

The Third Sunday of Advent/Year A – Gaudete
Sunday/Collection for Retirement Fund for Religious;
Paper, Personal, Food, etc., for Good Neighbors collected
at All Masses; Coffee/Donuts Sunday – 10/11
December 2016 –
Our Lady of Victory Parish Community –
HOMILY

1st Reading:

Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10

- “The desert and the parched land will exult; the steppe will rejoice and bloom. . . . they will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God. . . . Strengthen the hands that are feeble, make firm the knees that are weak, say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, . . . he comes to save you. Then will the eyes of the blind be opened, the ears of the deaf be cleared; then will the lame leap like a stag, then the tongue of the mute will sing. Those whom the Lord has ransomed will return . . . crowned with everlasting joy; . . . sorrow and mourning will flee.”

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 146 - *Sung*

2nd Reading:

James 5:7-10

- “Be patient, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord . . . You too must be patient. Make your hearts firm, because the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not complain, . . . about one another, that you may not be judged. Take as an example of hardship and patience, . . . the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.”

GOSPEL:

MATTHEW 11:2-11

- “When John the Baptist . . . he sent his disciples to Jesus with this question, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?” . . . “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them.” . . . “

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I. “The desert and the parched land will exult; the steppe will rejoice and bloom. . . . they will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God. . . . **Strengthen** the hands that are feeble, **make firm** the knees that are weak, say to those whose hearts are frightened: **Be strong, fear not! Here is your God**, . . . he comes to save you. Then will the eyes of the blind be opened, the ears of the deaf be cleared; then will the lame leap like a stag, then the tongue of the mute will sing. Those whom the Lord has ransomed will return . . . crowned with everlasting joy; . . . sorrow and mourning will flee.”

“Be patient, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord . . . Make your hearts **firm**, because the coming of the Lord **is** at hand. **Do not complain**, . . . about one another, that you may not be judged. Take as an example of hardship and patience, . . . the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.”

“Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them.”

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Given **all** of the amazing news we hear in these readings . . . how can **ANYONE** not possibly be **EXCITED** . . . **THRILLED?**

Granted . . . I will own that, perhaps, none of us will go home and look in our brown and desolate gardens and see all sorts of spring and summer flowers in bloom . . . most of all of the birds have flown south for the winter . . . and some of us gathered here will soon follow. And yes, there are those of us who do move more slowly than, perhaps, we used to due to aching bones and arthritis . . . for that matter . . . there are also those of us who are even leery at times about driving . . . especially at night, given our eyesight is not what it used to be . . . let alone our hearing . . . **BUT, BUT** this amazing news we hear from the Prophet Isaiah . . . this challenging call we hear in the letter of James . . . and the absolutely affirming and confident response Jesus gives in the Gospel to the question posed to him by John's disciples . . . This is **not** solely about all things physical . . . **no** . . . this **amazing news** is about **salvation** . . . not only the salvation and restoration of Israel and our ancestors in faith at the time of Jesus . . . but **our** salvation . . . yours and mine . . . **our** salvation at **this** time of Jesus!

ii. It is about that **strength** you and I experience,

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knowing that we are not alone in our daily challenges and struggles . . . that the Lord walks with us . . . and at times . . . even carries us through whatever it is we are facing . . . illness . . . the death or loss of a loved one . . . It is about that **courage** that we experience knowing deep within our hearts that the Lord has not, nor will He **ever**, abandon us nor walk away from us . . . it is about **seeing** beyond the pain . . . beyond the anxiety . . . beyond even the anger . . . **seeing** with new eyes that behold a vision of healing . . . of joy . . . of being reconciled with another and living in peace

It is about not being crippled by despair, but now being able to walk in hope . . . in trust . . .

It is about not feeling isolated . . . or for that matter . . . isolating others simply because they are different . . . but realizing that each and every one matters . . . each is part of the whole . . . the communion of believers . . . and each brings a richness to the very Body of Christ that communion forms . . .

It is about letting die in us that which should so that what may live through us does . . .

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It is about welcoming into the very poverty of our spirits the richness that is Christ . . .

Given all of this and more . . . how can any of us **not** be **excited** . . . **thrilled**?

III. Not only that . . . how can any of us **contain** or **withhold** that **excitement** . . . that **amazing news**?

We are at that time of year where we spend a lot of time shopping . . . deliberating . . . and yes . . . even making charitable donations . . . because we want others to have the material “stuff” that will provide for their need and bring them joy . . .

And yet . . . there is one thing we each have . . . no matter our age . . . no matter the size of our pocket book or wallet . . . one precious, precious thing each of us has that is **the** gift we all long for . . . **FAITH** . . . faith in Jesus Christ . . . a faith that lets others know about this amazing news . . . it doesn't need wrapped . . . in fact, if we have wrapped it up and stored it away, **now** is the time to tear open that wrapping . . . This precious gift won't result in our having to worry about paying for it next month or over the next several months . . . Jesus has already done just that . . . All you need to do is simply offer it . . . to others . .

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. share it . . . with others . . . give it away . . . to others . . .
and when you do . . . God will continue to do **amazing**
things! and so much more!