Pax Christi USA Lenten prayer service, week 2
March 2, 2026

Opening song - Olive Branch, Elyanna

Opening prayer – *from the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns*

For families in Iran living in fear, and for all who live under the evil rain of bombardment, may they find safe refuge. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For world leaders, that they stop the bombs and choose diplomacy over destruction and dialogue over retaliation. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all those who are poor and vulnerable, who bear the heaviest burdens of war, may their cries transform our hearts. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the courage to see the face of God in our neighbors and to build a culture of genuine encounter. **Lord, hear our prayer**.

For a lasting peace based on justice, mercy, and the sacred dignity of every life. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Opening litany

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 instruments for peace…

ALL: ***Amen***

Gospel reading: Luke 6:36-38

Jesus said to his disciples: "Be merciful, just as your Abba God is merciful.

"Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you."

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

Reflection: Written two days ago by Usama Nicola when the US and Israeli military strikes against Iran had begun and taken from his Substack, Updates from Bethlehem/Palestine.

Prayers of the faithful

From Kairos Palestine:
God of all nations and peoples,

We come to you with heavy hearts, crying out from the depths of our souls at the suffering caused by genocide, ethnic cleansing, and settler colonialism. Our hearts ache for the innocent lives destroyed, the families torn apart, and the communities erased by hatred and the lust for power.

For the victims and the oppressed: We pray for protection, safety, and healing for all families, men, women, and children who are enduring such atrocities. Comfort those who have lost loved ones and homes, and grant them strength and hope in the face of impossible circumstances. Be a refuge and a stronghold for the oppressed in their times of trouble.

For the perpetrators and the onlookers: Open the eyes and cleanse the souls of those who perpetuate this violence, that they may see the light of your image in the faces of their victims and repent. Deliver us from the apathy that hinders us from speaking up, and give the international community, our churches, and our leaders the conviction to advocate for change and demand accountability.

For the global community: Strengthen our resolve to dismantle all structures of domination and oppression, and to challenge the ideologies that incite hatred. Teach us to listen to those whose stories make us uncomfortable, to build bridges instead of walls, and to work for a world where all can live in dignity and peace.

Hear our prayer, O Lord!
Amen.

We also pray for these intentions. Our response is, "God of peace, hear our prayer. "

- *Jesus, during Lent you call us to a radical transformation. Help us to heed your call as we face the challenges and upheavals around us. Transform us, and fill us with compassionate love, that rejects hate, judgment and fear of the Other. May we be steadfast in our fight for justice, peace and community building.* ***God of peace, hear our prayer***
- *We pray for our legislators, state and local elected leaders and all associated with our government that they will find the grace to make decisions that benefit people over profits. And may they work together to make policies that are humane and promote human dignity.* ***God of peace, hear our prayer***
- *We pray for immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers who are living with immense fear, anxiety and uncertainty that the solidarity and protection by their communities may bring them comfort and assurance that they are not alone. And may all people of goodwill work together to end this unprecedented suffering.* ***God of peace, hear our prayer***

Closing prayer

Light Among the Olives*, a poem. Author is unknown:*

Even if the night is long and deep,
And shadows try to take the land,
A thousand promises the olive trees keep,
Rooted deep in sacred sand.
O little light, oh quiet ember,
Born of rubble, defying fate,
The world shall witness and remember,
How love returns, though late.
The dawn will break, the light will rise,
No curtain can hold back the sky,
With hopeful hearts and steadfast eyes,
The light of Palestine will never die.

And now we pray:

Dear Lord, let us open our ears to the cries of our Palestinian brothers and sisters, all those living in the pain of war in Iran, Lebanon, Yemen, and across the region. Let our hearts and minds lead us to stand in solidarity, especially with our Christian siblings in the land we call holy. Let us be fervent in our advocacy and tenacious in demanding what we know to be right and just. Let us understand that this is the Kairos moment when we are called to go beyond lament and repentance and make possible that all God's children wake on Easter morning to new life. Amen.

Closing song – Lullaby (0:10-3:21)

If you're looking for other resources for prayer, study and action for this second week of Lent, go to https://paxchristiusa.org/lent-2026/.

Use this link to download a study guide for the Kairos II document.