

**PASTOR'S MEANDERINGS  
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (C)**

**11 – 12 DECEMBER 2021**



**SUNDAY REFLECTION**

Today's Responsorial Psalm, Ps. Is. 12:2-6, as so often, sets the key tone for today's liturgy: 'Cry out with joy and gladness, for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel'. For Zephaniah the Church should be a shout for joy at the prospect of what God will do and has done. Today we have become so tame and domesticated in church that we have lost the capacity to shout even to sing out and really express what Alleluia is all about.

Some years ago I came across a reflection of the Russian theologian, Alexander Schmemmann, which can cause us to reflect: "The joy of the kingdom: it always worries me that, in the multi-volume systems of dogmatic theology that we have inherited, almost every term is explained

and discussed except the one word with which the Christian Gospel open and closes. 'For behold, I bring you tidings of great joy (Lk. 2:10) – so the Gospel begins with the message of the angels: 'And they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy' (Lk. 24:52) – so the Gospel ends. There is in fact no theological definition of joy. For we cannot define that sense of joy which no one can take away from us, and at this point all definitions are silent. Yet only if this experience of the joy of the Kingdom in all its fullness is again placed at the center of theology, does it become possible for theology to deal once more with creation...'

One thinks of the oft-quoted example from the Talmud that we will have to answer for one thing only in the judgment, what we could have enjoyed but didn't. John the Baptist is an example of what we call tough love, frequently the only way to get through to people like myself. Yet he is a surprise when he comes down to the concrete in practice. To the crowds he answers simply, 'share' to the one who has two coats or something to eat. To the publican he insists that they should not demand more than the fixed price. To the soldiers he advises, "Be content with your pay'. What amazing simplicity is commended for the fulfilment of our daily duty. On the baptism with fire and the Holy Spirit, Luke points forward to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the incorporation, through baptism and the laying on of hands, of believers into the Christian community. Jesus was different from John's expectation in Luke. He comes not with fiery threats but preaching good news to the poor, captives, blind and oppressed. Jesus' first encounter with tax collectors is to call them to be disciples and to have a meal with them. John in simple terms invites us to think of the coming judgment, to have compassion towards others by giving up extortion and acquisitiveness and to accept the coming Messiah.

**STEWARDSHIP:** Today's Gospel provides a blueprint for good stewardship: "Let the man who has two coats give to him who has none. The man who has food should do the same."

## **READINGS FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**19 DEC '21**

**Mi. 5:1-4:** In Bethlehem, the prophet declares, the savior will be born.

**Heb. 10:5-10:** Christ came into the world to do God's will.

**Lk. 1:39-45:** Filled with the Holy spirit, Elizabeth declares Mary to be of all women "the most blessed".

## **ADVENT TRADITION**

### **O ANTIPHONS**

The O Antiphons refer to the seven antiphons that are recited preceding the Magnificat during Vespers of the Liturgy of the Hours. They cover the special period of Advent preparation known as the Octave before Christmas, 17-23 December, with 24 Dec. being Christmas Eve and Vespers for that evening being for the Christmas Vigil.

The exact origin of the O Antiphons is not known. Boethius (c. 480-524) made a slight reference to them, thereby suggesting their presence at that time. At the Benedictine abbey of Fleury (now St. Benoit-sur-Loire), these antiphons were recited by the abbot and other abbey leaders

in descending rank, and then a gift was given to each member of the community. By the eighth century, they are in use in the liturgical celebrations in Rome. The usage of the O Antiphons was so prevalent in monasteries that the phrases, *Keep your O* and *The Great O* Antiphons were common parlance. One may thereby conclude that in some fashion the O Antiphons have been part of our liturgical tradition since the very early Church.

The importance of O Antiphons is twofold: Each one highlights a title for the Messiah: *O Sapientia* (O Wisdom), *O Adonai* (O Lord), *O Radix Jesse* (O Root of Jesse), *O Clavis David* (O Key of David), *O Oriens* (O Rising Sun), *O Rex Gentium* (O King of the Nations), and *O Emmanuel*.

Also, each one refers to the prophecy of Isaiah of the coming of the Messiah.

**O Sapientia:** 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. Isaiah had prophesied, The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord, and his delight shall be the fear of the Lord. (Is. 11:2-3). and Wonderful is His counsel and great is His wisdom. (Is. 28:29).

**O Adonai:** O sacred Lord of ancient Israel, who showed yourself to Moses in the burning Bush, who gave him the holy law on Sinai mountain: come, stretch out your mighty hand to set us free. Isaiah had prophesied. But He shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the lands afflicted. He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips. (Is. 11:4-5); and indeed the Lord will be there with us, majestic; yes the Lord our judge, the Lord our lawgiver, the Lord our king, he it is who will save us. (Is. 33:22).

**O Radix Jesse:** O Flower of Jesse's stem, you have been raised up as a sign for all peoples; Kings stand silent in your presence; the nations bow down in worship before you. Come, let nothing keep you from coming to our aid. Isaiah had prophesied, But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. (Is. 11:1), and On that day, the root of Jesse, set up as a signal for the nations, the Gentiles shall seek out, for his dwelling shall be glorious. (Is. 11:10). Remember also that Jesse was the father of King David, and Micah had prophesied that the Messiah would be of the house and lineage of David and be born in David's city, Bethlehem (Micah 5:1).

**O Clavis David:** O key of David, O royal Power of Israel controlling at your will the gate of Heaven. come, break down the prison walls of death for those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death; and lead your captive people into freedom. Isaiah had prophesied, God will place the Key of the House of David on His shoulder; when he opens, no one will shut, when he shuts, no one will open (Is. 22:22), and His dominion is vast and forever peaceful, from David's throne, and over His kingdom, which he confirms and sustains by judgment and justice, both now and forever. (Is. 9:6).

**O Oriens:** O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice: come, shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death. Isaiah had prophesied, The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shown. (Is. 9:1).

**O Rex Gentium:** O King of all the nations, the only joy of every human heart, O Keystone of

the mighty arch of man, come and save the creature you fashioned from the dust. Isaiah had prophesied, For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. (Is. 9:5), and He shall judge between the nations, and impose terms on many peoples. They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again. (Is. 2:4).

O Emmanuel: O Emmanuel, king and lawgiver, desire of the nations, Savior of all people, come and set us free, Lord our God. Isaiah had prophesied, The Lord himself will give you this sign: the Virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel. (Is. 7:14). Remember Emmanuel means God is with us.

According to Professor Robert Greenberg of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the Benedictine monks arranged these antiphons with a definite purpose. If one starts with the last title and takes the first letter of each one – Emmanuel, Rex, Oriens, Clavis, Radix, Adonai, Sapientia – the Latin words *ero cras* are formed, meaning, Tomorrow, I will come. Therefore, the Lord Jesus, whose coming we have prepared for in Advent and whom we have addressed in these seven Messianic titles, now speaks to us, Tomorrow, I will come. So the O Antiphons not only bring intensity to our Advent preparation, but bring it to a joyful conclusion.

## **OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE**

On December 9, 1531, in Mexico, Our Lady appeared to Juan Diego, a poor humble Aztec Indian who had recently converted to the Catholic faith. She asked him to go to the Bishop and tell him to build a church where she said “I will show and offer all of my love, my compassion, my help and my protection to my people.” Juan Diego did as she asked, but the Bishop asked for a sign that this message was really from Our Lady. Mary granted his request. On December 12, she showed Juan where the most beautiful Castilian roses were and told him to gather them. It was a miracle that the roses were there and in bloom because there was frost on the ground, and the ground was an infertile place where only cactus and thistles grew. After he gathered them, she helped arrange them in his tilma, or poncho, and told him to show them to the Bishop. When he brought them to the Bishop, the Bishop was amazed at the roses, recognizing them for a rose that did not grow in Mexico at that time, but was even more amazed at what began to happen to Juan Diego’s tilma. Right before their very eyes, the image of Our Lady began to form on the cloth. The picture of Mary was beautiful and the Bishop fell to his knees. He had the church built at her request. The tilma is still intact after 470 years. The colors have not faded and the cloth has not deteriorated. It has been on display in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe for all this time. The manner in which Our Lady appeared on the tilma was very significant to the Aztec Indians. God had her dressed in a way that they would understand who she was. She was dressed in royal clothes that showed that she was very important, perhaps a queen. She also had the symbol of the cross at her neck which was the same symbol the Spaniards had on their ships and in the churches they built. She had a sash tied around her waist which meant that she was with child, for this was the way the Aztec women dressed when they were pregnant. And on her beautiful dress were all sorts of designs and flowers. But there was one flower on her dress that was very significant. It had only four petals. To the Aztecs, the four petal flower was the symbol for the true God, the God above all

gods. This flower was located on her abdomen, right over the place where Jesus was growing inside of her. The Aztecs immediately understood that this was the mother of the true God! This appearance of Our Lady of Guadalupe was very important to the history of our continent. You see, the Aztec Indians and the Spaniards were on the brink of war. The Aztec Indians' culture and religion were very different from the Spaniards. They worshipped gods, to whom they would offer human sacrifices, often killing 50,000 people a year. The Spaniards, who were Catholic, were naturally disgusted by this. But they were cruel to the Aztecs too, treating them like animals and sometimes killing them for no reason. If a war had occurred, it would have been very brutal and the Spaniards and Christianity would have been totally wiped out. Mary's appearance changed everything, however. It helped the Indians to embrace Christianity and it helped the Spaniards to treat the Indians with respect and as human beings. In the course of seven years, 6,000,000 Indians converted to the Catholic faith. This was the biggest conversion in the history of the Church! This is why Our Lady of Guadalupe is the Patroness of the Americas. Juan Diego, the humble man to whom she appeared, was canonized in the summer of 2002. Mary's appearance also put an end to the worship of stone gods and the ritual of human sacrifice. We pray for Mary's help today to bring an end to the human sacrifice of God's children through abortion and to convert non-believers. Our Lady of Guadalupe is also called the Patroness of the Unborn.



## ADVENT DAILY REFLECTIONS

### THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT 13 – 18 DECEMBER

13 Dec Monday St. Lucy

Nm. 24:2-7, 15-17 Ps. 25:4-9 Mt. 21:23-27

In his book *Against the Infinite Horizons* (New York: Crossroad, 1996), Fr. Ronald Rolheiser comments "To submit to love is to be baptized" (173). God's love is made present and manifest in Jesus and in a very special way through our sacramental life. When we are baptized, we plunge into the mystery of God's love and mercy. And later in life, when we again and again submit to the mystery of love we continue to be baptized.

John the Baptist knew himself to be loved. This began in his mother's womb as Elizabeth rejoiced in God's gift of life. The Baptist experienced his father's love as Zechariah sang this canticle and foretold his son's mission of preparing the way of the Lord. Later in life when John watched the ministry of Jesus, he knew himself loved by the Messiah. John's baptism was divine because God is love and submitting to the grace of love is to plunge into God's life.

When we were baptized, our parents presented us to the Church, this community of faith and love. The experience of being loved reached far beyond the walls of our home into the universal Church. Our baptism was divine because it stemmed all the way back to Jesus and the apostles. We were sealed with the Holy Spirit and given a baptismal robe to be carried spotless through life. We were given a candle and challenged to be a light unto others. While using so many human symbols and signs, we received divine life. That life, during this Advent season, is to grow to even fuller maturity.

#### **14 Dec Tuesday**

**Zep. 3:1-2, 9-13 Ps. 34:2-3, 6-7, 17-19,23 Mt. 21:28-32**

To walk the talk (authenticity) is a significant part of our faith life. If we truly believe and repent for our sins, then we follow the way of the Lord, the path of holiness. Walking the talk means that we enter the kingdom of God, for by doing what God asks of us we come under the reign of God.

The Gospel "case" is quite clear. The son who did what the father wanted performed deeds. Speech was not sufficient: the test was in the doing (orthopraxis). Here is a faith that flows into action. Many who do not profess the Christian creed (a la tax collectors and prostitutes) may well be doing the work of the kingdom that we are unaware of. In the Acts of the Apostles Peter shouts out an insight about there being no partiality in God. In fact, whoever fears God and does what is good is pleasing to the Lord. Reverential fear and the doing of good give us access to the kingdom.

Jesus tells us that John preached the way of holiness. Holiness, within our Catholic tradition, is the perfection of love. What God wants of us is that we be a loving community, deeply concerned about the well-being of all our brothers and sisters. We are sent into the vineyard not to make money and achieve fame, but to serve those in need. The path of holiness is following Jesus in a life of dedicated service. If our faith is authentic, then our love will be sincere. And, even more, our hope of eternal life will be built on a firm foundation.

#### **15 Dec Wednesday**

**Is. 45:6-8, 18, 21-25 Ps. 85:1-4 Lk. 7:18-23**

One of the great mystics of the Church, St. John of the Cross, maintained that even though we seek God, much more is God seeking us. That is why He sent Jesus into the world: that we might be found and saved. He is indeed the one who is to come and there is no need to seek further.

Yet, strange to say, many people have found in Jesus a stumbling block. How is it possible, they ask, that God can take on our human nature and still remain divine? Why would the incarnate God be so concerned about the poor and wounded of the world? And, the very last straw, how could the Messiah wind up being nailed to a

cross, hung between common thieves?

In searching out and identifying the Savior of the world, we need look nowhere else than into the eyes of Jesus. Here we find the compassion of our infinite God; here we find forgiveness of all our sins; here we find the desire to restore everyone to the fullness of life. It is in the presence of this divine gaze that our joy and peace reside, and no place else. John the Baptist knew this, for he, like Jesus, was willing to give his life in doing the Father's will.

#### **16 Dec Thursday**

**Is. 54:1-10 Ps. 30:2, 4-6, 11-13 Lk 7:24-30**

In his book *The Prophetic Imagination*, the Scripture scholar Walter Bruggemann states that a prophet is one who criticizes and one who energizes. The criticism of the prophets is directed to the injustices and lies of the world, the energizing is directed to doing God's will and bringing about God's reign.

John the Baptist was not afraid to criticize the culture of his day. John saw sin for what it was, the breaking of relationships and God's law. His call was one of repentance, a turning from sin to new life. John's criticism of Herod eventually led to his death. So committed was John to the truth that he was willing to give his life for it. much courage was needed here.

But Jesus tells us that John was even more than a prophet. In the Baptist we find a special messenger who announced the coming of the Savior of the world. John prepared for this coming by proclaiming the forgiveness of sin. The baptism that he performed led to the conversion of many individuals. Those who did not submit to these life giving waters remained in darkness and sin, unaffected by the prophetic ministry

#### **17 Dec Friday**

**Gn. 49:2, 8-10 Ps. 72:1-4, 7-8, 17 Mt.1:1-17**

Most families have a skeleton or two in their closet, and they hope that they stay there. if we have an uncle who is in prison for murder or a sister who is a prostitute or a grandparent convicted of fraud or a son guilty of adultery – well, we prefer that the newspapers do not get hold of those facts.

Jesus had in His genealogy individuals who sinned grievously. One example will do: the great King David. Here was a leader who was guilty of adultery and murder. David slept with his general's wife and then had Uriah killed. Jesus came from this lineage. Jesus came to embrace the human condition and to redeem it from the inside. Purists would prefer that Jesus' family tree were impeccable. Such was not the case. Jesus rubbed His nose in the messiness of human history.

As we approach the Christmas mystery we begin to sing out the first "O" Antiphon: "Wisdom of our God Most High, guiding creation with power and love, teach us to walk in the paths of knowledge." God's wisdom is expressed in the mystery of the Incarnation, the divine becoming incarnate in human history, a history filled with darkness and chaos. Jesus breaks in with power and love to do the creative work of redemption and to teach us to walk in the paths of knowledge and peace. How

grateful we should be for so condescending a God.

## **18 Dec Saturday**

**Jer.23:5-8 Ps. 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19 Mt. 1:18-25**

Both Mary and Joseph experienced God's special revelation. Both of them had to struggle with fear and ignorance as God broke into their lives with special requests. Both Joseph and Mary were told of the action of the Holy Spirit, an event that transformed their lives and world history. We see in them people of deep faith and trust.

During this season of Advent, we too are called to be open to the Lord's visitation. What happened in the lives of Joseph and Mary, of Zechariah and Elizabeth, of Augustine and Francis, can happen to us if we are properly disposed. "God is with us," this God we call Emmanuel, and desires that through the faith community God's presence will be not only present but manifest. Each of us is to conceive God's word in our souls and through the power of the Holy spirit, bring that word to fruition.

Advent is about the coming of Jesus into history. As we prepare our hearts daily for the great Christmas mystery, we do well to beg God to transform our fears and ignorance into courage and knowledge. With the coming of Jesus all is made new. To the extent that we allow Jesus to have sway in our hearts, the world too will be transformed. Advent holds the possibility of a social revolution because once the power of the Spirit is released, the old reign of sin will be broken.

## **PRAYERS**

### **Third Sunday of Advent**

Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! (Zephaniah 3:14)

### **Prayer for the Advent Wreath**

Lord, our God, we praise You for Your Son, Jesus Christ, for He is Emmanuel, the Hope of all people.

He is the Wisdom that teaches and guides us.

He is the Savior of us all.

O Lord,

let Your blessing come upon us as we light two purple candles and the third (pink) candle of this wreath.

May the wreath and its light be a sign of Christ's promise of salvation.

May He come quickly and not delay.

We ask this in His holy name. Amen

### **Prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe**

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mystical Rose,  
make intercession for the Holy Church,  
protect the Sovereign Pontiff,



help all those who invoke thee in their necessities,  
and since thou art the ever Virgin Mary,  
and Mother of the True God,  
obtain for us from thy most holy Son the grace of keeping our faith,  
of sweet hope in the midst of the bitterness of life,  
of burning charity, and the precious gift of final perseverance.

**Prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe**

O Virgin of Guadalupe,  
Mother of the Americas,  
grant to our homes the grace of loving  
and respecting life in its beginnings,  
with the same love with which  
you conceived in your womb  
the life of the Son of God.  
Blessed Virgin Mary,  
Mother of Fair Love,  
protect our families so that  
they may always be united  
and bless the upbringing of our children.

Our hope, look upon us with pity,  
teach us to go continually to Jesus,  
and if we fall  
help us to rise again and return to Him  
through the confession of our faults  
and our sins in the Sacrament of penance,  
which gives peace to the soul.  
We beg you to grant us a great love  
of all the holy Sacraments,  
which are, as it were,  
the signs that your Son left us on earth.  
Thus, Most Holy Mother,  
with the peace of God in our consciences,  
with our hearts free from evil and hatred,  
we will be able to bring to all others  
true joy and peace,  
which come to us from your Son,  
our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who with the Father and the Holy Spirit,  
lives and reigns for ever and ever.  
Amen.

## THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

11 – 19 DECEMBER

- Saturday 11 Dec** 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent Weekday m St. Damasus I Pope  
8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Advent Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer II  
(Intention: Katie Drewiski)  
2:00 p.m. Wedding  
5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass Third Sunday of Advent  
Proper, Creed, Advent Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer III  
(Intention: In Honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe)
- Sunday 12 Dec** Third Sunday of Advent Gaudete Sunday  
7:00 a.m. Mass Proper, Creed, Advent Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer II  
(Intention: Parish of St. Stephen, Martyr)  
8:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Creed, Advent Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer I  
(Intention: Deacon Adrian Marchi)  
11:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Creed, Advent Preface I, Eucharist Prayer I  
(Intention: Gloria Munoz)  
2:00 p.m. Mass Brig
- Monday 13 Dec** M St. Lucy Virgin, Martyr Day Off  
6:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Saint, Common of Martyrs, Advent Preface I,  
Eucharistic Prayer III  
7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Confessions  
8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Saint, Common of Martyrs, Advent Preface I,  
Eucharistic Prayer III  
(Intentions: Kathy Anastasiu)
- Tuesday 14 Dec** M St. John of the Cross Priest, Doctor of the Church  
6:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Saint, Preface of Advent I, Eucharistic Prayer III  
(Intention: Crystal Anderson)  
7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Confessions  
8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Saint, Preface of Advent I, Eucharistic Prayer III  
(Intention: Alex Shuflat)  
10:30 a.m. Mass Georgian Manor
- Wednesday 15 Dec** Advent Weekday 3<sup>rd</sup> Week  
6:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Preface of Advent I, Eucharist Prayer II  
(Intention: Shirley Ara Saul RIP)  
8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Preface of Advent I, Eucharist Prayer II  
(Intention: Linda Hollingsworth)  
10:00 a.m. Mass Willow Creek
- THURSDAY 16 Dec** Advent Weekday 3<sup>rd</sup> Week  
6:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Advent Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer II  
(Intention: Susan Rose)  
7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Confessions

- 8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Advent Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer II  
(Intention: HyeJa Billie)
- 4:00 – 6:30 p.m. Confessions
- 6:30 p.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Advent Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer II  
(Intention: Manuel Bautistia RIP)
- Friday 17 Dec Advent Weekday 3<sup>rd</sup> Week**
- 6:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Advent Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer III  
(Intention: Maura Waggoner)
- 7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Confessions
- 8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Advent Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer III  
(Intention: )
- 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Adoration & Confession
- Saturday 18 Dec Advent Weekday 3<sup>rd</sup> Week**
- 8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Advent Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer II
- 1:00 – 4:30 p.m. Confessions
- 5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass Fourth Sunday of Advent  
Proper, Creed, Advent Preface II, Eucharistic Prayer II  
(Intention: James Allen Neary II RIP)
- Sunday 19 Dec Fourth Sunday of Advent**
- 7:00 a.m. Mass Proper, Creed, Advent Preface II, Eucharistic Prayer II  
(Intention: Parish of St. Stephen, Martyr)
- 8:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Creed, Advent Preface II, Eucharistic Prayer II  
(Intention: Joseph Shannon, Jr. RIP)
- 11:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Creed, Advent Preface II, Eucharistic Prayer II  
(Intention: Anthony Dinonno RIP)
- 2:00 p.m. Mass Brig

