

PRAYING TOWARDS THE 3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

THE GOSPEL. John 1:6-8, 19-28



*He came for testimony, to testify to the light,
so that all might believe through him.*

Send us too,
like John,
Lord.

Let us be the
sound of your voice
crying out in the desert.

Let our whole life be a witness to your light.
Make it our reason for being.

No guile in us.
No dimness.
Not any
more.

THE FIRST READING. Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me.

Lord,
you bring glad tidings to the poor.
Let us rejoice in it.

You heal the broken-hearted.
Heal us too.

You free prisoners from their jails.
Free us from everything that shackles us today.

Loving God,
please come to us,
and send us out—forgiven, healed—
to the poor, the broken-hearted, and the prisoners.

THE SECOND READING. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Rejoice always.

Jesus,

let us rejoice in you,
and then let everything work together for us,
whether listening to you or not,
feeling your presence
or not—

still,

let it be our unceasing prayer,
as you embrace us
with love.

Let us never
quench your Spirit.

Anne Osdieck

Rejoice! The Lord is near!

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.

As we draw near to Christmas, the readings for this 'Gaudete' Sunday are full of rejoicing. We light a pink Advent candle to focus our attention on that spirit of joy. Perhaps this year, more than any other, our hearts are longing for news of joy and happiness. Though it may not be possible for us to worship today with those we long to gather with, Christ shares in our longing, standing among us and within us wherever we come to pray.

At this time we are like the people of whom the prophet Isaiah speaks in the First Reading; a people who long for the One who will bring good news and proclaim liberty to captives.

In the Responsorial Psalm we pray the words that Mary proclaimed as she rejoiced when visiting her cousin Elizabeth. Her joyful prayer of thanks celebrates God's saving promise to us all.

In the Second Reading we are encouraged to pray at all times with a spirit of gratitude, never dampening the flow of the Spirit in our lives.

The Gospel introduces John the Baptist as a messenger for the light. Hidden within a challenging dialogue with the priests and Levites, John reveals a deep truth: Christ stands among us and is truly Emmanuel – God with us – even when we are ignorant to his presence.

Let us remember each other, and the needs of the world in our prayer this week. We remember also that we belong to a loving community of prayer that longs for and trusts in the light of Christ, even in the midst of the dark winter nights and difficult times in which we live.

So may our hearts and lives proclaim with every fibre of our being ...
'Rejoice! The Lord is near!' (Taken from pathwaystogod.org)

