

## Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 35:1-6a,10  
Psalm 146:6-10  
(with Is 35:4)  
James 5:7-10  
Matthew 11:2-11

**Monday December 12**  
**Our Lady of Guadalupe**  
Zechariah 2:14-17  
Judith 13:18,19  
Luke 1:26-38 or 1:39-47

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

**Wednesday December 14**  
**St. John of the Cross**  
Isaiah 45:6c-8,18,21c-25  
Ps 85:9-14  
Luke 7:18b-23

**Thursday December 15**  
Isaiah 54:1-10  
Ps 30:2,4-6,11-13  
Luke 7:24-30

**Friday December 16**  
Isaiah 56:1-3a,6-8  
Ps 67:2-3,5,7-8  
John 5:33-36

**Saturday December 17**  
Genesis 49:2,8-10  
Ps 72:1-4,7-8,17  
Matthew 1:1-17

Joy is the theme of the Third Sunday of Advent. As it says in the first reading, "Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, he comes with vindication to rescue you!" This is the reason for our joy. We have been ransomed from sin and its destruction. This is why Jesus came to earth to be born as one of us: to rescue us from the horrors of an eternal separation from God and his love.

Compared to eternity, our current problems are little, very little indeed.

Joy comes from realizing that, because of Jesus, no sins against us and no destructive forces can do us permanent harm. In fact, God will make good use of everything for our benefit! He defeats evil by making blessings come from it.

Even the worst of times become huge blessings if we let them unite us to Jesus.

With Christ and in imitation of how he suffered for the sake of others, we offer to others what our hardships have taught us, and thus our sufferings become ministries. Our sorrows find valuable meaning, which produces a joy that gets multiplied beyond measure.

In Christ we are crowned with everlasting joy. We feel his joy and gladness because of the good that will come and is already starting. Sorrow and mourning



will flee away as we rise above our pain to rejoice in the goodness of joining in the ministry of Christ. And we are lifted up by a faithful and compassionate God.

As the second reading points out, we must be patient while we wait for the Lord to convert our trials into triumphs. To maintain an attitude of joy, we must remain firm in our faith, not doubting that the Lord is concerned about us. And we must not complain, because complaints mean that we think we know better than God does about how our problems should be resolved and how long it should take.

Joy comes from rejoicing in the good news that God really does care and is of course working on our behalf to produce many wonderful blessings from our sufferings, just like Jesus says in the Gospel: "Blessed is the one who takes no offense in me."

### Reflect & Discuss:

1. What are you unhappy about?
2. Can you find joy in the trial? – because God will make good come out of the suffering if you want to use it for the benefit of others. Talk to Jesus about that today. What is he telling you? What hug is he giving you?
3. Describe a time when you saw blessings come from your sufferings. If you could do it all over again, with the option of avoiding those particular troubles, would you? Why or why not?