

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near.

COLLECT

O God, who see how your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord's Nativity, enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

FIRST READING 3:14-18

A reading from the prophet Zephaniah

Shout for joy, daughter of Zion, Israel, shout aloud!

Rejoice, exult with all your heart, daughter of Jerusalem!

The Lord has repealed your sentence; he has driven your enemies away.

The Lord, the king of Israel, is in your midst; you have no more evil to fear.

When that day comes, word will come to Jerusalem:

Zion, have no fear,

do not let your hands fall limp.

The Lord your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior.

He will exult with joy over you,

he will renew you by his love;

he will dance with shouts of joy for you

as on a day of festival.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps12

Response; Sing and shout for joy for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

**1. Truly, God is my salvation,
I trust, I shall not fear.
For The Lord is my strength, my song,
he became my saviour.
With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation. (R)**

**2. Give thanks to the Lord,
give praise to his name!
Make his mighty deeds
known to the peoples!
Declare the greatness of his name. (R)**

**3. Sing a psalm to the Lord,
for he has done glorious deeds,
make them known to all the earth!
People of Zion, sing and shout for joy
for great in your midst
is the Holy One of Israel. (R)**

SECOND READING 4:4-7

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians

I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord; I repeat, what I want is your happiness.

Let your tolerance be evident to everyone:

the Lord is very near. There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me.

He has sent me to bring good news to the poor.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL 3:10-18

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

When all the people asked John, 'What must we do?' he answered, 'If anyone has two tunics he must share with the man who has none, and the one with something to eat must do the same'. There were tax collectors too who came for baptism, and these said to him, 'Master, what must we do?' He said to them, 'Exact no more than your rate'. Some soldiers asked him in their turn, 'What about us? What must we do?' He said to them, 'No intimidation! No extortion! Be content with your pay!'

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, 'I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.' As well as this, there were many other things he said to exhort the people and to announce the Good News to them.

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May the sacrifice of our worship, Lord, we pray, be offered to you unceasingly, to complete what was begun in sacred mystery and powerfully accomplish for us your saving work. Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear. Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We implore your mercy, Lord, that this divine sustenance may cleanse us of our faults and prepare us for the coming feasts. Through Christ our Lord.

GOSPEL REFLECTION

Advent Prayer

Lord, in your life I find a pattern of service, love, and compassion. As the celebration of the anniversary of your birth draws near, let me work to reflect your life to those around me. Your constant care reminds me that I am called to follow your example. Teach me to love more and to share more. Amen.



How serious is John's admonition to share what we have with the poor and unfortunate? Should what we share come from our excess or from our own need?

The tax collectors and soldiers were unlikely candidates to ask for baptism. Who, in our time, would surprise us with a request for baptism?

Are we "satisfied with our wages?" Answer this question both from a material perspective as well as a spiritual one.

If John baptized with water, with what does Jesus baptize?

Why do we say that Jesus is the good news? How important is it for us to reach out to others and share Jesus Christ with them? How can we best do this?

What significance does this reading have for Advent? Have we taken full advantage of the Advent season to reflect on the wondrous gift that Jesus is to us?

Do we feel prepared for Christmas? Why or why not?

GOSPEL ACTION

Plan to give one thing of value to another person during this Advent. Can we offer our friendship to someone whom we do not like? If so let us do so with a spirit of humility

Readings—4th Week Advent Year C

First Reading: Micah 5: 1-4

Second Reading: Hebrews 10: 5-10

Gospel: Luke 1: 39-44

Homily

12th December 2021 – 3rd Sunday of Advent, Year C

Dear friends, the theme of rejoicing and the Lord being near runs through all our readings today on this Gaudete Sunday. I wonder how happy and joyful you feel today?

In the 1st Reading the prophet Zephania, who is writing seven centuries before the birth of Jesus, encourages the people to rejoice because salvation is near. God who stands in their midst and will deliver them from their enemies, is portrayed not just as a King and a warrior, but also as a loving bridegroom, I think we can take comfort from this message of hope.

The theme of joy is even more emphatic in the 2nd Reading, Paul tells the Philippians to rejoice because the Lord is near. He tells them there is no need to worry; if they need anything they are to pray for it, and the peace of God will be with them.

At the heart of the Gospel is the theme of the nearness of the Lord. John the Baptist tells the people what they must do to prepare themselves for the Lord's coming. At the same time he makes it quite clear that he is subordinate to Jesus.

At the beginning of the Gospel the people put a question to John the Baptist: 'What must we do?' This question only really makes sense if we think back to last week and remember what John was calling us to do. Last weekend we heard John announcing the coming of the Lord and he encouraged us to prepare a way for the Lord, we were urged to prepare a path for the one who brings salvation.

It is as though the people who heard John's message wanted to know what it meant in practice, what does it really mean for us? How do we prepare a way for the Lord, how do we smooth and straighten our lives into a welcoming highway for the Lord? Today we hear John's answer. We can make our hearts ready to receive Jesus by sharing what we have with those who have nothing and by treating others properly, with fairness and respect.

Jesus is the one who reveals God and God's love to us. Our response in faith to the loving presence of Jesus is that we act in the way that we know to be the right way; with great love, kindness and charity.

How we behave and how we treat others is a measure of how deeply we have welcomed Christ into our hearts, and how we will be able to welcome Jesus into our hearts once again this Christmas. But as well as reflecting on what we do, and how we treat others, we are also invited to think about the spirit in which we live and act.

Homily

12th December 2021 – 3rd Sunday of Advent, Year C

Zephaniah speaks of the joy that proclaims God's presence among us. St Paul invited his hearers always to be happy in the Lord. It's one thing to share what we have, or to do things for others, begrudgingly or out of a sense of duty; it's another thing completely to do so happily and joyfully.

Advent is a time for waiting in joyful hope as we look forward to celebrating the fulfilment of God's promise. It is a time to be thankful for God's generous love made real for us in the person of Jesus. John the Baptist knew that this love was a free and undeserved gift and he acknowledged that he was not even worthy to bend low and undo the sandals of Jesus.

None of us are worthy, however we are invited to be willing and open to let him change us and any attitudes or behaviours that need changing. The Gospel today shows us what that means in practice. Genuine Christian generosity and kindness will always be expressed with happiness and joy. On this Gaudete Sunday we rejoice in God's gifts freely given to us; this Christmas time let us also be joyful in happily sharing them with others, particularly those who are in need and those who are less fortunate than we are.

May God be with you as we wait together in joyful hope, **Fr Phil x**

Bidding Prayers and Synod Prayer

12th December 2021 – 3rd Sunday of Advent, Year C

Priest:

On this Gaudete Sunday, as we joyfully continue to prepare a way for the Lord this Advent we bring all our prayers before him now.

Reader:

For the Church and Christians everywhere: may they be attentive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit as they journey together this Advent.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For ourselves: may we always be good stewards of Creation caring for our World and all those in it.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who are poor or in need: following the example of Christ may we always help and serve them particularly in this time of Advent with love, generosity and compassion.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For migrants and refugees everywhere, particularly our refugees here in Wallasey; may we do all we can to help and support them.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those in our parish who are sick or housebound: may they come to know the love and the comforting presence of Christ the healer.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For the faithful departed especially **Victoria Coverdale, Jeffrey Wallace** and all who have died recently and those whose anniversaries occur around this time:

“Eternal rest grant unto them...”

We pray through the intercession of Mary our mother: **“Hail Mary...”**

In silence we bring our own private prayers and intentions before the Lord.

Priest: Loving Father,

As we prepare a way for the Lord this Advent

we offer these and all our prayers to you,

through your Son Jesus,

who is Christ Our Lord, Amen.

Bidding Prayers and Synod Prayer

12th December 2021 – 3rd Sunday of Advent, Year C

Synod Prayer

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,
as we gather together in Your name.

With You alone to guide us,
make Yourself at home in our hearts;
Teach us the way we must go
and how we are to pursue it.

We are weak and sinful;
do not let us promote disorder.
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path
nor partiality influence our actions.

Let us find in You our unity
so that we may journey together to eternal life
and not stray from the way of truth
and what is right.

All this we ask of You,
who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son,
forever and ever. **Amen**