



3rd Sunday of Advent, Cycle C

Zephaniah 3:14-18a
Isaiah 12:2-6
Philippians 4:4-7
Luke 3:10-18

Monday December 14
Numbers 24:2-7,15-17a
Ps 25:4-5ab,6,7bc,8-9
Matthew 21:23-27

Tuesday December 15
Zephaniah 3:1-2,9-13
Ps 34:2-3,6-7,17-18,19,23
Matthew 21:28-32

Wednesday December 16
Isaiah 45:6c-8,18,21c-25
Ps 85:9ab,10,11-12,13-14
Luke 7:18b-23

Thursday December 17
Genesis 49:2,8-10
Ps 72:1-2,3-4ab,7-8,17
Matthew 1:1-17

Friday December 18
Jeremiah 23:5-8
Ps 72:1-2,12-13,18-19
Matthew 1:18-25

Saturday December 19
Judges 13:2-7,24-25a
Ps 71:3-6ab,16-17
Luke 1:5-25

The Third Sunday of Advent focuses our attention on the spirit of joyfulness, because this is an essential mark of true faith. All the readings are full of joy and the thrill of happy expectation.

In the Gospel reading, John the Baptizer preaches good news to the people, and they are filled with joyful anticipation for whatever God is about to do.

Do you know that joy is a ministry? It's an important way to share the faith. We all have a calling to do this ministry wherever there is misery and hopelessness.

Let's look at how John fulfilled this ministry of joy. We might think he was anything but joyful in his robe of scratchy camels hair and his fiery sermons about repenting from sin. But look closer. His ministry prepared people's hearts to receive Jesus.

Having faith means trusting God which means resting in hope which produces joy. When you or someone you know is lacking joy, it's because Jesus has not yet been invited fully into the situation that's been stealing the joy. It might be too early in the grieving process, which is healthy and normal, or it might be a lack of faith, which needs nurturing.

The ability to experience the joy of faith comes from turning to the love of God and receiving his comfort in the midst of hardships. It also arises from getting to know the joyful side of Jesus and the joyful purposes behind all of his teachings.

Jesus preached going the extra mile, loving our enemies, and doing good to those who cause us hardships, none of which is fun. What we need to discover and then share with others is that holy living, although not always fun, is what unites us to the joyful love of Jesus and the joyful purposes of everything he preached.

Remember, even going to the cross produces joyful results.

The good news is: Jesus didn't just tell us how to be holy, he gave us the power to be holy: He gave us his Holy Spirit.

And when others see the Holy Spirit's activity in us, if they know that Jesus is the reason for our joy, they are evangelized by our faith!

Reflect & Discuss:

1. Think of a recent sin you've committed. How did it prevent you from experiencing joy?
2. The next time, how will you rely on the Holy Spirit to help you turn temptation into joy?
3. Name some of the special joys you experience during Advent and Christmas; how do they help you grow stronger in holiness?
4. Describe a time when you helped someone else become joyful; how did Jesus reveal himself in that?