

# The Promise of Light

*Reflections for Advent 2015*



*Sunday and Holy Day reflections by*

**Rev. John Rausch, glmy**

Pax Christi USA Teacher of Peace

*with weekday and Saturday reflections by*

**Nelson Araque**

Catholic Climate Ambassador

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# First Sunday of Advent

## November 29, 2015



A stone wall at the Shepherd's Field, outside of Bethlehem in the Occupied West Bank

**Jeremiah 33:14-16 | 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2**  
**Luke 21:25-28, 34-36**

*“But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads, because your redemption is at hand.” (Lk 21:28)*

Advent allows a step back from our preoccupation with economic worries and the cares of the world. It raises our eyes to see the new liturgical year as the hopeful dawn of salvation that will ultimately reach completion with our participation. Fear about the “end of the world” gets replaced by excitement about the fullness of God’s Reign. Your “ransom,” “liberation,” and “redemption” are at hand!

Fear sells newspapers and grabs our attention with every news broadcast. Terrorists might attack, hackers may control the Internet, a gallon of gas may double in price! Shriill talking heads on TV and radio constantly inflate every troublesome situation into catastrophic

tragedy. The gullible get scared. People of faith, by contrast, click the “off” button.

For faithful disciples the right agenda drives out fear. We know concerns like immigration, poverty, torture, capital punishment, the environment, workers’ rights, women’s rights, and every violence demand our attention. We People of Faith overcome our fear by speaking out, knowing “the Lord our justice” (Jer 33:16) stands by our side.

Fear, however, will grip those who get bloated on self-indulgence. Luke addresses his warning to the rich, i.e., the “greedy,” the over-consumers and super-consumers who “will die of fright in anticipation of what is coming upon the world” (Lk 21:26).

The poor seldom have time for trivial activities of self-indulgence. They’re too busy scratching for survival. And therein lies the key: by identifying with the agenda of the poor, our concern turns to love and that drives out fear. We stand with the oppressed, the deprived and those discriminated against.

Advent: a stepping back to stand with the least, and without fear, to securely “stand before the Son of Man” (Lk 21:36).

*What surprising gifts have wandering brought to you?*

*How have you seen God alive in your seeing the pain of our world?*

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## **Thursday, Second Week of Advent December 10, 2015**

**International Human Rights Day  
Isaiah 41:13-20 | Matthew 11:11-15**

*“The afflicted and the needy seek water in vain,  
their tongues are parched with thirst.” (Is 41:17)*

Today when we celebrate International Human Rights Day, there are people afflicted and needy who are looking for water. The scarcity of water is one of the main problems in our world and it has gotten progressively worse in recent years. An important reason for this problem with water is greed. Some of us live as if we own natural resources, but the reality is that God created everything for all people. Our concern

must lead us to use natural resources in a sustainable way. Our concern must lead us to share, protect and save the sources of water. We need water to live; most of the body is made of water. Having access to drinkable water is a human right. Taking care of God's creation is a human duty!

*Can you list three things you are doing to save water at home?*

*What are the rules in your city or town regarding the use of water?*

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## **Thursday, Fourth Week of Advent December 24, 2015**

**Christmas Eve  
2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16 | Luke 1:67-79**

*"In the tender compassion of our God, the dawn from on high shall break upon us ... to guide our feet into the way of peace." (Lk 1:78)*

In a few hours, we will celebrate Christmas, the glorious feast of the Incarnation. Our family, relatives and friends will surround us. This is the celebration of the birth of the Messiah for which we have been preparing throughout the Advent season. Now is the moment when we need to continue our commitment to the poor and displaced. It is the time when the dawn from on high breaks upon us anew. This Light we call Jesus illumines the darkness and offers life after death. God became flesh and thus restored humanity to the image of the Creator. This is the time for us to take significant action to restore the dignity of every person. So begins anew our determination to do the works of justice and prepare the way for peace.

*After Christmas, what specific action will you commit yourself to do to restore justice and peace in your neighborhood or community?*

This is a sample of Pax Christi USA's 2015 Advent reflection booklet. We are taking pre-orders now. Our printing run will depend on pre-orders, so be sure to get your order in before September 17th. A limited number of booklets will be available after September 17th, but to assure your order, please contact us before September 17th.

To guarantee your order contact Lori Nemenz at 814-520-6245 or at [sales@paxchristiusa.org](mailto:sales@paxchristiusa.org) or visit the website at [www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org) before Thursday, September 17th.