

PAX CHRISTI USA COMMUNITY LENTEN SERVICE – week 4

Fourth week of Lent – [Readings are from Wednesday, March 30th](#)

Welcome

*We'll be remembering tonight: **Fr. John Rausch**, Pax Christi USA Teacher of Peace; **Bob DellaValle Rauth**, long time leader of Pax Christi Virginia and advocate for the Haitian people; and **Sr. Esther Pineda**, former National Council member.*



Opening song

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

Opening Prayer: On Pax Christi USA's 50th Anniversary

God of Peace and Justice,

As we journey through our 50th Anniversary Year,

Make us weavers of your peace that will only come through justice,
taking up the threads of peacemakers who have gone before,
adding our collective contributions with creativity,
and making space for future generations to join this tapestry.

Keep us firmly rooted in your love,
love that transcends time and space.
Guide us with clarity of vision
to study the past in order to learn from history
and heal wounds that still hurt us.

Let us acknowledge your presence as we look to the future.
Nourish our enthusiasm,
Help our dreams emerge,
and enable hope to blossom.

Together, we will learn from one another,
amplify prophetic voices,
and weave the work of peace, justice,
mercy, and love that transforms.

We ask all of this through our brother Jesus,
Way of Nonviolence,
Weaver of Peace.

ALL: Amen.

First reading: From the prophet Isaiah...

Thus says God:

In a time of favor I answer you,
 on the day of salvation I help you;
 and I have kept you and given you as a covenant to the people,
To restore the land
 and allot the desolate heritages,
Saying to the prisoners: Come out!
To those in darkness: Show yourselves!
Along the ways they shall find pasture,
 on every bare height shall their pastures be.
They shall not hunger or thirst,
 nor shall the scorching wind or the sun strike them;
For the one who pities them leads them
 and guides them beside springs of water.
I will cut a road through all my mountains,
 and make my highways level.
See, some shall come from afar,
 others from the north and the west,
 and some from the land of Syene.
Sing out, O heavens, and rejoice, O earth,
 break forth into song, you mountains.
For I your God comfort my people
 and show mercy to those afflicted.

But Zion said, "God has forsaken me;
 God has forgotten me."
Can a mother forget her infant,
 be without tenderness for the child of her womb?
Even should she forget,
 I will never forget you.

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

Gospel reading: From the gospel of John...

Jesus answered the Judeans:
"My Father is at work until now, so I am at work."
For this reason they tried all the more to kill him,
because he not only broke the sabbath
but he also called God his own father, making himself equal to God.

Jesus answered and said to them,
"Amen, amen, I say to you, the Son cannot do anything on his own,
but only what he sees the Father doing;
for what he does, the Son will do also.
For the Father loves the Son
and shows him everything that he himself does,

and he will show him greater works than these,
so that you may be amazed.
For just as the Father raises the dead and gives life,
so also does the Son give life to whomever he wishes.
Nor does the Father judge anyone,
but he has given all judgment to the Son,
so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father.
Whoever does not honor the Son
does not honor the Father who sent him.
Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever hears my word
and believes in the one who sent me
has eternal life and will not come to condemnation,
but has passed from death to life.
Amen, amen, I say to you, the hour is coming and is now here
when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God,
and those who hear will live.
For just as the Father has life in himself,
so also he gave to the Son the possession of life in himself.
And he gave him power to exercise judgment,
because he is the Human One.
Do not be amazed at this,
because the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs
will hear God's voice and will come out,
those who have done good deeds
to the resurrection of life,
but those who have done wicked deeds
to the resurrection of condemnation.

"I cannot do anything on my own;
I judge as I hear, and my judgment is just,
because I do not seek my own will
but the will of the one who sent me."

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

A reflection from this year's Lenten reflection booklet – former Pax Christi USA National Coordinator and Teacher of Peace Sr. Mary Evelyn Jegen, SNDdeN: Special guest Beatrice Parwatikar, Pax Christi USA Ambassador of Peace will read Sr. Mary Evelyn's reflection and offer a few additional words to expand on it to address the context we're living in today.

"All who are in tombs will hear God's voice and will come out,
for the dead will hear ... and those who hear will live."

So many of us are entombed in negativity, judgments, blaming, in seeing the world as evil, in perceiving diversity and inclusivity as threatening, in fearing that teaching truth will diminish our unearned privileges and expose the lies we have been taught and come to believe about ourselves.

These are the tombs of our own making. In the midst of those of us in the tombs, there is the voice of God. It is persistent, at times loud and shouting, at other times quiet yet clear. Are we so deaf to the voice of God that we refuse to listen and come out of the shadows? Are we too frightened to experience life and resurrection? Are we so dead that we are unable to be transformed?

*In what tomb of your own making are you dwelling?
What are the words that can call you out?*

Silent reflection

We invite you to quietly reflect on tonight's readings, Beatrice's reflection, and to consider these Lenten questions from Sr. Patty and Sr. Anne-Louise's reflection: ***In what tomb of your own making are you dwelling? What are the words that can call you out?***

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 forgiveness, hear our prayer.

Closing prayer

(from Sr. Thea Bowman)

O, Lord, help us to be attentive to your commands. Help us to walk in unity. Help us to celebrate who we are and whose we are. Help us to overcome selfishness, anger, and violence in our hearts, in our homes, in our Church, in our world. Help us to knock down, pull down, shout down the walls of racism, sexism, classism, materialism, and militarism that divide and separate us. Help us to live as your united people, proclaiming with one voice, our faith, our hope, our love, our joy. 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.)