



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY December 15 & BEYOND

THE TRUE JOY OF OUR LIVES



This Third Sunday of Advent is known as “Gaudete Sunday” or “Rose Sunday”. The reason for the former name is that the Introit of this day’s mass starts with the word “Rejoice” (*Gaudete* in Latin). The latter refers to the use of rose as the liturgical color for this day. So essentially the theme of this day is to rejoice. But what is there to rejoice about?

The Gospel reading for this day presents a different John the Baptist. This is not the one shouting out in the wilderness, but the imprisoned one doubting, asking about the Messiah’s identity. “Are you he who is to come or shall we wait for another?” He sends out his followers to ask Jesus himself, but instead of giving a straightforward ‘yes’, Jesus simply tells them about the signs of the Kingdom he and his followers have been giving: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.

We may wonder what made John the Baptist doubt. Was it because he was imprisoned and therefore depressed? Knowing his character and his integrity one can hardly think so. But maybe there was more than physical imprisonment here. We can be imprisoned by our own preconceptions. The Messiah John the Baptist was expecting had a clear-cut mission: to establish a new Kingdom for those who had repented, in which all evil would be excluded. This would be a definitive establishment. And John did not see that happening. For one thing, he was still unjustly held in prison and the ones who did him injustice were free. So maybe he was wrong about Jesus being the Messiah.

When we see the world around us we may have the same doubts. We tend to think that the only way this can be God’s world is when all evil doers are banished, when only good things happen to us all the time. We see ourselves as the passive receivers

of the circumstances of this world. If they happen to be favorable, then we are 'happy'. If they are adverse, we are the unhappy victims. And what is God waiting for to make everything bright and clear for us, the 'good guys'? It turns out that we are always the ones deserving happiness and many others are seen as the ones making us unhappy. This is an immature and unrealistic view of the world.

What we call happiness is always dependent on circumstances. So where is the real joy of life?

Jesus did not tell John the Baptist's followers: Look, my followers and I all live in wonderful palaces and we spend our days in blissful leisure, enjoying every moment of our lives because we never experience any adversity or sorrow. He told them what he and his followers had done, through hard and constant work, to alleviate the suffering of the world around them, to mend broken lives, to give new life, to give hope to the poor. And that was how God's Kingdom was being brought into the world.

Is it easy to give hope to the suffering ones, to heal broken lives, to become good news for the hopeless? It is not. It calls for self-giving sacrifice, of our time, of our favorite activities, of our money, of our energy, and what not. But this is what Jesus is calling us to do. This is how we become agents of joy. And this is how we can experience the most authentic joy in our life.

Fr, Carlos Expósito, Rector

Readings for this Sunday – The Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 35:1-10 Psalm 146:4-9 James 5:7-10 Matthew 11:2-11

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: The Third Sunday of Advent

8:00am Low Mass (Church)

10:30am Solemn Mass (Church)

7:00pm Little Apple Group (Parish Hall)

—*The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue*—

Note: Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

THURSDAY 9:30a Journeying the Way of Love: Advent Curriculum (Library)

www.episcopalchurch.org/wayoflove

FRIDAY

AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)

SUNDAY

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

8:00am Low Mass (Church)

10:30am Solemn Mass (Church)

AA Meeting

7:00p Little Apple Group (Parish Hall)