

Reflection for December 10, 2025

By Gail Addis, IHM

Both readings today are invitations to remember that God is never far away in times of difficulty and exile.

In the reading from Isaiah, the people are in in Babylon, exiled after the destruction of Jerusalem. Driven from their homeland, their hopes and dreams, their kinship connections and way of life have been shattered. They are discouraged and wonder if God has forgotten them. They cry out to their God who seems to be very far away and letting them down.

Like the Israelites, we strongly feel in exile in today's political climate. We have not been driven from our homeland, like refugees and immigrants. We do experience a widening chasm in terms of our country's values and modes of operation. What gave meaning to our democratic way of life is persistently being and eroded and discarded.

We wonder how God's kingdom will come on earth when so much of what we experience is blatantly contrary to the God in whom we believe, and whose vision we try to live by. We, too, cry out in anger, frustration and disbelief —how can this be happening? Isaiah's message is a word for us.

God summoned the prophet to comfort the people and announce that their exile would end. Isaiah reminds his community, and ours, that God is the creator and sustainer of everything. No one is like or equal to God. God is filled with generosity and overflowing care. This God never gives up on us. God is with us in all we experience.

Like the Israelites, we, too, are being invited to put our hope and trust in that same God. This God, whose ways are not always our ways, listens to the cries of the oppressed and to those who are heavily burdened. God never leaves us. When things are falling apart, will we still put our hope and trust in that God who wants life in abundance for the entire earth community?

In the Gospel, Jesus calls all who labor for the coming of the kingdom and are burdened, to come to him and he will give us rest.

We need to heed Jesus invitation, not just because we're tired or burned out or discouraged...all of which may be true in light of the chaos in which we live.

We are wise to choose time in God's presence when we feel in exile, so we may gain perspective and remember who God is, the One who is creating and sustaining all that exists.

Like Mary, when she didn't understand how life would unfold, we need to pause a while so we can hear, "Nothing is impossible with God."



Deep Faith. Courageous Spirit. Action for Justice.

We need time to remember who we are...human servants, not the master builders of the kingdom. God works in ways we cannot comprehend and our vision is limited.

Perhaps in our exile rest we might ask what am I learning about myself? Are there attitudes, values or behaviors in me, that are like those I judge in others, only more subtle? What might God be doing in us and in our world? what are we to learn, and might God be preparing us for something, even though like Mary, we do not presently see it?

We need time to remember God's promise, that we are never alone in our efforts to hasten the coming of God's kingdom. As we will celebrate at Christmas, the God we serve is Immanuel, God-with-us, who shares our burdens and is never far away in time of trouble, personal or national.

In this Advent time, Jesus also invites us to let go of the yoke of what oppresses us and take up his yoke which is that of loving unconditionally no matter what!

Loving unconditionally probably won't be an easy coming to birth in our personal relationships or in how we love the world. It carries a lot of vulnerability and surrender.. It is our participation in the mystery of the Incarnation.

As the Pax Christi daily Advent meditations note: "May our broken hearts hum at the same frequency as Gods." P 10