Washington, D.C., he is dedicated to simple living and social change. Joe also serves as the Pastoral Associate for the Latino community at Our Lady Queen of Peace, Arlington, Virginia.

“God has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has lifted up the lowly; has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich have been sent away empty.” (Lk 1:52-53)

Mary’s prayer on the occasion of her hurried visit to Elizabeth is a study in what might be called “Divine Revolution” – God’s undermining and reversing the status quo in favor of those victimized by every unjust social system. She sings the praises of her God – and ours – who “scatters the proud, brings down the powerful, lifts up the lowly, fills the hungry and sends the rich away empty.”

This is not the “gentle mother, peaceful dove” of some popular Marian spirituality, but the flesh and blood woman who educated a son to confront the searing injustices of his time and all times. She knows who God is, the One who hears the cry of the people and gives us the Word made flesh to speak truth to power.

We pray for such boldness from Gospel people today in the face of every situation where economic, racial & all injustices limit people’s lives.

> Does your life in God include advocacy on behalf of social change?

Silent reflection (3-5 minutes)

We invite you to quietly reflect on tonight's reading and the question: Does your life in God include advocacy on behalf of social change? 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 joy, hear our prayer.

**Closing prayer** (by Pax Christi USA Teacher of Peace Art Laffin)

Jesus, it is You who we seek during this Advent.
For You are the Incarnation,  
the Word made flesh  
who dwells among us.

It is You, Jesus, our Savior, that we will follow,  
and no other earthly principality or power.
May Your spirit of love and nonviolence fill our hearts, and the hearts of people everywhere,  
as we strive to make God's reign of justice, peace  
and love a reality in our world.

Jesus, Son of God, Human One, Healer, Peacemaker, Redeemer—our only hope,  
help us to disarm our hearts and our world of violence, racial hatred and fear.
In this time of peril and pandemic, empower us to abolish war, all weapons—from nuclear weapons to killer drones to handguns, halt the climate crisis and safeguard all creation.

Help us to respect the dignity of each person, welcome the immigrant and refugees, and to resist and help transform structures and policies that cause and perpetuate economic exploitation, poverty, racism, sexism, discrimination, inequality, and social injustice.

Help us, dear Jesus, during this holy Advent season,  
to make Your Word flesh,  
to rid ourselves and our world of all that wounds, divides and destroys,  
and become channels of your peace, justice, mercy, and reconciling love.

For nothing is impossible with God!  
Come Lord Jesus! 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 Advent question. Breakout rooms will automatically close after 20 minutes.)*