

THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT YEAR A

Welcome the Christ in our future

A reed swaying in the breeze? No? Then what did you go out to see? A man wearing fine clothes? Oh, no those who wear fine clothes are to be found in palaces. Then what did you go out for? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet: he is the one of whom scripture says: Look, I am going to send my messenger before you: he will prepare your way before you. I tell you solemnly, of all the children born of women, a greater than John the Baptist has never been seen; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection

"Are you the one we are waiting for or is there someone else to come?"

What do you think would be the response of the world if Jesus appeared today? What personally, do you feel you would need to happen, to prove that Jesus is who he said he is?

Final Prayer

Lord God, you are ever faithful to your promises, and ever close to your church: we rejoice in hope of the Saviours return and look forward with longing to his promise of heaven on earth.

Amen.



On the columns of the canopy covering the Altar in St Peter's Basilica there are bees among the leaves and flowers. It is also traditional in the Church for the candles on the altar and the Pascal candle to be of beeswax. Beeswax is a natural product made from the bee's activities of selfless work.

A cup of tea is the way we offer hospitality to others; it says "welcome, come in, join us, have a cuppa".

When we welcome others, as Christ does, we invite them to be part of God's family.

Prayer Focus

On the third Sunday the Liturgical colour is rose/ pink, a reflection of the lightening of our mood in expectation of the coming of Christ.

- * Bible.
- * Teapot and cup.
- * Lavender fresh or dried.
- * 2 candles in purple or lavender, one in rose or pink.



Prayer for lighting candle

Let us ask God to help us to look towards a future that continually builds on our relation with Christ. (Light the three candles.)
Lord God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we rejoice in the hope of Christs coming at Christmas and long for his return at the end of time.
Amen.

Weekly challenge.
Each day put aside some time to sit and talk with Jesus and to listen and be open to his reply.

First Reading Isaiah 35: 1-6; 10

Isaiah, who gave stern warning of coming destruction in Chapter 34, changes to the poetry we hear in this reading. The future is looking bright: God is going to bring his people safely to himself.

When this happens everything will change for the better, the lifeless will spring into life and flowers will bloom. A great future is seen for those who have the courage to stand with God.

COURAGE, DO NOT BE AFRAID

Reflection on the Reading

Sometimes the future can look frightening, we are not sure of what we see ahead. What sort of things in your life do you need to have courage for and do you have family or friends that you turn to in times of fear and insecurity?



Psalm 145

The link with the first reading is that God is seen as caring for his people in need. He will “give sight to the blind” and the “eyes of the blind will be opened” (Isaiah), encouraging us to say:

LORD, COME AND SAVE US.

Second Reading James 5: 7-10

James, an early member of the Church, wrote particularly to the Jewish Christians, and appealed for them to live the faith as active members of the community.

In this reading he tells the Christians that they must be patient and be considerate of each other, rely on God and all will be well.

Reflection on the Reading

It can be hard to be patient when you are under stress, ill, overworked or unhappy. Are you a patient person or do you expect everything to happen straight away?

In what way are you able to let God take charge and wait as he sorts things out?

Introduction to the Gospel

John was in prison and was puzzled by the reports he hears about Jesus. His expectation of the Messiah was different to what he was hearing. He expected the Messiah to be judgmental. Jesus sends a reply to John’s question that reminds him that there is another side to the Messiah’s work.

When Jesus speaks to the people about John, he is speaking of his New Kingdom, pointing out to them that they are greater than John, because John belongs to the older order and they have committed to the new.

Gospel Acclamation

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me;
He sent me to bring the Good News to the poor.

Gospel Reading Matthew 11: 2-11

John in his prison heard what Christ was doing and he sent his disciples to ask him, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for someone else?’ Jesus answered, ‘Go back and tell John what you hear and see; the blind see again, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised to life and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor; and happy is the man who does not lose faith in me.’

As the messengers were leaving, Jesus began to talk to the people about John: ‘What did you go out into the wilderness to see?’