



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

"Our mission is to bring the good news of Jesus Christ's love to our entire community through traditional Anglo-Catholic worship, fellowship, outreach, and Christian formation."

Our Vision: *"We strive to be a haven of healing, reconciliation, joy and peace in service to our wider community and beyond, so that our example in prayer and practice may reflect Christ's love for us all."*

THIS SUNDAY — December 17, 2023

“Do We Have Reasons to Rejoice?”



Rose Sunday or *Gaudete* Sunday is here this week. It is the third Sunday of Advent, and the word *rejoice* or *joy* appears in all the readings assigned for this Sunday. The liturgical color also reminds us of the joyful expectation whose end—at

least in the perspective of God made flesh in history—is drawing near as the Christmas celebration approaches.

But as we look at the world around us, the wars, the conflicts, the injustice, the lack of compassion, the hunger and poverty that plagues so many countries—and even close to home—the homeless and mentally derailed people who roam our own cities, we may wonder if we have reasons to rejoice.

Even if we are lucky enough to be among the well-to-do in this world, at this very moment we may have close relatives or friends undergoing painful diseases, or even dying.

The actual world we live in looks more like the world of Job after he was allowed by God to be tested by Satan than like God's Kingdom of love and peace.

And we may wonder, was it much better for the prophet Isaiah, or for the Apostle Paul, or even the writer of the fourth gospel?

Definitely not.

The prophets never had a smooth time. They were slandered, misunderstood, and mistreated. They did not prophesy to have a more comfortable life, but because they could simply not keep silent when God called them to speak in His name.

We all know how much St. Paul had to suffer after he was called by our Lord to evangelize the Gentiles. He suffered slanders, whippings, shipwrecks, prison, and finally death for relentlessly announcing the truth of Jesus' Way of Love.

John the Evangelist is believed to have died of a natural death, but even he was deported and confined to an island, and had to suffer much for spreading the Good News of Salvation to all the nations.

No, the world at the time of Isaiah, and at the time after Jesus' ascension did not look like a rose bed—even if we call this Sunday “rose Sunday”. They were convoluted times, full of suffering people, oppressed people, people who had lost all hope. And yet, Isaiah and St. Paul rejoiced and encouraged their contemporaries to rejoice.

And do they tell us what is there to rejoice for? Certainly.

Isaiah speaks about the new creation that God is about to make. In this new creation there will be no more injustice, or people dying at a young age, and weeping and distress will be no more. It will be a creation which all creatures will live in harmony, and no creatures will hurt or destroy. The image Isaiah uses is one of great poetic beauty: “The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent—its food shall be dust! They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lord.”

Isaiah's main reason for rejoicing is the sure hope of the new creation, so it has a future outlook, but the rejoicing is already a present reality.

St. Paul, however, sets the rejoicing in a present—or even an atemporal—perspective. He calls his readers in the First Letter to the Thessalonians to rejoice always. He is aware of how hard it is for these new converts to face the reality that surrounds them, especially now that they have embraced this New Way, and encourages them to “give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

And then he adds, “Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.”

This clearly shows that the rejoicing Paul is depicting has nothing to do with a “do not worry, be happy” superficiality in these converts. He is calling them to stay firm on the right path, but, above all, to let the Spirit kindle their lives with authentic joy.

If only we pondered on Paul’s words and put them into practice today!

Fr. Carlos

Readings for The Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 65:17-25 1 Thessalonians 5:16-28 Psalm: 126 John3:23-30

CALENDAR

Note: We worship in our historic church. The service will also be on Zoom. The service time is 10am. Tuesday Noon Mass and Friday Morning Prayer at 10:00am are held in All Saints’ St. Mary Chapel

SUNDAY December 17, 2023 The Third Sunday of Advent

10:00am Mass in All Saints’ Church

Join Zoom Meeting from our web site at www.allsaintschurch.org

Recording of Mass available before noon at www.allsaintschurch.org

Christian Formation and First Communion Instruction for Children

Ages 5-12 in the Parish Hall from 10:00am-10:45am

Christian Formation Meets next on Sunday, January 14 at noon in the Rector’s Office and the Library

TUESDAY Noon Mass in St. Mary Chapel

THURSDAY Spanish Class will recess for the remainder of the month of December and resume on Thursday, January 11.

FRIDAY 10:00am Morning Prayer in St. Mary Chapel

SUNDAY December 24, 2023 The Fourth Sunday of Advent

10:00am Mass in All Saints' Church

Join Zoom Meeting from our web site at www.allsaintschurch.org

Recording of Mass available before noon at www.allsaintschurch.org

Ages 5-12 in the Parish Hall from 10:00am-10:45am

Christian Formation Meets next on January 17 at noon in the Rector's Office and the Library

SUNDAY December 24, 2023 Christmas Eve in All Saints' Church

8:30pm Musical Offering

9:00pm Christmas Eve Mass

MONDAY December 25, 2023 Christmas Day

10:00am Mass in All Saints' Church

OUR CORE VALUES:

- Welcoming strangers like old friends
- Embracing the Anglo-Catholic tradition
- Being dependable members of a caring community
- Respecting each other's differences
- Being faithful stewards of God's gift
- Remembering that God loves everyone unconditionally