

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

December 13, 2020

Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 61:1–2a, 10–11; 1 Thessalonians 5:16–24; John 1:6–8, 19–28



Reflection by: Dyann Brown, OPA

Today's readings for the third Sunday of Advent proclaim the physical and spiritual preparation by the faithful in anticipation of the imminent and wondrous event: welcoming the Christ child on earth.

In the first reading the prophet Isaiah proclaims his anointment by God as the bearer of glad tidings to those who are poor, brokenhearted, captives or prisoners. Through God's year of favor, they will be fed, soothed, liberated and released. The responsorial psalm continues in a similar manner with more rejoicing. This time it is Mary's canticle of humbly rejoicing that God has chosen to bless her womb. In the second reading the faith community is counseled on the importance of rejoicing and never ceasing in prayer. We must always give thanks but be vigilant to avoid evil situations.

The Gospel is John's testimony when prodded by priests and Levites about his origins and reasons for baptizing people. As he is asked whether he is Christ, Elijah or a prophet, he states simply he is only the voice who heralds Christ's imminent arrival. John, the baptizer, tells those needing an answer that the one who is coming he is unworthy to even tie his sandal straps. Preparation for His coming is an intense time of prayer, repentance and sacrifice.

As an adult Catholic, I now grasp more fully the purpose of the rituals of each liturgical season. The feeling of joy in the midst of intense spiritual preparation during the Advent season seems quite appropriate. In this liturgical season of prayer, penance and sacrifice, joy in the third Sunday of Advent—*Guadete (Rejoice) Sunday* is a good balance. The four weeks of Advent are solemnized with 3 purple candles (for hope, faith and peace) and a pink (or rose) candle—the Shepherd's Candle or Joy Candle—which represents a joyful third week for the coming of the Redeemer.

Hope * Faith * Joy * Peace

It is apt to be able to express joy especially during these solemn times. Express joy when we can still talk in person or virtually to family and friends in the midst of devastating losses of so many loved ones gone too soon. Express joy that you can reach out with kindness or acts of mercy to help another in the midst of food scarcity, job loss, home loss, and company closings. In the midst of adversity, continue to call on Him. Prepare for His coming and **still** sing joyfully—with an Advent perspective:

*"Joy to the world, the Lord is come. Let earth receive Her King.
Let every heart prepare Him room..."*

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Blessings for a safe and Joyful Advent Season!