



# focus on sunday

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (GAUDETE) 11th December 2022

The coming of Christ is a message of joy: a joy founded and rooted in God's love and care for his people, and his promise of an eternal companionship.



## Rejoice



One of the most poignant conversations in the gospel takes place between John the Baptist and some of his companions who visit him in prison after his arrest by Herod. John must know, I think, that his prospects are

not good and somewhere between hope and desperation he asks his companions to go to Jesus and put the question, 'Are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for someone else?' It is such a loaded question, so full of expectation but tinged with fear of disappointment.

People all around us are wondering the same. They wonder and hope...and pray that someone will help them in whatever difficulty confronts them. They are also afraid that no-one will. Coming up to Christmas these feelings are especially strong.

John got his answer – the Messiah had come! It was a time to rejoice; the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are healed. As Christians, we get to share that joy but also to accept the challenge that comes with it. To love and care for each other just as Jesus loves and cares for us.

You don't have to belong to a charitable organisation to do something. Members of the Society of St Vincent De Paul, for example, will do their utmost to meet some of the needs of people who come to them. You can help them in their commitment. You can be part of the effort to answer the question, 'Are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for someone else?'

Fr. Paschal Scallan CM. Spiritual Director, Society of St Vincent de Paul

who is just to those who are oppressed. It is he who gives bread to the hungry, the Lord, who sets prisoners free. [R]

2. It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind, who raises up those who are bowed down, the Lord, who protects the stranger and upholds the widow and orphan. [R]

3. It is the Lord who loves the just but thwarts the path of the wicked. The Lord will reign for ever, Zion's God, from age to age. [R]

**SECOND READING James 5: 7 - 10**  
**A reading from the letter of St. James**

Be patient, brothers, until the Lord's coming. Think of a farmer: how patiently he waits for the precious fruit of the ground until it has had the autumn rains and the spring rains! You too have to be patient; do not lose heart, because the Lord's coming will be soon. Do not make complaints against one another, brothers, so as not to be brought to judgement yourselves; the Judge is already to be seen waiting at the gates. For your example, brothers, in submitting with patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

**The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**Alleluia, alleluia!**  
**The spirit of the Lord has been given to me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor. Alleluia!**

**GOSPEL Matthew 11: 2 - 11**  
**A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.**

John in his prison had heard what Christ was doing and he sent his disciples to ask him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for someone else?' Jesus answered, 'Go back and tell John what you hear and see; the blind see again, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised to life and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor; and happy is the man who does not lose faith in me.'

As the messengers were leaving, Jesus began to talk to the people about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the breeze? No? Then what did you go out to see? A man wearing fine clothes? Oh no, those who wear fine clothes are to be found in palaces. Then what did you go out for? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet: he is the one of whom scripture says: Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way before you. I tell you solemnly, of all the children born of women, a greater than John the Baptist has never been seen; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is.'

**The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**NICENE CREED**

**I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth,**

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

**Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near.**

**PENITENTIAL ACT**

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.



May almighty God have mercy on us..... Amen.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

*(The Gloria is omitted awaiting its Christmas Proclamation.)*

**OPENING PRAYER**

O God, who see how your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord's Nativity, enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing. Through our Lord Jesus Christ.....

LITURGY OF THE WORD

**FIRST READING Isaiah 35: 1 - 6.10**

**A reading from the prophet Isaiah**

Let the wilderness and the dry-lands exult, let the wasteland rejoice and bloom, let it bring forth flowers like the jonquil, let it rejoice and sing for joy.

The glory of Lebanon is bestowed on it, the splendour of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, the splendour of our God.

Strengthen all weary hands, steady all trembling knees and say to all faint hearts, 'Courage! Do not be afraid.'

'Look, your God is coming, vengeance is coming, the retribution of God; he is coming to save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unsealed, then the lame shall leap like a deer and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy, for those the Lord has ransomed shall return.

They will come to Zion shouting for joy, everlasting joy on their faces; joy and gladness will go with them, and sorrow and lament be ended.

**The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.**

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps.145:6 -10**

**R. Come, Lord, and save us.**

1. It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever,

