

# Pax Christi USA Lenten prayer service, week 2

## March 17, 2025

**Welcome** - *With special intention for Sr. Jean Fallon, MM*



**Opening song** - [Hold on to love](#)

*Text and music © 2016, Jesse Manibusan*

### **Opening prayer**

RESPONSE: ***Forgive us, we pray***

For our hardness of heart...	For failing to risk...
For wasting our gifts...	For failing to trust...
For wanting too much...	For failing to act...
For wounding the earth...	For failing to negotiate...
For neglecting the poor...	For failing to hope...
For trusting in weapons...	For failing to love...
For ignoring racial injustice...	For our arrogance...
For refusing to listen...	For our impatience...
For exporting arms...	For our cowardice...
For desiring dominance...	For our pride...
For wanting to win...	For our silence...
For lacking humility...	For our complicity...

RESPONSE: ***Change our hearts***

That we learn compassion...	That we live in hope...
That we embrace nonviolence...	That we might be strong...
That we act in justice	That we do your will...
	That we might be peace...

**ALL: Amen.**

### **First reading: Isaiah 1:10, 16-20**

Hear the word of the LORD, princes of Sodom!

Listen to the instruction of our God, people of Gomorrah!

Wash yourselves clean! Put away your misdeeds from before my eyes; cease doing evil; learn to do good. Make justice your aim: redress the wronged, hear the orphan's plea, defend the widow.

Come now, let us set things right, says the LORD: Though your sins be like scarlet, they may become white as snow; Though they be crimson red, they may become white as wool.

If you are willing, and obey, you shall eat the good things of the land; But if you refuse and resist, the sword shall consume you: for the mouth of the LORD has spoken!

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

**Gospel reading: Matthew 23: 1-12**

Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying, "The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses.

Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example.

For they preach but they do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens hard to carry and lay them on people's shoulders, but they will not lift a

finger to move them. All their works are performed to be seen. They widen their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels. They love places of honor at banquets, seats of honor in synagogues, greetings in marketplaces, and the salutation 'Rabbi.' As for you, do not be called 'Rabbi.' You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers and sisters. Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven. Do not be called 'Master'; The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted."<sup>1</sup>



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

**A reflection from this year's Lenten reflection booklet, written by Ralph McCloud**

*For they preach but they do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens hard to carry and lay them on people's shoulders, but they will not lift a finger to move them.*

"Practice what you preach" is a saying or mantra that we hear often in a way to get us to be true to what we believe. Easily said but challenging in practice. We will often say *I love everybody*, or *I love you* or *I care about the poor*, or even *I'll pray for you*. Lent calls us to a deeper understanding and appreciation of what the connections mean. Lent encourages us to ensure that the words of our preaching match the practices of our day-to-day living. When we say we love and care about those who are poor, how do we connect the words to our actions? When we hear of someone in struggle, are our words of "I'll keep you in my prayers" just a hollow feel-good moment? Jesus admonished those who attempted to fake piety and not move their

<sup>1</sup> *The Christ of the Breadlines*, Fritz Eichenberg, 1951

faith into action. The overwhelming power of prayer and the need for us to interact with our brothers and sisters, especially those in need, is inextricably tied together; one actually feeds the other and vice versa. Prayer energizes the love and love energizes prayer.

During the season of Lent, our prayers should be for strength, wisdom and, just as importantly, vision that opens our eyes to the importance of being siblings in new and unique ways.

**Silent reflection – We invite you to quietly reflect on tonight's readings and reflection, and to consider this Lenten question: When you say you love and care about those who are poor, how do you pray with your actions?**

### **Prayers of the faithful**

RESPONSE: ***God of peace, hear our prayer***

### **Closing prayer**

Adapted for tonight from *Songs of Our Hearts, Meditations of Our Souls: Prayers for Black Catholics*, edited by Cecilia A. Moore, Ph.D, C. Vanessa White, D. Min., and Paul M. Marshall, S.M.)

Holy Spirit, direct the paths of the future decisions to be made by our government leaders and comfort those uprooted souls as you plot a new course in their lives.

O Lord, hold our feeble hands and grant us protection from all hurt, harm and danger.

Give us, Lord, what we need to lift up and build up one another in faith, hope and love.

We ask all of these things in the precious name of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Bread of Life, Holy Mary, Mother of God, Angels and Saints, Be our intercessors. Amen.

### **Closing song - Hold on to love**

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*If you're looking for other resources for prayer, study and action for this second week of Lent, go to <https://paxchristiusa.org/lent-2025/>. Thank you for coming and we look forward to seeing you next Monday night for our third prayer service.*

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