



# beginning the journey of *transforming* grace: transforming consciousness

Reflection for the week of December 3, 2023

## *Opening Song*

**O Come, O Come Emmanuel** by Lauren Daigle

## *Prayer*

As we light the first candle on our Advent wreaths, we experience our dawn coming later and sun setting earlier.

In this shifting light, we ponder and lament the divisiveness and polarities which rob us of the hope that the reign of God is emerging among us. Our Hope Candle calls us to sincerely examine the ways we are contributing to the polarities among us and imagine that another way is possible.

During this Advent season we practice recognizing the first inklings that an action of ours is contributing to the divisiveness of the world. We pray for the courage to face our complicity and practice the skills that will enable us to contribute to the gift that the Prince of Peace brings at Christmas.

## *Listen*

**Paul's first letter to the Corinthians 1:4-10**

I continually thank my God for you because of the gift bestowed on you in Christ Jesus, in whom you have been richly endowed with every gift of speech and knowledge. ... you lack no spiritual gift, ... God will strengthen you ... I beg you, sisters and brothers, in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ to agree in your message. Let there be no factions; rather, be united in mind and judgement. (The Inclusive New Testament, Priests for Equality)



## *Watch*

**Daily Habits, Political Violence, Changing Choices**

Christine-Marie Abu Sarah

*The most important thing [I've learned] is that political violence is not culturally endemic. We create it. And whether we realize it or not, our day-to-day habits contribute to the creation of violence in our environment.*

Polarization in our society is not impulse, it's learning. Every day we are teaching ourselves: the news we click on, the emotions that we focus on, the thoughts that we entertain... We can get out of whatever news bubble we're in, we can be more mindful about the emotional cues that we focus on, the outrage bait that we click on. ... And that's why it is so, so important for us to retrain our brains and stop contributing to violent ecologies.

## *Reflect and Act*

As we embark on this Advent journey of transforming consciousness, let us pause. Reflecting, perhaps journaling with the following questions, and, if possible engaging in contemplative dialogue on them may lead us towards the first step on this journey

Identify a time when you found yourself in a polarizing situation- spend some time recalling your thoughts and feelings.

Create a space for prophetic imagination and allow yourself to consider if something else was possible.

This week, note ways you are aware of "we/they" or "either/or" moments of anger and division. What happens as you pause, breathe, and offer compassion to yourself and the "other."

## *Closing Prayer*

God of Hope, teach me your ways of trusting in transforming grace, patient presence, and possibilities for peace. Amen