

Light the Way: Advent service for the Trade Justice campaign

Introduction

This service is designed so that you can create either a non-eucharistic service (e.g. for ecumenical worship) or use appropriate elements or ideas from it in your Mass for the day. Please feel free to adapt to suit your circumstances. For additional material please see Prayers for a Change, the campaign prayer booklet. Hymn numbers given are for Laudate, published by Decani music in 1999.

Service

As the service begins the room/hall/church is in darkness apart from flickering candles around the edge of the congregation or group. The service opens with a chant from Taize: "Wait for the Lord". As the chant is sung, four people walk from East, West, South and North carrying a small, lit candle each. When they arrive in the centre the chant is reduced to humming and each candle bearer in turn says: "I come from the East", "I come from the North" etc. After the fourth bearer has spoken the chant stops.

Finally they say together: "The nations are gathered together."

And the congregation responds:

"The nations are gathered together in hope and expectation."

The candle bearers now wait until after the Opening Sentences when they will light the Advent candle together.

The leader welcomes the congregation

Leader: In Isaiah's vision all the nations stream to God's house, where they will learn God's ways, ways of peace and justice. Today we are all trying to walk down the right path and take the right decisions. But sometimes we get distracted; we start to live as though we do not believe in the coming of Christ. We get on with our everyday lives – shopping, working, cooking, dancing and drinking – we think this is reality, but actually we are numbing ourselves to the real truth. Christ is coming – this belief could change our lives completely.

Are we ready to meet this challenge?

Opening sentences

based on Isaiah 2:1-5

Leader: All the nations stream to the house of the Lord

Men: Loving God, teach us your ways,

Women: We will walk in the path of the Lord

All: **We will walk in the light of Christ**

Leader: God will judge between the nations

Men: We will hammer our swords into ploughshares

Women: Nation will not lift sword against nation

All: We will walk in the light of Christ

Leader: God will show us the ways

Men: of peace

Women: and of justice

All: We will walk in the light of Christ

Light the Advent candle using the flames from each of the four small candles so that the four flames come together to make one.

Song

Christ, be our light. (Bernadette Farrell, OCP publications, can be found in *Laudate* (Decani music) number 883)

Opening Prayer

Leader:

Generous loving God,

As we begin this season of preparation and hope, teach us how to live in love. Show us how to walk in your ways, ready to learn and ready to change. Help us always to hold in our hearts and minds all those who go hungry. Give us the courage and compassion, tenderness and strength to work for an end to the scandal of poverty, and to fight, in peace, for justice.

All: Amen

Reading

Reader 1 : Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly, defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Proverbs 31:8-9

Reader 2: My name is Ignacio Perez. I am 38 and I come from Chiapas in Mexico. I am a farmer. I have three rooms in my house. I wash in the stream at the end of the garden and I cook on an open fire outside. I eat tortillas made from maize, and salt if we have any. I drink coarse coffee with no sugar.

Reader 3: The prices Ignacio gets for his crops have dropped, and prices of other things have gone up. He would love to buy shoes for his children, or new clothes, but he can't. He doesn't eat anything before his day at work in the fields, and leaves the tortillas in the morning for the children who then eat nothing until they come back from school.

Reader 2: Maybe the day will come when we will have more to eat than just a little maize, when our children will grow quickly and strongly and not have to live in the mud. Then maybe we will not suffer any more as we do now.

Reader 1: We believe that in every poor man or woman we meet Jesus Christ. We therefore reiterate our absolute conviction that the suffering and death of so many people as a direct result of poverty is a scandal crying out to heaven for redress. We take this opportunity of a renewed international interest in poverty reduction on the part of the world's most powerful governments and institutions to urge them to address a trading system that, in systematically favouring the markets and exports of the North over those of the South, is fundamentally unjust.

Pontifical Council 7 December 2000

Psalm

Psalm 122. Ideally this should be sung. Good versions include "Like as a deer that yearns for flowing water" (Laudate 219).

Reading

Reader 1: You know the time has come; the moment is here for you to stop sleeping and wake up, because by now our salvation is nearer than when we first began to believe.

Reader 2: The night is nearly over, daylight is on the way; so let us throw off everything that belongs to the darkness and equip ourselves for the light.

Romans 13:11- 12

Song

City of God (Laudate 824)

Gospel reading

Matthew 24: 37-44

This gospel is ideal for dramatisation as a mime during the reading. Set a table and arrange a feast on it with plenty to eat and drink. Show people holding hands, kissing, exchanging rings, going shopping (using credit cards), going to work/school, all without a care in the world. Then they should all fall asleep around the table. At the beginning of verse 42 (so stay awake!) change the reader to someone with a loud voice (or several voices join in at once) to wake everyone up. The people round the table stay asleep.

Procession of goods from around the world

Leader: Sometimes we too live as if our eyes are closed. We buy and sell things from around the world, taking it for granted that they are available, without even realising where they come from. But often global rules mean that people who live in poverty don't benefit from trade – they are left out and go hungry. God created the world for all to share, yet just a few people live in incredible wealth whilst millions struggle just to feed their children. We believe in a better world than this.

From East, West, North and South (in a reprise of the opening procession) food and goods are brought from different points of the church. Pick one or two appropriate

items to represent those on the list e.g. a T-shirt and Gameboy from the East, a jar of coffee and a bottle of wine from the West, a bar of chocolate and a bunch of flowers from the South, a credit card and a take-away container from the North. You may choose to play instrumental music live or on tape at this point. When all the goods have arrived in the middle the bearers announce (one at a time):

East: From China, Korea, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam – I bring your clothes, your computer games, your televisions and microwaves.

West: From Nicaragua, Chile, Argentina, Mexico and the Caribbean – I bring your coffee, your wine, your corn and your sugar.

South: From Kenya, South Africa, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Cameroon – I bring your chocolate, cut flowers, your cotton, fruit and vegetables.

North: From Europe and the United States – I bring your cars, your fast food, your banks and insurance companies.

Homily/talk/discussion

Pledge and sending out

Leader: God of justice and compassion, show us how to walk in your ways. Teach us how to make the right choices so that in our world of plenty no one is left hungry.

All: We believe trade should work in the interests of all people. We promise to act with others to change the rules that govern international trade so that they work to eradicate poverty, protect the environment and ensure equal access to life in all its fullness.

Song

Diverse in culture, nation, race (to the tune Tallis' canon "Almighty Father, Lord most high" Laudate 841) or *Who will speak if I/we don't?* (Marty Haugen).

Responses

Reader 1: The night is nearly over, daylight is on the way; so let us throw off everything that belongs to the darkness and equip ourselves for the light.

All: Stay awake and stand ready

Reader 2: Send out your light and your truth;
They shall be my guide,
To lead me to your holy mountain
To the place where you dwell.

All: The night is nearly over. Stay awake and stand ready.

Reader 3 : Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly, defend the rights of the poor and needy.

All: Daylight is on the way. Stay awake and stand ready.

Leader: We come from the East, the North, the South and the West. We are your people, God of hope.

Leader: Loving God, teach us your ways.

All: **We will walk in the path of the Lord**
We will walk in the light of Christ.

Blessing

Leader:

Loving Creator God
Help us to believe in a more just world
Give us the openness to work with others to make a difference
Give us the confidence to challenge injustice
And to nurture the flame of justice until it burns brightly

And may the Spirit of justice and community
Accompany you and light your way

May this Spirit move you, heal you,
Guide you and challenge you
Call you to action and to prayer

May a passion for justice burn through you and in you
And may it warm the hearts of those around you
Encouraging hope and overcoming fear.

All: Amen

Song

Sent by the Lord am I (Laudate 855)

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