

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Rejoicing in the Lord

Gracious and loving God,
you are the source of all hope,
Embed your grace into our hard hearts,
and guide us to rejoice on this day.
Help us to do your will
as we repent of our willful ways.
May our deaf ears hear
the wisdom of Scripture
as we joyfully await the Lord's coming.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, December 11, 2022

Be Strong, Fear Not



Today's readings: Isaiah 35:1–6a; Psalm 146:6–7, 8–9, 9–10; James 5:7–10; Matthew 11:2–11. From the rose vestment the priest may wear, to the depiction of joy in the prayers and readings, the Advent theme of rejoicing permeates the liturgy on the Third Sunday of Advent. The day is called Gaudete Sunday, “gaudete” coming from the Latin word *gaudere*, “to rejoice.” We hear the word *rejoice* in the entrance antiphon: “Rejoice in the Lord always,” and the word *joy* in the collect, or opening prayer. The reading from Isaiah portrays this joy, telling of the desert and the parched land rejoicing and a time when the eyes of the blind will be opened, the lame will leap, and the mute will sing.

Isaiah predicts salvation and God's victory over sickness and evil. Our “Thanks be to God” after the first reading should be emphatic, because wonderful things await us. Psalm 146 offers praise and hope as it tells how the Lord sets captives free, protects strangers, and thwarts the wicked. At this halfway point in Advent, the Letter of St. James tells us to be patient “until the coming of the Lord.”

For your Advent prayer this week, reflect on the reading from St. James, reading it in the morning or before a meal. St. James tells us not to judge another and to look to the prophets as an example of hardship and patience. The Scripture will help you center on the meaning of Advent.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, December 12

Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Many people began celebrating la Virgen de Guadalupe nine days ago with a novena. The novena concludes with a vigil Mass at midnight, after an evening of dancing, feasting, and celebrating Mary's appearance and miracles at Tepeyac Hill, Mexico. Mary appeared to the poor to be close to us. Today and during the coming week, find one way to be close to the Blessed Mother. Pray the Magnificat and ask Mary to intercede for people seeking asylum in the United States. *Today's readings: Zechariah 2:14–17 or Revelation 11:19a, 12:1–6a, 10ab; Judith 13:18bcde, 19; and Luke 1:26–38 or Luke 1:39–47.*

Tuesday, December 13

St. Lucy, Virgin and Martyr

St. Lucy is the patron saint of those who struggle with eye disease, blindness, or impaired sight. Pray today for those who are blind to their neighbor and for others who cannot “see” with eyes of faith and turn away from God. *Today's readings: Zephaniah 3:1–2, 9–13; Psalm 34:2–3, 6–7, 17–18, 19, and 23; Matthew 21:28–32.*

Wednesday, December 14

St. John of the Cross

St. John of the Cross was a Carmelite priest from Spain, known to his followers as a mystic and a poet. In early life he was taught by the Jesuits and the Augustinians, was influenced by the Carthusians, and finally became a spiritual follower of Teresa of Avila. An admirer of Teresa's lifestyle and spirituality, he tried to reform his Carmelite order with her guidance and mentoring. His efforts were misunderstood, though, and he suffered in prison for trying to reform the Carmelites. His “cross” was being treated unjustly. *Today's readings: Isaiah 45:6c–8, 18, 21c–25; Psalm 85:9ab and 10, 11–12, 13–14; Luke 7:18b–23.*

Thursday, December 15

Prepare

Advent is full of joyful events to anticipate and encounter. Not only do we become closer to God through listening to his Word but also through the songs of anticipation, the sweets we eat with thanksgiving, and the nativity scenes enacted. If we are open, the festivities during this time of year can change us, renewing us in hope for a better life and world. Prepare the way of the Lord today, joyfully. *Today's readings: Isaiah 54:1–10; Psalm 30: 2 and 4, 5–6, 11–12a, 13b; Luke 7:24–30.*

Friday, December 16

Beginnings

Today, Simbang Gabi, Las Posadas, and Las Parrandas celebrations begin, anticipating the nativity of Jesus. During Advent support a religious cultural celebration that is different from your experience by attending one of the celebrations. Find the celebrations through your diocesan newspaper or the parish or diocesan website. *Today's readings: Isaiah 56:1–3a, 6–8; Psalm 67:2–3, 5, 7–8; John 5:33–36.*

Saturday, December 17

“O” Wisdom

As Christmas nears, begin a family evening prayer consisting of the Hail Mary, Our Father, and the “O” antiphon of the day (or sing a different verse of “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” daily). Today's antiphon is “O Wisdom, O holy Word of God, / you govern all creation with your strong yet tender care / Come and show your people the way to salvation.” Invite your family to reflect on how they will look to God's wisdom during the coming week. *Today's readings: Genesis 49:2, 8–10; Psalm 72:1–2, 3–4ab, 7–8, 17; Matthew 1:1–17.*

