

# 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

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.” (Luke 1: 39-45)

## Reflection

In today’s gospel, Mary and Elizabeth, having both received surprising news of their pregnancies, are preparing to become mothers for the first time. While it is joyful news, it is also challenging. We witness them turn to each other in love and embrace the promise that God will be with them.

The two women affirm, share and celebrate the blessing they have been given. In their joyful encounter they support each other as they look forward to what God is doing in and through them.

And then Mary bursts her great song of praise, the Magnificat. She sings of the great reversal when the powerful are pulled down, the lowly lifted up, the hungry fed and the rich sent away empty. Shalom, the Hebrew word for “peace”, means the end of war and conflict, but it also means being in right relationship with God, each other and the planet. It is of this deep peace, the peace of compassionate justice, that Mary sings.

## 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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