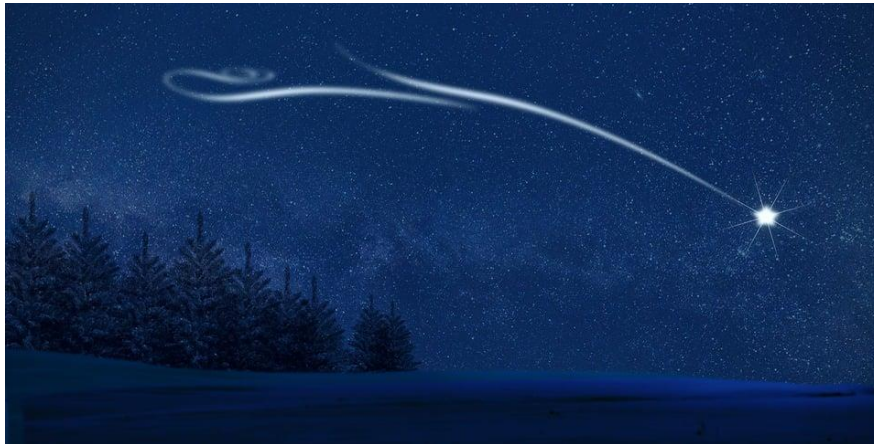




*Paz y
Esperanza*



ADVENT REFLECTION

As we approach Advent, we asked **Olga Restrepo** from Paz y Esperanza Colombia to share a reflection. She has chosen to meditate on Zechariah 9 v 9.

*'Rejoice greatly, daughter Zion!
Shout, daughter Jerusalem!
See, your king comes to you,
righteous and victorious,
lowly and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'*



In this world we constantly hear about the horrors of war. Countries show their power through weapons, with the aim of warning others not to challenge them, and with the aim of achieving "peace" through the latest technology and artillery.

But what does this have to do with Advent? Let me tell you that the Messiah who was promised and came to be born in a manger, came to dismantle all the apparatus of national security so that we could have eternal peace.

Zechariah is a prophet who came to a people who didn't have much hope for the future. The prophet explained where people needed to fix their eyes and place their hope. In this moment of history in which Zechariah writes in chapter 9, there was turbulence in Israel and the Middle East with the prospect of war. In Zechariah 9 v 1-8, the pride and boasting of the nations is described during times of war. Zechariah proclaims that God will bring justice to all the nations that decided to put their trust in riches and military force rather than Him. He says God has his eyes over all humanity and declares that Israel should rejoice as their king and Messiah is coming. The Messiah would come to them and be just, humble and a saviour. This king will come on a colt, not on a grand horse like other kings or great leaders would ride on. The type of mount used by leaders during a time of war shows power and strength but the Bible tells us in Psalm 96 and 98 and Isaiah 62 that this King will make a different kind of entrance and Israel should be glad.

The peace that the people of God need will not come from military power, not from shows of strength or from new developments in defence technology. The peace of God comes through the weakness of a King who would be born on Earth. The creator of all would destroy all human strategies for achieving peace. Instead of coming in power He would come in weakness. Instead of showing ambition, he would show humility. Instead of a fight motivated by fear and hate, he would act with justice.

Christmas reminds us that this King was born in a stable. The God of the universe, who has unimaginable power, stronger than all the atomic bombs in the world, comes to Earth and is born in a stable. This King doesn't use his strength and power, doesn't seek revenge and loves everyone whether they trust in him or not. This King gives his life for everyone instead of finding new ways to take the lives of enemies. This is the King that we remember at Christmas who came to bring peace.

May we remember this Messiah and this Saviour this Advent.

Thank you for your financial support and prayers this year. Why not make a Christmas gift to support our brothers and sisters in Latin America.

<https://www.justgiving.com/pazesperanza>

If you would like to read what the PyE UK team have been up to, we have now posted a link to the 2022 annual report on our website.

Help yourself and enjoy.

<https://www.pazesperanza.org/uk/how-we-work/achievements/>

Any queries or clarification, please contact us.