

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Herald of Light

O God of Justice,
you called the prophet John the Baptist,
to prepare the way for the coming of your Son.
John's message of repentance led others to
embrace you.

Grant your servants ears to hear his cry in
the desert of their hearts
so that, transformed by love,
we, too, may turn and embrace you.

Fill us, O God, with the Spirit of courage
and strengthen our will to be heralds
of the Light.

Make us fervent in our prayer
and direct us to bring glad tidings to the poor
so that, on that final day,
we may be found holy and blameless
in your sight
as we rejoice in the gift of your mercy.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, December 17, 2017

Glad Tidings

Today's Readings: Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11; Luke 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54 (antiphon: Isaiah 61:10b); 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28. Today is Gaudete Sunday, the turning point in the season of Advent. After two weeks of contemplating the end-time and Christ's Second Coming, the Church invites us to rejoice in Christ our Savior. We are filled with joy because we know that the coming of Christ is the coming of our salvation. Like Mary, we rejoice because God's love overflows into the world and takes root in our hearts.

Today's response, taken from the Magnificat, is Mary's great song of praise and puts her words of praise on our lips. Imagine the joy she must have experienced. When has Christ filled you with joy? When we ponder the Incarnation,

how can we not be filled with joy? Jesus is the Anointed One who brings Good News to the poor and frees the enslaved. Everything that God has promised to his people is revealed in Jesus and continues today to be revealed in his Church.

Even though this Sunday is joy filled, we cannot forget that many have lost hope and that they find themselves on the margins. Jesus calls us to carry the cross and be heralds of the Good News to the poor and brokenhearted. It is not always easy, but this is the work of all the baptized. This week, gather a group from your family or parish and using these readings for prayer, begin discerning how your community can bring glad tidings to the poor and release to prisoners.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, December 18

O Lord

In this third week of Advent, the readings begin to focus more directly on the birth of Christ. In today's Gospel, Joseph learns how Mary conceived Jesus. Although Scripture does not provide a lot of insight on Jesus' foster father, the glimpse we get here shows an obedient, loving, and generous man. This passage helps us know that God, through the Incarnation, is truly with us. The praying of the "O" Antiphons begins this week. Consider using them with your meal prayer this week. *Today's Readings: Jeremiah 23:5-8; Psalm 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19; Matthew 1:18-25.*

Tuesday, December 19

O Root of Jesse

The two readings today present God's awesome power to overcome any trial. First, we hear the story of the wife of Manoah who learns from an angel that she will bear a son. Second, the angel Gabriel tells Zechariah that his wife, Elizabeth, will conceive a son. Imagine how these two women, once barren, rejoiced at the news of conception. Upon their lips were songs of praise. Light candles and pray today for all the unborn and for those who are unable to conceive. *Today's Readings: Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a; Psalm 71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17; Luke 1:5-25.*

Wednesday, December 20

O Key of David

The Gospel Acclamation tells of the Key of David setting prisoners free. As we draw closer to Christmas, it is good to reflect on Christ, the Key who unlocks the gates of heaven. It is Christ, the descendant of David, who ransoms us from sin and darkness so we can walk in the light of his countenance. Take your keys today and use them in your prayer as you do *lectio divina* with today's psalm. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 7:10-14; Psalm 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6; Luke 1:26-38.*

Thursday, December 21

O Dayspring

This is the second time during Advent that we have heard this portion of the Gospel reading from Luke. Because John leapt in Elizabeth's womb, she seems to know that Mary is carrying the Christ. Her prayer, which we say in the Hail Mary explains it all. Mary's womb is blessed. Imagine if you were Elizabeth. How might you react to this news? Song of Songs provides images to ponder when we think of the bridegroom coming to be with us. How can we not leap for joy and sing a new song! *Today's Readings: Song of Songs 2:8-14 or Zephaniah 3:14-18a; Psalm 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21; Luke 1:39-45.*

Friday, December 22

O King of Nations

Today we encounter Hannah, the mother of Samuel, and Mary. These two women sing the praises of God at the birth of their children. Listen carefully to the psalm response today and notice its connection to the Magnificat in the Gospel proclamation. Both texts praise God's power to cast the rich aside and raise up the poor. Jesus, the King of the Nations, has conquered the enemy—so let us rejoice. Today read a commentary on the Gospel and meditate on its rich imagery. *Today's Readings: 1 Samuel 1:24-28; 1 Samuel 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd; Luke 1:46-56.*

Saturday, December 23

O Emmanuel

In the First Reading, the prophet Malachi announces a messenger who will prepare the way for God's coming. The Gospel tells of the birth of John the Baptist, the one whose call to repent and prepare a way for the Lord began our Advent season. Have you listened to John's plea? Review your Advent journey tonight, and be attentive to the rough ways in your life that still need straightening. Praise God for the good works already accomplished. *Today's Readings: Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24; Psalm 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 and 14; Luke 1:57-66.*

