

ADVENT 2017 (3)
 St Mary's Pro-Cathedral
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Programme

- Welcome to Advent 3, 2017
- Context of writing
- Reading poetic texts
- Back to Second Isaiah
- Pointers for prayer
- Prayer

| Advent Readings | | | | | Themes |
|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Advent 1 | Is 63:16-17; 64:1, 3-8 | Ps 80 (79) | 1 Cor 1:3-9 | Mk 13:33-37 | End of Time |
| Advent 2 | Is 40:1-5, 9-11 | Ps 85 (84) | 2 Pet 3:8-14 | Mk 1:1-8 | John the Baptist |
| Advent 3 | Is 61:1-2, 10-11 | Magnificat | 1 Thess 5:16-24 | Jn 1:6-8, 19-28 | John the Baptist |
| Advent 4 | 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-11, 16 | Ps 89 (88) | Rom 16:25-27 | Lk 1:26-38 | Mary |

Gaudete Sunday

- Anticipation of joy
- The happy believer
- Evangelii gaudium

Context of writing

- Isaiah 1-39 — Uzziah, Ahaz and Hezekiah, in the Assyrian period
- Isaiah 40-55 — Cyrus, in the Babylonian period
- Isaiah 56-66 — in the Persian period, after the Exile

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|------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Introduction 56:1-8 | Foreigners in the service of the Lord | Conclusion 66:18-24 |
| 56:9-59:8 | Community life in Jerusalem | 65:1-66:17 |
| 59:9-15a | Prayers for forgiveness and restoration | 63:7-64:12 [11] |
| 59:15b-21 | Visions of the Lord in judgment | 63:1-6 |
| 60:1-22 | Visions of Jerusalem restored | 61:10-62:12 |
| | The prophet's call 61:1-9 | |

Isaiah 61:1-11

Isa 61:1 The spirit of the sovereign LORD is upon me,
 because the LORD has chosen me.
 He has commissioned me to encourage the poor,
 to help the broken-hearted,
 to decree the release of captives,
 and the freeing of prisoners,

- 2 to announce the year when the LORD will show his favour,
the day when our God will seek vengeance,
to console all who mourn,
- 3 to strengthen those who mourn in Zion,
by giving them a turban, instead of ashes,
oil symbolizing joy, instead of mourning,
a garment symbolizing praise, instead of discouragement.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
trees planted by the LORD to reveal his splendour.
- 4 They will rebuild the perpetual ruins
and restore the places that were desolate;
they will re-establish the ruined cities,
the places that have been desolate since ancient times.
- 5 "Foreigners will take care of your sheep;
foreigners will work in your fields and vineyards.
- 6 You will be called, 'the LORD's priests,
servants of our God.'
You will enjoy the wealth of nations
and boast about the riches you receive from them.
- 7 Instead of shame, you will get a double portion;
instead of humiliation, they will rejoice over the land they receive.
Yes, they will possess a double portion in their land
and experience lasting joy.
- 8 For I, the LORD, love justice
and hate robbery and sin.
I will repay them because of my faithfulness;
I will make a permanent covenant with them.
- 9 Their descendants will be known among the nations,
their offspring among the peoples.
All who see them will recognize that
the LORD has blessed them."
- 10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD;
I will be overjoyed because of my God.
For he clothes me in garments of deliverance;
he puts on me a robe symbolizing vindication.
I look like a bridegroom when he wears a turban as a priest would;
I look like a bride when she puts on her jewellery.
- 11 For just as the ground produces its crops
and a garden yields its produce,
so the sovereign LORD will cause deliverance to grow,
and give his people reason to praise him in the sight of all the nations.

(1) Spirit anointing:

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching. (Isaiah 42:1–4)

(2) Marriage metaphors:

In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and like a strong man runs its course with joy. Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them; and nothing is hid from its heat. (Psalms 19:4–6)

You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the Lord delights in

you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your builder marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. (Isaiah 62:4–5)

(3) Jubilee year:

And you shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family. That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you: you shall not sow, or reap the after-growth, or harvest the unpruned vines. For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you: you shall eat only what the field itself produces. (Leviticus 25:10–12)

Responsorial Psalm

- The responsorial “psalm” is the Magnificat, one of the four canticles in Luke 1-2 (the Benedictus, the Magnificat, the Gloria and the Nunc dimitis)
- The Magnificat is an early Christian psalm/hymn, based on the Song of Hannah (1 Samuel 2:1-10)

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.
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.
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.

The second reading

- The joy of the Gospel is very evident in the writings of St Paul (see more texts below). This is true also in Paul’s very first letter, 1 Thessalonians.
- Joy is emphasised even though believers may have been undergoing tremendous challenges.
- In 2 Corinthians he refers again to the Christians in Macedonia (of which Thessalonica was the Roman capital): We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. (2Corinthians 8:1–2)

1:1 Letter superscript
 1:2-10 Thanksgiving / introduction
 1:9-10 Topic, in three parts
 2:1-3:12 Relationships
 4:1-12 Holiness
 4:13-5:11 End time issues
5:12-23 Exhortation / conclusion
5:24 Letter postscript

1 Thess 5:12 Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who labor among you and preside over you in the Lord and admonish you, **13** and to esteem them most highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. **14** And we urge you, brothers and sisters, admonish the undisciplined, comfort the discouraged, help the weak, be patient toward all. **15** See that no one pays back evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good for one another and for all. **16 Always rejoice, 17 constantly pray, 18 in everything give thanks. For this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. 19 Do not extinguish the Spirit. 20 Do not treat prophecies with contempt. 21 But examine all things; hold fast to what is good. 22 Stay away from every form of evil.**

1 Thess 5:23 Now may the God of peace himself make you completely holy and may your spirit and soul and body be kept entirely blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **24** He who calls you is trustworthy, and he will in fact do this. **25**

Brothers and sisters, pray for us too. **26** Greet all the brothers and sisters with a holy kiss. **27** I call on you solemnly in the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters. **28** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

The Gospel

John 1:6 A man came, sent from God, whose name was John. **7** He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that everyone might believe through him. **8** He himself was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.

John 1:19 Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" **20** He confessed—he did not deny but confessed—"I am not the Christ!" **21** So they asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not!" "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No!" **22** Then they said to him, "Who are you? Tell us so that we can give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

John 1:23 John said, "I am *the voice of one shouting in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord,'* as Isaiah the prophet said." **24** (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) **25** So they asked John, "Why then are you baptising if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

John 1:26 John answered them, "I baptise with water. Among you stands one whom you do not recognise, **27** who is coming after me. I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandal!" **28** These things happened in Bethany across the Jordan River where John was baptising.

• Anxiety about John the Baptist in the Fourth Gospel

- The poetry of the Prologue is interrupted by prose (today's first paragraph), designed to put John in the second division;
- John is then made himself to quote the Old Testament citation at the start of Mark's account;
- The baptism of Jesus by John is not recounted, although associated phenomena are;
- The death of John is not presented to prevent any comparisons with the unique "lifting up" of the Son of Man.

Pointers for prayer

1. If someone were to describe my experience of "the joy of the Gospel," where would I begin? As it been my experience that joy and suffering go together?
2. For what should I give thanks to God at this point in my life? According to Meister Eckhardt, if the only prayer we ever said was one of thanksgiving it would be sufficient.
3. God is faithful: can I name my own experience of God's faithfulness to me?

Prayer

Living and faithful God, in you we find the deep springs of love and joy. Help us to embrace these gifts that others may be drawn to the Good News in Jesus.

Grant this through him, your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.