

FIRST READING

The Lord is at your side.

A reading from the book of the prophet Zephaniah

3:14-15

Everyone in Jerusalem and Judah,
 celebrate and shout with all your heart.
 You won't be punished now.
 The Lord has made your enemies retreat.
 The Lord is the king of Israel,
 and he is at your side.
 You don't have to worry about any more troubles.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Isaiah 12:2, 4bcd, 6

*R. (6) Cry out with joy and gladness:
 for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.*

I trust the Lord to save me,
 and I won't be afraid.
 My power and my strength come from the Lord God,
 and he has saved me.

*R. Cry out with joy and gladness:
 for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.*

Our Lord, we are thankful, and we worship only you.
 We will tell the nations how glorious you are
 and what you have done.

*R. Cry out with joy and gladness:
 for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.*

People of Jerusalem, celebrate and sing.
 The famous Lord God of Israel is here with you.

*R. Cry out with joy and gladness:
for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.*

SECOND READING

The Lord is near.

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Philippians

4:4-7

Brothers and sisters:

Always be glad because of the Lord!
I will say it again: Be glad.

Always be gentle with others.
The Lord will soon be here.
Don't worry about anything,
but pray about everything.

With thankful hearts offer up your prayers and requests to God.
Then, because you belong to Christ Jesus,
God will bless you with peace
that no one can completely understand.
And this peace will control the way you think and feel.

The word of the Lord.

ALLELUIA

Isaiah 61:1

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

The Spirit of the Lord now upon me
has sent me to bring good news to the poor.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

What, then, must we do?

† A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke

3:10-16, 18

The crowds asked John the Baptist, "What should we do?"
John told them,
"If you have two coats,
 give one to someone who doesn't have any.
If you have food,
 share it with someone else."

When tax collectors came to be baptized, they asked John,
"Teacher, what should we do?"
John told them, "Don't make people pay more than they owe."

Some soldiers asked him, "And what about us?
What do we have to do?"

John told them,
"Don't force people to pay money to make you leave them alone.
Be satisfied with your pay."

Everyone became excited and wondered,
"Could John be the Messiah?"

John said, "I am just baptizing with water.
But someone more powerful is going to come,
 and I am not good enough even to untie his sandals.
He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

In many different ways John preached the good news to the people.

The gospel of the Lord.

Third Sunday of Advent Cycle C

We can give the gift of God's love.
(Review Advent Activities Section)

Prayer: Dear Jesus, today we celebrate REJOICE Sunday. We sing with joy to God, for sending us Jesus to show us how to love and to live with hope for justice for all your people. Please help us to be your light and love to all those who need hope and love these days.
AMEN

Readings: Zephaniah 3:14-18a; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:10-18

Reflection: The readings express joy, hope and gratitude for God's Presence in the world. St Paul tells us we should rejoice always because the Lord is near. John the Baptist really puts the burden of discipleship right back on to those who ask: "What shall we do?" John does exactly what Jesus would do: Tells each person to honestly and simply go the good you can! Sister Dianne Bergant, CSA, a Scripture scholar said, in relation to this Scripture: "We cannot fail to wonder how much of the world's sorry state is not the consequence of arrogance—arrogance stemming from military prowess, or economic prosperity, or educational superiority.... It is precisely in and through our efforts to rid our world of such [arrogance] that the new world is fashioned, the reign of God brought forth."

Activities: Ask the children to talk about how we know God is present in our world. Talk a little bit about how we can help God in establishing peace and changing people's attitude toward the poor and underserved of the world. Share about how we might respond to John the Baptist's challenge: What can we do? (Also, see Activities, #3, for next Sunday—especially if you will not be meeting next week.)

REVIEW NEXT SUNDAY'S Activities in case you'd rather incorporate them this week.)

To Conclude the Session: Remind the children, that God doesn't just ask us to pray for the poor, sick, and unjustly treated people of the world: God expects us to do what we can! Big or small.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, today we celebrate REJOICE Sunday. We sing with joy to God, for sending us Jesus to show us how to love and to live with hope for justice for all your people. Please help us to be your light and love to all those who need hope and love these days.
AMEN

KEY WORDS TAKEN FROM ALL THREE SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS: Joy, Israel, rejoice, gratitude, sharing anticipation, wondering, Messiah, baptize, Holy Spirit, good news