THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT
Cycle B

FIRST READING

The Spirit of the Lord has chosen me.

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah 61:1-2

The Spirit of the Lord God has come to me,
because he has chosen me.
The Lord has sent me to tell the oppressed the good news,
to heal the brokenhearted,
and to announce freedom for prisoners and captives.

This is the year when the Lord God
will show kindness to us and punish our enemies.
The Lord has sent me to comfort all who mourn.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 185:8, 9, 109

R. (Isaiah 61:10b) My soul rejoices in my God.

With all my heart I praise the Lord,
and I am glad because of God my Savior.
God All-Powerful has done great things for me, and his name is holy.

R. My soul rejoices in my God.

God gives the hungry good things to eat,
and he sends the rich away with nothing in their hands
He helps his servant Israel
and is always merciful to his people.

R. My soul rejoices in my God.



SECOND READING

May you all be kept blameless, spirit, soul, and body,
for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians 5:16-24

Brothers and sisters:
Always be joyful and never stop praying.
Whatever happens, keep thanking God because of Jesus Christ.
This is what God wants you to do.

Don't turn away God's Spirit or ignore prophecies.
Put everything to the test.
Accept what is good and don't have anything to do with evil.

I pray that God, who gives peace,
will make you completely holy.
And may your spirit, soul, and body be kept healthy and faultless
until our Lord Jesus Christ returns.
The one who chose you can be trusted,
and he will do this.

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

There stands among you, unknown to you,
the one who is coming after me.

† A reading from the holy gospel according to John 1:19-28

The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and temple helpers
to ask John who he was.
He told them plainly, "I am not the Messiah."
Then when they asked him if he were Elijah,
he said, "No, I am not!"
And when they asked if he were the Prophet,
he also said "No!"

Finally, they said, "Who are you then?
We have to give an answer to the ones who sent us.
Tell us who you are!"

John answered in the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"I am only someone shouting in the desert,
'Get the road ready for the Lord!' "

Some Pharisees had also been sent to John.
They asked him, "Why are you baptizing people,
if you are not the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet?"

John told them, "I use water to baptize people.
But here with you is someone you don't know.
Even though I came first,
I am not good enough to untie his sandals."

John said this as he was baptizing east of the Jordan River in Bethany.

The gospel of the Lord



THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT
Cycle B

Prayer:
Jesus, I am so excited. So many wonderful things are happening. I want to follow you. I need your help to follow closer so I won't get lost. Come, Lord Jesus! Come! Amen.

Readings:
Isaiah 61:1-2
Psalm Luke 1:47 and 49, 53-54
Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:19-28

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD HAS CHOSEN ME … TO ANNOUNCE THE GOOD NEWS!

Catechist::
We are now half way through Advent. The closer Christmas comes, the stronger the pull to God and the crazier the season becomes. 'Anticipation' becomes the 'Proclamation' and now we are challenged to 'Witness' to the Truth—Jesus has come to set us free. In the Gospel we hear the witness of Mary in her prayer of praise for all that God has done for her. She was chosen among the lowly ones to prepare the way for the Messiah, literally prepare her womb as the "first tabernacle of the Lord." Mary new deeply within her, soul and spirit, the awesome power of God. She was so overwhelmed by God's Word, that when she greets Elizabeth, she breaks into song. "My soul proclaims the greatness of God."

The key word this week is "WITNESS." John refers to Jesus as the LIGHT. The Greek noun-verb ("marityios-matyreo" in 1:7), meaning WITNESS. (An interesting side not: this noun-verb combination is the root word for MARTYR, the ultimate CHRISTIAN WITNESS). John the Baptist witnessed that he was not the "Messiah,' he was not "Elijah" nor was he the long awaited "Prophet." He spoke with the conviction of a PERSONAL CALLING FROM GOD. The message he came to tell, the action of baptizing the people, and his own personal witness, was to tell the people the TRUTH, because HE WITNESSED TO GOD'S TRUTH, THE CHRIST. Those baptized by John looked forward to a life with God. Those baptized by Christ lived in God.



John the Baptist witnessed for two reasons. 1) John witnessed about God's Light, the one who would bring truth to a darkened, dishonest world. His role was to prepare people to receive the Light that would turn them to the light, the good, the life, etc. 2) Those who heard the Baptist's witness would believe in the Light.

How strong was my Witness this week? Was it personal? Was it honest? Last week we were invited to tell the Good News about Jesus. Who did you tell? What did you do? How were you accepted?

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: MY SOUL REJOICES IN MY GOD.

When Mary met Elizabeth, her heart was filled with great joy! She was so happy to see Elizabeth that she felt the baby Jesus move. If you have younger brothers and sisters, where you able to feel the baby move or kick inside your mother? Sometimes the baby becomes so active that mom is kept awake at night. All the moving around inside mommy makes her jump for joy and she runs to tell everyone that the baby is moving. The waiting for the child to be born is almost here. All the preparations will need to get finished soon. Soon and very soon, the child will be with us.

HOW WOULD YOU COMPOSE A SONG OF PRAISE? WHAT WOULD YOU INCLUDE IN THE SONG?

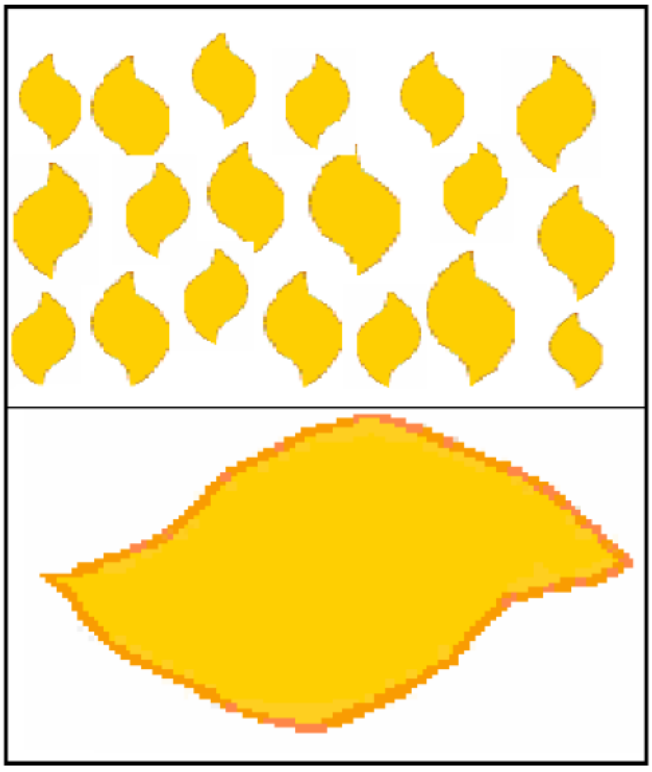
When Mary felt Jesus move inside her, she was so happy that all she wanted to do was sing and dance for joy. She sang a song of thanksgiving, praise and hope. She sang of all the great gifts God has given her; her hopes and dreams for Jesus; and for people everywhere to celebrate Jesus the Son of God. MARY LIVED HER LIFE BELIEVING, FOLLOWING JESUS AND WITNESSING TO THE TRUTH OF THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS.

Activity:
You will need one sheet of paper (8.5"x11"), pencils, and glue, magazines (for younger children). Music: "This Little Light of Mine." Title the Page with "LIGHT" On one side identify various forms of light that we use (for younger children have them name different forms of Light; use magazines to cut out "lights" and have the children paste them). The children that are able to write, have them write down on pieces of precut "flames." On the reverse side, identify ways you share the Light of Christ to God's people (Corporal works of mercy – see Mt. 25:31-46).

HOW CAN YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR OTHERS?
HOW CAN YOU MAKE LIFE BETTER FOR YOUR PARENTS? YOUR FAMILY? YOUR FRIENDS?



Activity:
Cut out different sizes of flames or draw flames on yellow, orange, or blue construction paper. Write different forms of light on each flame.



For younger children, outline light forms with a flame.

The reverse side would work best if drawn on the construction paper. When working on this side the hymn "This Little Light of Mine" could be playing in the background or have children sing along.

A song of Praise! Like Mary.

Example: With this Light of mine, I'm gonna visit the sick, I'm gonna visit the sick, I'm gonna visit the sick. This little Light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine; let it shine, all the time. I'm gonna feed the hungry… I'm gonna pray for prisoners… I'm gonna clothe the poor… I'm gonna love my neighbor… etc.

Children's Liturgy shared by the Adorers of the Blood of Christ
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