

Pax Christi USA Lenten prayer service, week 4
March 31, 2025



Welcome - *This week we especially remember Rose Bagley of Pax Christi Illinois, who, along with her late husband John, was a stalwart Pax Christi supporter.*

Opening song - [Give us your peace](#)

Opening prayer

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

For our hardness of heart...

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...

RESPONSE: ***Change our hearts***

That we learn compassion...

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: Isaiah 65:17-21

Thus says the LORD:

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 man who does not round out his full lifetime;

He 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: John 4:43-54

At that time Jesus left [Samaria] for Galilee. For Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his 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, written by Ralph McCloud

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 ...

God's desire for us is joy! God wishes happiness and bliss for each of us. God often spoke through the prophets that that was the reason for sending his son. God wants us to visualize this joy and to live in its aura. In a culture that spends so much time focusing on the past, this week's scriptures point us to a time and place where joy is present. The old sorrows will pass and yield to the hope of the future. We are tempted to wallow in the difficulties of the past

because it is familiar; in some cases, it requires courage and bravery to get beyond our own self-pity and move towards hope.

The words of the great doctor St. Augustine come to mind: "Hope has two beautiful daughters; their names are anger and courage. Anger at the way things are, and courage to see that they do not remain as they are."

During this Lenten season, do we have the courage to abandon our negative past and the courage to look towards the future with hope and optimism? Do we have the courage to anticipate and plan on receiving the joy that God has for us? Let's pray for the grace and courage to be joyous!

Silent reflection – *We invite you to quietly reflect on tonight's readings and reflection, and to consider this Lenten question: **What does it take for you to have optimism and hope in the current social and political climate?***

Prayers of the faithful

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

Closing prayer

Adapted for tonight from *Jesus, Our Tortured Brother Today* by Sr. Dianna Ortiz, OSU, Pax Christi USA Teacher of Peace

**Jesus, guiding Spirit,
Teach us to be in solidarity with those who hang from modern day crosses of despair,
disillusionment and cruelty.
Call out to those who cause terror and torture
"Know the evil you have done and repent."
Call out to the rest of us:
"What meaning does love have if you allow torture to continue unopposed?"
Give us the strength, the courage and the will to bring this inhumanity to an end. in
the name of love, justice and the God of us all. Amen**

Closing song - [How can I keep from singing](#)

If you're looking for other resources for prayer, study and action for this fourth 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 fifth and final prayer service for this year.

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