

Wednesday, December 21st, Day 25 – Kevin McIlroy

(Welcome)

Hello, and welcome to Vespers for the Advent season. My name is Kevin McIlroy, and today is the 25th day of Advent, Saturday, December 21st.

(Centering)

As we begin our time of reflection and devotion, let's take a moment to center ourselves.

Make sure other distractions are quieted for the next few minutes.

If possible, bring your body to complete rest.

As you become aware of the stillness around you, focus on your breathing as we inhale and exhale slowly together.

Breathe in, exhale.

Breathe in, exhale.

Breathe in, exhale.

(Responsive Prayer)

As we continue in prayer together, speak the words of this responsive prayer.

LEADER – God of love

RESPONSE – May this season remind us of your steadfastness

LEADER – Christ of hope

RESPONSE – May this season remind us of your promises

LEADER – Spirit of peace

RESPONSE – May this season remind us of your comfort

LEADER – As it was from the beginning,

RESPONSE – So now, may the joy of this season burn in our hearts

TOGETHER – Amen

(Lectio Divina)

For the next few moments, let's dwell in God's Word.

Our reading today comes from Ecclesiastes, Chapter 3.

I will read the passage through 3 times - each time with a different way for you to experience the scripture.

(1st Reading)

Hear the Word of God

1 For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven:

2 a time to be born and a time to die;
a time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted;

3 a time to kill and a time to heal;
a time to break down and a time to build up;

4 a time to weep and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn and a time to dance;

5 a time to throw away stones and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing;

6 a time to seek and a time to lose;
a time to keep and a time to throw away;

7 a time to tear and a time to sew;
a time to keep silent and a time to speak;

8 a time to love and a time to hate;
a time for war and a time for peace.

(After 1st Reading Prompt)

As we read through the 2nd time, take notice of what word or phrase stands out to you and hold onto it. If you would like to write your reflections down or tell someone else your findings, feel free to pause the video after this 2nd reading.

Passage Repeated

(After 2nd Reading Prompt)

If a word or phrase caught your attention, what, if anything, do you sense God saying to you about the PEACE that Advent brings? Listen for that invitation during this final reading. If you would like to write your reflections down or tell someone else your findings, feel free to pause the video after this 3rd reading.

Passage Repeated

(After 3rd Reading Prompt)

As we conclude this time of reading together, let me offer these questions as a challenge to be aware of as you go about your Advent season:

How does it feel to know that a full life has ups and downs, highs and lows?

How is the PEACE of the Advent evidence of these contrasts?

(Benediction)

Thank you for spending time with us today. As you continue this week, may the PEACE of the Advent resound in every part of your life. If you will, speak these words with me as we conclude:

ALL – Lord of hosts,
Who breathed the words of creation and
spoke the Word of the Incarnation
Ignite our imaginations
Fill us with awe and wonder
Prepare the way for the Messiah, within and without
For unto us, a Child is born
Unto us, Emmanuel is given
Bring us Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace
As we receive, once again, Your greatest gift to the world
Amen, and amen

(Conclusion)

Join us every day of Advent for a time of reflection and devotion.
May God go with you through this season of PEACE.
Blessings, dearly beloved.