

Week 4: Peace



Opening prayer

As we light our candle today, we pray for our troubled world, so full of conflict. Lord, help us to be a people of peace.

(Light the first, second, third and fourth candle on your Advent wreath.)

Scripture

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, "Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you." She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, "Mary, do not be afraid, you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and his reign will have no end." Mary said to the angel, "But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?" "The Holy Spirit will come upon you" the angel answered "and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy, and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God." "I am the handmaid of the Lord," said Mary "let what you have said be done to me." And the angel left her. (Luke 1:26-38)

Reflection

"Do not be afraid." With these beautiful words the angel Gabriel greets Mary

In our war-torn world, awash with conflict and division, many people are afraid. We see the suffering caused by conflict in countries such as Ukraine, Syria, Sudan and Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory.

But today we can also hope for restoration and healing. Mary's generous and courageous "yes" allows us to welcome her son Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

As we approach Christmas, let us pray that that we may commit to God's vision of a just peace and seek to build a world where no one need be afraid of violence, oppression or

poverty.

For discussion

- When you picture peace, what images come to mind?
- What steps can we take to make a just peace a reality?
- Jesus is born amongst the oppressed and those in poverty. How does that impact our celebration of Christmas?

Closing prayer

We listen to your word
as it whispers in our hearts:
“Do not be afraid.”

Come, Lord, prince of peace.

Grant us the courage
to build peace in our homes,
our local community and our world.

Come, Lord, prince of peace.

Lead us in your ways,
as together we make a change
and share your peace with all.

Come, Lord, prince of peace.

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