

Fourth Week of Advent (December 21- December 24):

In this final, “short” fourth week of Advent, we are invited to explore the Incarnation, where *Peace is Made Flesh* must be a central element in our Gospel Peacemaking.



Opening Prayer for Week 4:

Clare at the Manger

Look closely, I say, to the beginning of the life of this admired one, indeed at the poverty of him who was wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed in a manger.
O marvelous humility!
O astonishing poverty!
The King of the angels.
The Lord of heaven and earth is
Laid to rest in a manger!

Amen

Closing Prayer for Week 4:

Blessing (Given to Brother Leo at LaVerna)

May the Lord bless you
and keep you;
may the Lord show his face to you
and have compassion on you!
May he turn his face to you
and give you peace!

Amen.

Personal Peacefulness Practice Items for Each Day of Week 4:

- Take time to go to your local parish and spend an hour in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, whether He is in the Tabernacle or in Exposition. In preparation for this time of “waiting with Jesus,” read you a newspaper or watch the news paying particular attention to stories of conflict and violence. Bring these situations into conversation and contemplation as you spend time with the Blessed Sacrament.



- When you encounter each person this week, look deeply into them to see the presence of the Incarnation in each of them. Attempt to train yourself to look first for the Christ in the other before anything else. Doing so does not remove bad action(s) from the other’s “slate”, but it invites us to see also “the flesh made peace.”
- Try fasting one day this final week with the intention of being more peaceful on your fasting day. Fasting creates emptiness in a physical sense, but it also creates an opportunity for peacemaking. In this emptiness, attempt to connect with the entire world. See if you can experience solidarity with all Creation (human and non-human). In this experience of solidarity, we enjoy a taste of the Incarnation.

Sunday, December 21 (Fourth Sunday of Advent)

Scripture Reading (for Sunday and Monday of Advent Week 4)

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke:

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

"Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be,

since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.

Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

Then the angel departed from her. (Lk 1: 26-38)



Sunday Reflection Question: What does following God's will mean to you? How does this "following" invite you to be a Gospel Peacemaker?

Monday, December 22

Reading: Reflect again on the Sunday Scripture Passage

Monday Reflection Question: How has God created miracles in your life? How does or could the gratitude you experience in receiving these gifts enable you to see invitations for Gospel Peacemaking?

Tuesday, December 23

Reading for Tuesday and Wednesday

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus

that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment,

when Quirinius was governor of Syria.
So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town.
And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town
of Nazareth
to Judea, to the city of David that is called
Bethlehem,
because he was of the house and family of David,
to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was
with child.



While they were there,
the time came for her to have her child,
and she gave birth to her firstborn son.
She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him

in a manger,
because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were shepherds in that region living in
the fields
and keeping the night watch over their flock.
The angel of the Lord appeared to them
and the glory of the Lord shone around them,
and they were struck with great fear.
The angel said to them,
“Do not be afraid;
for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy
that will be for all the people.
For today in the city of David
a savior has been born for you who is Christ and
Lord.
And this will be a sign for you:
you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling
clothes
and lying in a manger.”
And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly
host with the angel,
praising God and saying:
“Glory to God in the highest
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor
rests.” (Lk 2: 1-14)

Tuesday Reflection Question: What are the implications in your community of the birth of Jesus as the Prince of Peace, as Peace Made Flesh? How can this be shared in a peaceful manner?

Wednesday, December 24 (Christmas Eve)

Reading: Reflect again on the Gospel of Luke.

Wednesday Reflection Question: What are the implications in the world of the birth of Jesus as the Prince of Peace, as Peace Made Flesh? How can this be shared in a peaceful manner?

Thursday, December 25 (Christmas Day!)

Reflection Question: What does the birth of Jesus as the Prince of Peace, as Peace Made Flesh, call you to in terms of activities in the New Year?

***Merry Christmas from the Franciscan Communities!!
Thank you for sharing this journey!***