

PAX CHRISTI USA COMMUNITY LENTEN SERVICE – Holy Week

Holy Week – [Readings are from Monday, April 11th](#)

Welcome

*Tonight, we're remembering **Gus Nystrom**, long-time member and leader with Pax Christi Northern California and former National Council member; **Naed Smith**, long-time leader of Pax Christi Harrisburg (PA); and **Sheila Croke**, long-time member and leader of Pax Christi Long Island.*



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...

Here is my servant whom I uphold,
my chosen one with whom I am pleased,
Upon whom I have put my Spirit;
this one shall bring forth justice to the nations,
Not crying out, not shouting,
not making their voice heard in the street.
A bruised reed they shall not break,
and a smoldering wick they shall not quench,
Until they establish justice on the earth;
the coastlands will wait for this teaching.

Thus says God,
who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spreads out the earth with its crops,
Who gives breath to its people
and spirit to those who walk on it:
I, your God, have called you for the victory of justice,
I have grasped you by the hand;
I formed you, and set you
as a covenant of the people,
a light for the nations,
To open the eyes of the blind,
to bring out prisoners from confinement,
and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness.

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

Gospel reading: From the gospel of John...

Six days before Passover Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. They gave a dinner for him there, and Martha served, while Lazarus was one of those reclining at table with him. Mary took a liter of costly perfumed oil made from genuine aromatic nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and dried them with her hair; the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

Then Judas the Iscariot, one of his disciples, and the one who would betray him, said, "Why was this oil not sold for three hundred days' wages and given to the poor?" He said this not because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief and held the money bag and used to steal the contributions. So Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Let her keep this for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

The large crowd of Judeans found out that he was there and came, not only because of him, but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. And the chief priests plotted to kill Lazarus too, because many of the Jews were turning away and believing in Jesus because of him.

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

A reflection from this year's Lenten reflection booklet by former Pax Christi USA National Coordinator Anne McCarthy, osb:

Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. (Jn 12:3)

Mary of Bethany, who loved Jesus deeply and listened to his word, now anoints him, pours expensive perfume on his feet. It is a reckless act, a tender, intimate act, and Jesus is grateful. Several days later, Jesus washes the feet of his disciples and dries them. It is a tender, intimate, loving action which he learned from Mary. Might Mary be our teacher?

Mary is not afraid of death. She has the courage to be with Jesus as he confronts his crucifixion. Mary is not afraid of bodies either. And Mary is not afraid of love—of the openness and vulnerability and risk that love is.

In leading retreats, I often introduced a self-anointing ritual prayer to acknowledge and thank our bodies for all their gifts to us and to strengthen and prepare our bodies for whatever comes, which, sooner or later, will be death. Retreatants often find thanking their bodies as a surprisingly powerful experience. Perhaps the act of anointing itself helps us move beyond fear to deeper love and connection with both ourselves and others.

*Can you relate now with any of Jesus' emotions on his entry into Jerusalem? If so, which ones?
Are there gifts from those emotions in your work for justice?*

Further reflection by Judy Coode

Silent reflection

We invite you to quietly reflect on tonight's readings and reflection, and to consider the Lenten question: *Can you relate now with any of Jesus' emotions on his entry into Jerusalem? If so, which ones? Are there gifts from those emotions in your work for justice?*

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 2-3 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 love, hear our prayer.

Closing prayer

(from Thomas Merton)

Oh God, we are one with You. You have made us one with You. You have taught us that if we are open to one another, You dwell in us. Help us to preserve this openness and to fight for it with all our hearts. Help us to realize that there can be no understanding where there is mutual rejection. Oh God, in accepting one another wholeheartedly, fully, completely, we accept You, and we thank You, and we adore You, and we love You with our whole being, because our being is in Your being, our spirit is rooted in Your spirit. Fill us then with love, and let us be bound together with love as we go our diverse ways, united in this one Spirit which makes You present in the world, and which makes You witness to the ultimate reality that is love. Love has overcome. Love is victorious. 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.)