



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2016

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT; GAUDETE SUNDAY

Joyful anticipation

Gaudete is Latin for “Rejoice!” The church tells us to rejoice, but not in a be-happy-on-demand kind of way. Advent gives you a *reason* to be joyful, as you are when you know that someone who deeply loves you is on her or his way. It is anticipation; it is hope that comes from trusting that the promises of God will be fulfilled. Is there a promise you need to fulfill, someone who is waiting for your visit, a phone call, a letter? Don’t wait until Christmas to bring someone joy—not with a material gift, but with a simple reminder that God is good.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11 (7)*. “*They will meet with joy and gladness, sorrow and mourning will flee.*”

MONDAY, DECEMBER 12 FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE Am I not here?

When Mary appeared to Juan Diego on Tepeyak Hill on the outskirts of present-day Mexico City, she said to him, “Don’t be afraid. Am I, who am your Mother, not here?” She also said, “Know for certain that I am the perfect and perpetual Virgin Mary, Mother of the True God,” and she called him, “my little one.” Juan Diego was not a little boy—he was a grown man. Still he was Mary’s “little one.” Mary is our Mother. And if she is our Mother, why are we afraid? Seems so simple, yet for many it is a profound realization. And no matter how old we are, we are still Mary’s “little ones.” Spend some time with your Mother Mary and thank her for being with us.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Zechariah 2:14-17 or Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab; Luke 1:26-38 or Luke 1:39-47 (690A)*. “*Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!*”

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13 MEMORIAL OF LUCY, VIRGIN, MARTYR Let your light shine

In the darkness of these Advent days, Saint Lucy stands as a shining example of the gift of faith in this world. Martyred in fourth-century Italy after being outed as a Christian by a disappointed suitor, Lucy is one of only seven women included in the original Eucharistic Prayer. Said to have worn a crown of candles into the dark catacombs of Rome to serve the poor, Lucy reminds us that bringing light into the darkness of the world is a costly venture. Faith, though, calls us to shine bright, no matter the cost.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Zephaniah 3:1-2, 9-13; Matthew 21:28-32 (188)*. “*I will leave as a remnant in your midst a people humble and lowly, who shall take refuge in the name of the Lord.*”

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14

MEMORIAL OF JOHN OF THE CROSS, PRIEST, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH Respect reformers

John of the Cross is revered with one of the highest honors possible, named a “Doctor of the church” as a saint of particularly high importance. Yet during his life, a group of superiors from his own order who opposed his visionary reforms forcibly imprisoned him and subjected him to cruel treatment and public lashings in front of his community. Perhaps as John sat in his cold, dark jail cell, Jesus’ line about prophets being honored except in their home town came to mind. Be slow to criticize modern-day reformers; perhaps they have a message we need to hear.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Isaiah 45:6c-8, 18, 21c-25; Luke 7:18b-23 (189)*. “*Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?*”

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15 ADVENT WEEKDAY Prophet-able thoughts

Do you think about prophets like you do about fortune-tellers? Prophets predict the future, right? Well, not in God’s world they don’t. God’s prophets have the job of making people aware that God wants to be first in everyone’s life. God has a call and an invitation for everyone. Today, when the temptation is to focus on the 10 shopping days until Christmas, what do you think John the Baptist would say to call your attention to God’s presence in your daily life? In the eyes of God, what really matters on this Advent day? Ask today for the grace to see God’s presence around you.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Isaiah 54:1-10; Luke 7:24-30 (190)*. “*I send my messenger ahead of you to prepare your way before you.*”

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16 ADVENT WEEKDAY Let your light shine

Jesus told his followers not to hide their “lamp under a bushel.” But why would anyone shield their inner light? Perhaps we fear that we’re not worthy of the greatness of being a child of God, says author Marianne Williamson. “Your playing small doesn’t serve the world,” she writes. “There’s nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you.” In her book, *A Return to Love*, she urges everyone to “make manifest the glory of God that is within us” and “give other people permission to do the same.”

TODAY’S READINGS: *Isaiah 56:1-3a, 6-8; John 5:33-36 (191)*. “*John was a burning and shining lamp.*”

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17 ADVENT WEEKDAY Cue the Magi

The Magi begin their long trek across the East, and we’re glad to honor these Wise Men of old. But we need even more the wisdom of men and women of this generation, and every generation, to show us how to build a better world. The genealogy of Jesus contains a surprising list of who might contribute to history’s rescue from the ways of death. As we begin the days of the O Antiphons of the church, we pray: “*O Wisdom of our God Most High, teach us the path of knowledge!*”

TODAY’S READINGS: *Genesis 49:2, 8-10; Matthew 1:1-17 (193)*. “*The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*”



Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time.

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