

Third SUNDAY

of *Advent*

December 13, 2020

Rejoice always.
Pray without ceasing.
In all circumstances
give thanks,
for this is the will
of God for you
in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

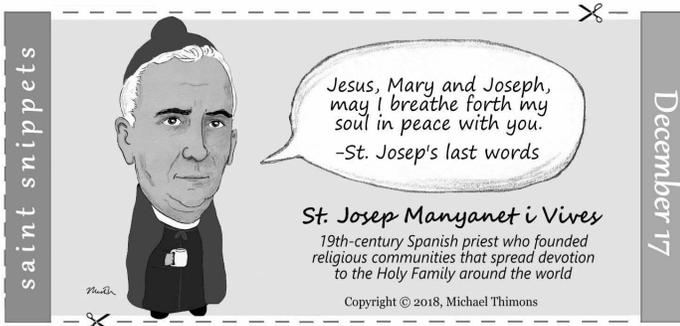
Feast of Faith

The Shape of the Mass

In the renewal of the liturgy that followed the Second Vatican Council, the full, conscious, and active participation of the assembly was the primary consideration. By participation, the Council Fathers did not mean just joining in the singing and the spoken responses, but active engagement and prayerful understanding of the rites. They envisioned a transparent liturgy, a worship that spoke so directly to the hearts and minds of the faithful that it would require no explanation at all.

The liturgy itself is the best possible catechesis on the liturgy. What does the liturgy teach us? It shows us the ministry of Jesus continuing in the present. He gathers a community. He calls us to prayer and repentance and praise. He teaches us with the very word of God. He does not send us away empty, but sets before us a marvelous banquet, feeding us with his very body and blood. Then he sends us forth to do what he has done—to give ourselves for others, not just in words, but in deeds. The Mass is the pattern of our Christian lives.

—Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.



John the Baptist

At a school open house a woman could be overheard introducing her husband to some of the other parents. “Oh, Bill, I’d like you to meet Johnny’s father. And over here, this is Marie’s mom; you know, the little girl from our Ellen’s soccer team.”

With satisfied resignation Bill introduced himself not by name: “I’m Ellen’s Dad.”

It’s good to know who you are. Be it someone’s father or mother, son or daughter, husband or wife, it’s important to embrace the full meaning of our various roles.

John the Baptist knows who he is. And who he is not. He is not the Christ. Nor Elijah. Nor like any other prophet God’s people had ever seen.

John the Baptist knows his mission is divine. He’s more than satisfied to be the one to announce the coming of God’s reign. The Christ is near. Make straight your paths. Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Readings for the Week

Monday:	Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a; Ps 25:4-5ab, 6, 7bc-9; Mt 21:23-27
Tuesday:	Zep 3:1-2, 9-13; Ps 34:2-3, 6-7, 17-18, 19, 23; Mt 21:28-32
Wednesday:	Is 45:6b-8, 18, 21c-25; Ps 85:9ab, 10-14; Lk 7:18b-23
Thursday:	Gn 49:2, 8-10; Ps 72:1-4ab, 7-8, 17; Mt 1:1-17
Friday:	Jer 23:5-8; Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19; Mt 1:18-25
Saturday:	Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a; Ps 71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17; Lk 1:5-25
Sunday:	2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29; Rom 16:25-27; Lk 1:26-38

Saints and Special Observances

Sunday:	Third Sunday of Advent
Monday:	St. John of the Cross
Wednesday:	Las Posadas begins



Angels of Peace

Let us not be justices of the peace, but angels of peace.

—St. Thérèse of Lisieux

Measuring Success

Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles that one has overcome while trying to succeed.

—Booker T. Washington

Today's Readings

First Reading — As a garden makes its growth spring up, so will God make justice spring up before all the nations (Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11).

Psalm — My soul rejoices in my God (Luke 1:46-50, 53-54).

Second Reading — Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good (1 Thessalonians 5:16-24).

Gospel — I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, make straight the way of the Lord (John 1:6-8, 19-28).

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Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing.
— 1 Thessalonians 5:16

Treasures From Our Tradition

We make transitions along life's journey, and search for meaning. Watch an infant take those first wobbly steps. Inevitably they are toward the arms of a dear one, and the gleeful smile and wordless laughter let us know that the baby understands that the whole world is renewed in an instant. Parents may see that wide-eyed smile again some years later as they flip car keys in the teenager's direction, and by God's grace at in-between moments of forgiveness and affirmation.

Sacraments open a window to the blessings of everyday life and help us claim their deep meaning. A voice from a fiery bush warned Moses to take off his shoes because he stood on "holy ground." Your first steps, your first word, taking your place at the family table, stirring to new love, forgiving and being forgiven: all of this is holy, laden with meaning, full of possibilities. Sacraments are not escape pods from the realities of the everyday; rather they invest us ever more deeply in life and recruit us for the kingdom inaugurated by Jesus. We take baby steps all our life long. In the world of sacrament, they are always directed toward the arms of a loving God, and always on the common holy ground of a community's life.

—Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Third Sunday of Advent Reasons to Rejoice

Saint Paul seems to be throwing out a handful of sayings that may sound overly optimistic, but are actually very practical. "Rejoice always? Who can do that?" It sounds absurd, but the next two lines give it context: If we pray constantly and thank God for all that happens to us, we have reason to rejoice. Whatever happens is the will of God for us. Even the bad things, things we don't like, can be allowed by God, so that God can bring good out of them. God allows sin because it leads to forgiveness, an experience of God's love for us. And God allows even death, because God can bring us to eternal life. The next two sayings may be a little obscure. When Paul tells us not to quench the Spirit, he means we should be open to what the Holy Spirit moves us to do. "Prophetic utterances" refer to things that other people were inspired to proclaim. If we pray constantly (1 Thessalonians 5:17) we won't be so distracted by the things of this world that we cannot hear the promptings of the Holy Spirit in us. We won't be so critical of others that we miss what the Spirit is telling us through them.

How do we know if something really is from the Spirit? The next phrase helps with that: Test everything. Retain what is good (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Use the scriptures, the teachings of the Church, and your conscience to decide whether the Spirit is moving you, or if advice you hear is worthwhile. And most of all trust God to help with all this because God wants us to be holy. God will make us holy if we only allow it. Then we will be ready for the coming of the Lord, whether through the sacraments, the celebration of Christmas, or God's final coming in glory. I'd say that's a reason to rejoice.

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