

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps Isaiah 12)

ANTIPHON: Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.

RESPONSE: Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.

LECTOR: Truly, God is my salvation, I trust, I shall not fear. For the Lord is my strength, my song, he became my saviour. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. **R.**

LECTOR: Give thanks to the Lord, give praise to his name! Make his mighty deeds known to the peoples! Declare the greatness of his name. **R.**

LECTOR: Sing a psalm to the Lord for he has done glorious deeds, make them known to all the earth! People of Zion, sing and shout for joy for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he sent me to bring Good News to the poor. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear. Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.

TODAY'S READINGS Zephaniah 3:14-18; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:10-18

NEXT WEEK (4th Sunday of Advent, Year C) Micah 5:1-4; Psalm 79; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45

*Majellan
office
closure*

Christmas Greetings

Majellan Media will reopen on Monday January 13. Have a safe and holy Christmas with your loved ones. See you in 2025!

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Experiencing joy through repentance



15 December 2024 3rd Sunday Advent, Year C

The two themes of Sunday's readings are repentance and joy. We do not usually associate these two themes with each other, but they go hand in glove in the kingdom of God.

The prophets of the Old Testament often spoke of what it would mean for God to live with his people. As we read in today's first reading, it would mean the total flowering of love between God and humanity, the permanent establishment of justice and the overthrowing of everything that afflicts and enslaves people. In the words of the prophet Zephaniah, it will be a day for God's people to "shout for joy" and "exult with all your heart".

However, this joyful uniting of God with his people requires our cooperation. A significant theme in the Old Testament is that God will only be actively present in the midst of a just and holy community. This is because to remain close to God is to become like him and for everything else to fall away.

As a result, we have to prepare ourselves to be able to operate in God's presence. For John the Baptist in today's gospel, the kind of spiritual labour involved in this preparation begins with repentance.

Repentance for John starts with giving up those habits of ours where we get an advantage at the expense of others or where we live in a way contrary to God's love and law. It may mean, as it did for the people in today's Gospel, that we need to change how we use our money, our

relationships with others or how we go about our jobs and careers.

However, repentance is not a process that should cause us anxiety. When we are moved to repentance, we know that we do so with God's accompaniment and patience. As Paul says, through prayer, we can invite God into every area of our lives, even those places where we are afraid to let God have control.

When we turn towards God in repentance, we do not find condemnation or judgement but the peace and joy that come from living in lockstep with Christ. This is why the coming of Christ, celebrated at Christmas, is celebrated with such rejoicing. God has come to live among his people and, where there was separation due to sin, God can make the repentant heart both whole and holy.

And our joy is assured because, when we do turn back to God, we are responding to the great love and joy that God has called us with. Zephaniah depicts the moment of God coming to live among his people as God "dancing with shouts of joy". As it says elsewhere in the Gospel of Luke, there is great "joy in heaven over one sinner who repents."

Repentance, then, is nothing to fear but is instead the path to true joy.

All it takes is listening to God's daily invitation to turn back towards his way of living and start on the journey of a life lived with Christ.

Joseph Doyle
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