



# THE LORD'S DAY AT HOME

## THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (B) "Gaudete Sunday" Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2020

If you are housebound or self-isolating at this time, please use these prayers to unite yourself with the worship of the Universal Church, and your own Parish this Sunday. If alone, read or say these prayers quietly to yourself. If with another, or in a family, someone should read the "leader" parts, and others respond. It might be suitable to find a special, quiet place at home for your Sunday prayers.

### THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

#### Entrance Antiphon

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

#### Sign of the Cross

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**A: Amen.**

#### Introduction

L: This Sunday has a nickname – "Gaudete Sunday." "Gaudete" is the Latin for "Rejoice!", as in the antiphon we said a moment ago. It's a reminder, half way through Advent, that this is a joyful season, as we prepare ourselves to meet the Lord. As Christmas draws nearer, with all its stresses and pressures, it's good to sit back today and remind ourselves what it's all about! Let us pray that we may be able to rejoice with Jesus, and begin our prayers this third Sunday of Advent by asking for the help of his forgiveness:

#### Penitential Act

L: Lord Jesus, you came to gather the nations into the peace of God's kingdom. Lord, have mercy.

**A: Lord, have mercy.**

L: You come in word and in sacrament to strengthen us and make us holy. Christ, have mercy.

**A: Christ, have mercy.**

L: You will come again in glory with salvation for your people. Lord, have mercy.

**A: Lord, have mercy.**

L: May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

**A: Amen.**

#### Opening Prayer

L: Let us pray.

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, God, for ever and ever.

**A: Amen.**

### THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

#### Gospel Reading

*John 1:6-8,19-28*

A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as a witness, as a witness to speak for the light, so that everyone might believe through him. He was not the light, only a witness to speak for the light. This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' he not only declared, but he declared quite openly, 'I am not the Christ.' 'Well then,' they asked 'are you Elijah?' 'I am not' he said. 'Are you the Prophet?' He answered, 'No.' So they said to him, 'Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?' So John said, 'I am, as Isaiah prophesied: a voice that cries in the wilderness: Make a straight way for the Lord.' Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they put this further question to him, 'Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the prophet?' John replied, 'I baptise with water; but there stands among you – unknown to you – the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal-strap.' This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising. The Gospel of the Lord.

**A: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

#### Reflection

Advent is a difficult season to celebrate: by now we are very much in the midst of the "secular Christmas"

– trees and lights are up, parties would be happening if it were not for coronavirus restrictions, and the TV and radio schedules have surrendered to festive themes! Keeping Advent can make you seem a bit of a kill-joy. But did you notice that phrase in the opening prayer: "O Lord, who see how your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord's Nativity..." Are we waiting? Or will we be tired of Christmas by the 26<sup>th</sup> December? The priests and Levites in the Gospel seem to be a bit impatient and not inclined to wait: the way they pressure John the Baptist, constantly asking who he is, shows they have no patience. They are not going to wait for something "still to come." But this is precisely what John demands – that they wait for what is "coming after." No quick fixes. No short cuts. And yet the wonderful paradox is that what they are demanding – what they refuse to wait for – the Messiah – is already "among you, unknown to you." Their impatience is blinding them to the very thing they are after! On this "middle" Sunday of Advent, let's just pause for a moment, to make sure that in our busyness, in our anticipation and eagerness to celebrate Christmas, we are not missing the whole point, and failing to recognise the One who is already among us – Jesus Christ!

#### For our Younger Friends

I bet the waiting is getting unbearable! Christmas is so close, and yet still we have to wait! While this might seem hard, perhaps it's a good thing. As you grow up, one of the hardest things to learn is how to be patient! Some grown ups never learn this, always wanting everything NOW and getting very grumpy if they don't. There were some of those in the Gospel today – did you hear how the priests and Levites were nagging John the Baptist with questions, because they didn't get the answers they wanted. They

sounded very grumpy! But John was very patient, simply telling them that Jesus was coming – in fact, he was already there, but with all their fussing and demanding, they didn't know him! The lesson we have to take from this is that we have to be calm and patient, and then sometimes we see things differently. So even though Christmas is getting so exciting, just remember to be patient, in case you miss something important! (Oh and since today is "Rejoice Sunday", is there something you can do today to MAKE SOMEONE JOYFUL?)

*If gathering as a family, perhaps now continue to discuss what this Gospel passage means to you. If alone, think about what key message you take from the Scriptures today.*



### **Profession of Faith**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.**

### **Intercessions**

- L: We rejoice to be preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus Emmanuel, the God who is already among us, and who will come again. Let us pray that we may open our eyes to his presence, and show him to a needy world.
- L: For the Church, that her leaders may guide us in humility and charity. Lord, in your mercy:
- A: Hear our prayer.**
- L: For governments, that they may act in the common good of all people,

and especially those most in need. Lord, in your mercy:

**A: Hear our prayer.**

L: For families, that they may know nothing but peace, harmony and joy in this season. Lord, in your mercy:

**A: Hear our prayer.**

L: For all who are sick, housebound or bereaved, that they may have patience and hope: for the departed, that they may have life through Jesus. Lord, in your mercy:

**A: Hear our prayer.**

*Please add your own prayers for the needs of the Church, the world and your local community. You may wish to add particular prayers for family members, friends or neighbours in need at this time.*

## **THE COMMUNION RITE**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

L: At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

**A: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.**

L: 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.

**A: Amen.**

### **Before Spiritual Communion**

L: Loving Father, your Son assumed at his first coming the lowliness of human flesh, and so fulfilled the design you formed long ago, and opened for us the way to eternal salvation, that, when he comes again in glory and majesty and all is at last made manifest, we who watch for that day may inherit the great promise in which now we dare to hope. At the Last Supper he showed the fullness of your love, as he gave his Body and Blood for his people. Even though we are not in Church, and not able to receive communion today, we open our minds and hearts now to your generous love and the gift of Jesus your Son, welcoming him spiritually into our lives.

### **Spiritual Communion**

**A: My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Holy Sacrament of the altar. I love you above all things and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come spiritually into my soul so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever. Amen.**

*Pause for a moment of silent prayer and reflection.*

### **Thanksgiving Psalm**

L: My soul rejoices in my God.

**A: My soul rejoices in my God.**

My soul glorifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.

He looks on his servant in her nothingness; henceforth all ages will call me blessed.

**A: My soul rejoices in my God.**

The Almighty works marvels for me. Holy his name!

His mercy is from age to age, on those who fear him.

**A: My soul rejoices in my God.**

He fills the starving with good things, sends the rich away empty. He protects Israel, his servant, remembering his mercy.

**A: My soul rejoices in my God.**

## **THE CONCLUDING RITES**

### **Final Prayer and Blessing**

L: Let us pray.

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

**A: Amen.**

L: May the Lord ✕ bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

**A: Amen.**

L: Let us bless the Lord!

**A: Thanks be to God!**

