

- [2] Fr. John Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 349
- [3] CCC 410
- [4] Is. 42:1-9
- [5] cf. CCC 713
- [6] CCC 438
- [7] Luke 4:18-19
- [8] CCC 436
- [9] CCC 695
- [10] CCC 664
- [11] Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church (YouCat) Section 74
- [12] Jn. 1:1-4
- [13] The Order of the Mass
- [14] The Order of the Mass; Penitential Act
- [15] The Order of the Mass; Penitential Act
- [16] Hebrews 2:10-12
- [17] Matthew 23:8
- [18] Saint Augustine
- [19] Code of Canon Law; Can. 849
- [20] Jn. 1:7
- [21] Gary Hoge; *How Can Catholicism Be True When Catholics Are So Dead?*
- [22] Fulton Sheen; Foreword to *Radio Replies* Vol. 1, (1938) page ix
- [23] Code of Canon Law; Can. 840
- [24] Code of Canon Law; Can. 879
- [25] The Order of the Mass; Penitential Act
- [26] 1 Thes 5:16
- [27] Ps. 84:8
- [28] Ps. 25
- [29] cf. Isaiah 30:19, 30
- [30] Fr. John Hardon; Modern Catholic Dictionary
- [31] Fr. John Hardon; Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 243
- [32] In Conversation with God 1, 15.2
- [33] In Conversation with God 1, 15.2
- [34] YouCat Section 3
- [35] In Conversation with God 1, 15.1
- [36] Gal. 6:2
- [37] John 1:41-42
- [38] Saint John Chrysostom
- [39] ibid
- [40] ibid
- [41] In Conversation with God 1, 15.1
- [42] In Conversation with God 1, 15.3
- [43] Luke 2:34
- [44] In Conversation with God 1, 15.3

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Rejoice in the Lord 3rd Sunday of Advent

Lessons and Discussions

Page 4 – Messianic Fulfillment

“...make straight the way of the Lord.”

Page 8 – Adopted Brothers and Sisters

“...the one who is coming after me...”

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“He was not the light, but came to testify to the light.”

Page 14 – Christian Happiness

“Rejoice in the Lord always.”

Entrance Antiphon (Phil 4:4-5) – Simple English Propers

This should be chanted so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred. Another song can be substituted, but should have the same theme.

*Gaudete in Domino**Phil 4: 4, 5*


R Ejoice in the Lord always; * again I say, rejoice.

Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Do not be anxious over anything; but in all manner of prayer, let your requests be made known unto God.

Source: <http://www.ccwatershed.org/>

Alternate options:Hymns

Hark! A Herald Voice Is Calling
On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

Songs of Praise

Prepare the Way

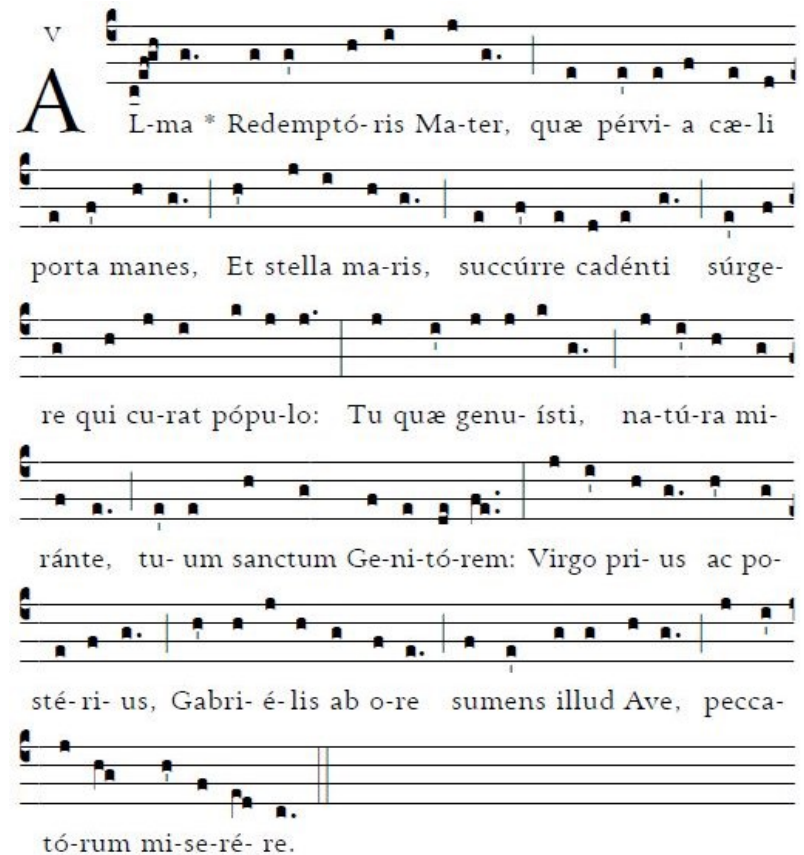
Remnant

Life is Not (Remnant)

Collect – Roman Missal

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Marian Antiphon – Alma Redemptoris Mater


A L-ma * Redemptó-ris Ma-ter, quæ pérvia cæ-li
porta manes, Et stella ma-ris, succurre cadénti súrge-
re qui cu-rat pópu-lo: Tu quæ genu-ísti, na-túra mi-
ránte, tu-um sanctum Ge-ni-tó-rem: Virgo pri-us ac po-
sté-ri-us, Gabri-é-lis ab o-re sumens illud Ave, pecca-
tó-rum mi-se-ré-re.

O loving Mother of our Redeemer, gate of heaven, star of the sea,
Hasten to aid thy fallen people who strive to rise once more.
Thou who brought forth thy holy Creator, all creation wond'ring,
Yet remainest ever Virgin, taking from Gabriel's lips
that joyful "Hail!": be merciful to us sinners.

“The End” Notes

[1] Fr. John Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 348-349

is the time to “not keep this treasure to himself”[40] (to our self) but give it like a gift to the world, starting with our families.

Why should we be happy during Advent? “In a few days it will be Christmas, a great feast for us Christians, but also for the whole human race, which, without knowing it, is looking for Christ. Christmas is coming, and God wants us to be joyful, like the shepherds, like the wise men, like Mary and Joseph”[41]

As we get ready for Christmas, let us try “to get ready for the Holy Season by encouraging an atmosphere of Christian peace where we live and work, and by doing all we can in small ways...People need to be convinced that Christ has really been born in Bethlehem, and few things are more convincing than the habitual happiness of the Christian, even in the midst of pain and contradictions.”[42] A great example is Mary, who preparing to bring Jesus in this world. Mary gave birth in the midst of pain and contradictions. Her Son would be called a “sign of contradiction”[43]. In the midst of many hardships and even being refused a place to stay, Mary and her husband Joseph remained charitable. “But these problems did not cause her to lose her joy when God became Man, and dwelt among us.”[44]

Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion – Passion Prayer of Saint Andrew

Saint Andrew shows a zeal for the Lord from the moment he meets him to the time of his death. He not only wants to share the Messiah with others, as he does with his brother Saint Peter, but wants to share in the intimacy of a life lived with, in and through Christ. Even in suffering and death, Saint Andrew does not want to be separated from the love of Christ, but instead sees his own crucifixion as an honor in which he can better unite with Christ.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Hail, O Cross! Receive the disciple of him who hung from thee – my Master, Christ! O good Cross, so long desired and now awaiting my thirsty heart. In tranquil joy and exultant security I come to thee! Thou hast received the beauty and loveliness of the members of the Lord; do thou now receive me and take me from men and join me again to my Master, so that He who by thee redeemed me, may by thee also receive me.

O God, who see how your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord's Nativity, enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Gospel Reading – John 1:6-8, 19-28 – Roman Missal

NOTE: In the Roman Catholic Tridentine Lectionary this Gospel is read on the Third Sunday of Advent (verses 19-28) and The Third Mass in Daytime on Christmas (verses 6-8).

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.
- Glory to you O Lord

A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light.

And this is the testimony of John: When the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to him to ask him, "Who are you?" He admitted and did not deny it, but admitted, "I am not the Christ." So they asked him, "What are you then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you, so we can give an answer to those who sent us? What do you have to say for yourself?" He said: "I am *the voice of one crying out in the desert, 'make straight the way of the Lord,'*" as Isaiah the prophet said." Some Pharisees were also sent. They asked him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ or Elijah or the Prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water; but there is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie." This happened in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

The Gospel of the Lord.
- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings

From *St. Augustine*

John is the voice, but the Lord *is the Word who was in the beginning*. John is the voice that lasts for a time; from the beginning Christ is the Word who lives forever.

Take away the word, the meaning, and what is the voice? Where there is no understanding, there is only a meaningless sound. The voice without the word strikes the ear but does not build up the heart.

However, let us observe what happens when we first seek to build up our hearts. When I think about what I am going to say, the word or message is already in my heart. When I want to speak to you, I look for a way to share with your heart what is already in mine.

Responsory - Office of Readings – 3rd Sunday of Advent

I must decrease, but he must increase; the one who comes after me existed before me;

– and I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandal.

I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

– And I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandal.

Messianic Fulfillment – Lesson and Discussion

“...make straight the way of the Lord.”

What does “Messiah” mean? Messiah is from the Hebrew word for “Anointed One.” “The equivalent word in Greek is Christos. In the Old Testament it was sometimes applied in a general sense to prophets or priests (Exodus 30:30), but more specifically it referred to the coming of one, who would usher in a period of righteousness and conquer sin and evil (Daniel 9:26). In the New Testament the Evangelists made it clear that they knew Jesus was the long-anticipated Messiah (Acts 2:36; Matthew 16:17; Galatians 3:24-29).”[1] The word “Christ” comes from this term of “Messiah.” As we read the first reading at Mass, we see that Isaiah is also “anointed”. There were other kings, priests, prophets and most famously King David, who were anointed. However, there was going to be one anointed above all others, with a kingdom that will reign forever.

Who was the Messiah? Jesus was the promised Messiah. Jesus is the “Anointed One”. The word Jesus means “God saves”. The word Christ means, “anointed”. The Holy Name of Jesus, alone,

James Hart gives the analogy of the sunflower. When oriented toward the sun, the sunflower is open and faces the sun, but when the sun is absent the sunflower turns or curves inward on itself. As the sunflower, so too is man. When oriented toward God, man is open and brilliant. God is never absent from man, but when man becomes absent to God, he quickly turns or curves inward on himself. This orientation toward self cannot bring happiness, because man is not the source of happiness. Only an orientation toward God, the source of happiness, the beatific vision, can bring happiness.

Having Christian happiness, we do not look inwardly, but only to those who need to hear of Christ’s joy. We are able to take care of the troubles of others in a gentle and loving way. St. Paul wrote, “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”[36] We are able to attract others around us through happiness. Those who are gloomy tend to send a vibe that repels people, while those with joy attract people. We attract people by showing them that we appreciate them, giving a smile, a kind remark, a word of praise, and letting small things go which in the grand scheme of things are unimportant.

The feast day of Saint Andrew, one of the Apostles, is November 30th, sometimes falls during Advent. Prior to meeting Jesus, Saint Andrew was a disciple of Saint John the Baptist. When Saint Andrew finally met Jesus, he was so full of happiness in finding the Messiah that he said to his brother Simon Peter, “We have found the Messiah. And he led him to Jesus.”[37] Saint Andrew is a beautiful example to us. It was by following Saint John the Baptist, that he encountered Christ. Then, once he encountered Christ, he shared it with others, first being his brother, Saint Peter, who would go on to be the first Pope and rock of the Church. What if Andrew did not share this happiness of encountering Christ? What would have been Saint Peter’s life without sharing? What happens to others if we don’t share Christ with them? What will their life be without Christ? “After Andrew has stayed with Jesus and had learned much from Him, he did not keep this treasure to himself, but hastened to share it with his brother.”[38]

We tend to think of the Christmas Season as time to get presents and the Advent Season, with Black Friday and Cyber Monday, as the time to shop for presents. This is a twisted view of both seasons. Advent is the time, as Saint Andrew did, to “stay with Jesus and learn much from Him”[39], and Christmas

happiness on “changeable circumstances like good news, good health, peace and quiet, enough money to bring up the family comfortably and having all the material possessions we would like. All these things are good in themselves if they do not separate us from God, but they are unable to provide us with real happiness.”[33] The only unchanging thing that can bring us happiness is God. We sustain this happiness when we stay in constant communication with Him in prayer, reading Scripture, going to Mass, going to Confession and seeking spiritual direction.

The world looks to pull itself away from God and thus seems to be getting darker and sadder. Thus, our mission as Christians is to bring happiness into the world. Jesus Christ is the source of happiness and thus to bring Christ is to bring happiness. Happiness can sometimes be so rare that we begin to believe that happiness is unnatural or that happy people are weird. Happiness is natural. Despair is unnatural. “It is natural for man to seek God. All of our striving for truth and happiness is ultimately a search for the one who supports us absolutely, satisfies us absolutely, and employs us absolutely in his service. A person is not completely himself until he has found God. ‘Anyone who seeks truth seeks God, whether or not he realizes it’ (St. Edith Stein).”[34] It was during the Advent that the Wise Men sought truth, and it was not until, on the Epiphany when they found Jesus, who is The Way, The Truth and The Life, that they found happiness and rest from their journey.

[\[See also Link to Liturgy Lesson: What do we seek?\]](#)

It is natural to seek God. We do not seek what cannot be found. From the beginning of time people and cultures have sought God. This is natural for man. It is unnatural to turn from God, to disbelieve. Not only is this unnatural, but in the end leads to frustration and despair.

How do we share happiness with others? We must bring happiness to all we encounter. “A gloomy soul is at the mercy of many temptations. How many sins have been committed in the shadow of that gloominess! When the soul is happy it spreads its happiness and is an encouragement to others.”[35] Those who are sad and down trodden tend to turn in on themselves.

Saint Augustine coined the term, *Incurvatus in se*. *Incurvatus in se* is Latin for, turned or curved inward on oneself. Msgr. E.

tells us everything. Who is He? God. What has He come to do? Save. He is the Anointed One, the Promised One, Emmanuel, God with us.

Why didn’t everyone believe that Jesus was the Messiah?

“Those who refused to accept Jesus interpreted the promised kingdom to be a worldly domain and looked forward to a Messiah who would be a military leader to help Israel triumph over her enemies.”[2]

How do we know that Jesus is the Messiah? The coming of the Messiah was greatly anticipated. The first words spoken of this promised Messiah were from God in the Book of Genesis. Right after the fall of man, God gives man a promise and calls man to restoration. “God calls him and in a mysterious way heralds the coming victory over evil and his restoration from his fall. This promise made by God is known as the “Protoevangelium” (“first gospel”): the first announcement of the Messiah and Redeemer, of a battle between the serpent and the Woman, and of the final victory of a descendant of hers.”[3] This continued through the Prophets, starting in Isaiah and up to John the Baptist. One of the most important readings regarding the coming Messiah is the “servant songs”[4] where we read that the Messiah is not going to be a powerful ruler, but one who will suffer and die by pouring out the spirit to all, and taking our death upon himself.[5]

We read of the shepherds being called by the angel announcing the birth of Jesus as the Messiah: “To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”(Lk 2:11) Jesus’ consecration as the Messiah was revealed on earth at His Baptism. “‘God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power,’ ‘that he might be revealed to Israel’ (Acts 10:38; Jn 1:31) as its Messiah. His works and words will manifest him as ‘the Holy One of God.’(Mk 1:24; Jn 6:69; Acts 3:14)”[6] Finally, after His Baptism and forty days in the desert, Jesus went back to Nazareth. In the synagogue, Jesus reads the first two verses we hear in the first reading this Sunday, “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he has anointed me; he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.”[7]

As mentioned earlier, those who were anointed in the Old

Testament were priests, prophets and kings. Therefore, in the coming Messiah, all three had to be present.. “It was necessary that the Messiah be anointed by the Spirit of the Lord at once as king and priest, and also as prophet. Jesus fulfilled the messianic hope of Israel in his three-fold office of priest, prophet, and king.[8]

[See Also [Link to Liturgy Lesson “Jesus: Priest, Prophet, King”](#)]

ACTIVITY – What are the odds?

One out of every...

563 catch a foul ball

685,000 drown in bathtub

880,000 date a supermodel

2 million win the lottery

6 million die in shark attack

10 million become president of the United States

A good game is to make two cards for each statement above. For example, on one card write “563” and on the other card write “Catch a foul ball”. In the end there will be twelve (12) cards or six (6) pairs. Mix/shuffle the number cards and mix/shuffle the statement cards, keeping each category of cards separate. Tape or stick the number cards on a wall or board (on one side), then pull the statement cards out one by one and ask the group or a person to try to match the statement card to the respective number card. This could also be done in teams, seeing which team is able to match the largest number correctly.

Point - The odds that one person would fulfill all the prophecies of the Old Testament would be like winning the lottery 22 times in a row.

Listed below are some of the prophecies, yet Jesus fulfilled these and all the other prophecies:

Preach in parables

Work miracles

Rejected by brethren

Ministry in Galilee

Entry into Jerusalem

Will live in poverty

Called Immanuel

Born in Bethlehem

regularly used in Scripture to describe the lot of those who are blessed by God for doing His will, and the reward of the just for their faithful service on earth. Happiness is a divine gift but does require man’s co-operation to be gained.”[31]

When we are happy, we want to share that joy with others, and many times it can be contagious. When we are filled with happiness for God, it is a happiness that burns within us much longer than, say, buying a song, which we get tired of hearing after a few weeks or months.

What does it mean to have Christian happiness? True happiness is essential for all Christians. Christian happiness is a deeper burning happiness than worldly happiness. The world’s happiness often leads to its own loss, especially when someone looks outwardly to bring happiness to himself. Christian happiness, however, finds joy within oneself because they meet God in their soul in grace. This happiness comes from Christ and brings about peace and joy in one’s soul. “Only he can give it and preserve it, because the world does not possess its secret.”[32]

What is the difference between worldly happiness and Christian happiness? The world’s happiness is ever fleeting and can leave in times of distress, but Christian happiness can be sustained even in times of great trial or difficulty. This is because we know that we have a God who is looking out for us and wants the best for us. Worldly happiness only seeks to satisfy the individual, where Christian happiness begs to be shared with others. Many things in life bring us happiness, but once they are shared they are gone. A birthday cake might bring us happiness, but once we share it, it is gone, and maybe with it our happiness of having another piece later. This limit of temporal, worldly goods is like worldly happiness; sometimes the happiness is connected to how long we have the temporal good. Saint Catherine Siena says that Christian happiness is like a candle flame, and that once we share it, it does not diminish but instead increases, and in fact increases the more it is shared. The reason Christian happiness does not diminish is because what is being shared is eternal in nature. Virtues, gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit for example can all be shared and will never decrease.; The same is true of the Sacraments and the charity found in the Sacraments.

Happiness must have a solid foundation. The world seeks

Christian Happiness – Lesson and Discussion*“Rejoice in the Lord always.”*

During Advent, we are called to bring joy and happiness to all around us. We know that the Son of God is coming and this brings us great joy. In the first two readings, as well as the Responsorial Psalm, the theme is rejoicing. St. Paul says to “Rejoice always”. [26] The Third Sunday of Advent is called Gaudete Sunday. This name comes from the first words of the Introit (Entrance Antiphon) in Latin, “Gaudete in Domino”, “Rejoice in the Lord”.

Why do we have reason to rejoice? The answer of why we are rejoicing is found in the Psalms, “O Lord, thou hast blessed thy land: thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob.” [27] We are no longer captives. We are no longer slaves to sin. We are now blessed, for our Savior has come. If we look back at the Entrance Antiphons for the First and Second Sundays in Advent we see more reason for rejoicing. The First Sunday of Advent we pray in the Entrance Antiphon, “Unto you have I lifted up my soul, O my God, I trust in You, let me not be put to shame, do not allow my enemies to laugh at me, for none of those who are awaiting you will be disappointed.” [28] We rejoice because we have lifted up our soul to God. We trust in God. We are not ashamed and are protected from enemies. We are not disappointed because we wait on the Lord. The Second Sunday of Advent we pray in the Entrance Antiphon, “People of Zion behold, the Lord is coming to save all the nations, and He will cause you to hear His voice, for the joy of your heart.” [29] We again rejoice because all nations are given salvation, no people or culture is excluded. The First Sunday of Advent we watch, the Second Sunday of Advent we listen as Jesus causes us to hear His voice. In hearing His voice we are filled with joy and rejoice.

MUSIC – Pharrell Williams - Happy – POP CULTURE**CONNECTION – 4:00**

http://youtu.be/ZbZSe6N_BXs

How is happiness defined in the lyrics, music and video of this song?

What is happiness? A simple definition is “Any contentment in the possession of a good” [30], but there is a much more profound meaning to happiness for Christians. Happiness for Christians “...implies a state of well-being. Not some single experience, or a relative permanence and constancy. Hence, it is

Persons will come to adore
Slaying of children
Out of Egypt
Proceeded by a herald
Anointed by the Spirit
Born of a virgin
Jew & Gentile rise against him
Betrayed by a friend
Sold for 30 pieces of silver
Silence under suffering
Hit on cheek, scourged
Hands and feet pierced
Vinegar and gall offered
Cast lots for garments
Numbered among thieves
Forgave his murders
Death and resurrection
No broken bones
Conversion of Gentiles
Universal dominion

There is no question that Jesus is who He says He is. He is the Messiah and fulfills all the prophecies.

VIDEO – Jesus: What Are The Odds? – POP CULTURE**CONNECTION – 3:19**

<http://youtu.be/Iw7RLeV38m4>

This video can be used with the activity “What are the Odds”.

He is anointed with what? Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit. “Jesus is God’s Anointed in a unique way: the humanity the Son assumed was entirely anointed by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit established him as ‘Christ’ (Cf. Lk. 4:18-19; Isa 61:1)” [9] The Holy Spirit was with Jesus and was what gave Jesus power over all on earth. In union with God the Father and through Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit was given to all of us. We are anointed and brought into the flock of Jesus’ Messianic Kingdom when we receive the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.

Does Jesus as the Messiah have a kingdom? Yes. We pray during the Nicene Creed, “He is seated at the right hand of the Father”. This action signifies his Messianic kingdom. “Being seated at the Father’s right hand signifies the inauguration of the Messiah’s kingdom, the fulfillment of the prophet Daniel’s

vision concerning the Son of man: 'To him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.'(Dan. 7:14) After this event the apostles became witnesses of the 'kingdom [that] will have no end.'(Nicene Creed)"[10]

Adopted Brothers and Sisters – Lesson and Discussion

"...the one who is coming after me..."

Why was John the Baptist called to proclaim His coming? In the Gospel reading, the people asked John the Baptist who he was, and the first thing he clarified was that he is not the Christ, the Anointed One. John the Baptist's mission was that of repentance and preparation for the one who was to be the Christ, Jesus. John the Baptist understood his role to baptize with water and to have the people of Israel repent from their sins. John the Baptist knew that Jesus, the Anointed One, would come to baptize with the Holy Spirit.

Saint John the Baptist is very clear to tell everyone that he is not the one who is important. The one who is coming after him is the important one. In other words, he is saying, "You haven't seen anything yet!"

Saint John the Baptist was great, what makes Jesus so much better? John the Baptist is only a man. Jesus is true God and true man. We profess in the Nicene Creed, "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God." **What does begotten mean?** "When Jesus calls himself 'God's only-begotten Son' and Peter and others bear witness to this, the expression means that of all human beings only Jesus is more than a man and has a unique relationship to God, his Father."[11]

Jesus is true God and true man. As true God, Jesus is begotten of the Father. This means He has a unique relationship with His Father that none of us share. As God, Jesus and the Father are one. In this unique relationship with the Father, Jesus is an "only son" and has no siblings; He alone shares the Father's love. This is explained in the first verses of John's Gospel when he says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life

CONNECTION – 6:17

<http://youtu.be/FmY2-RXo65o>

It is impressive when MLB players give their testimony about Christ and the impact that Christ and His Church has made in their lives. Our testimony can make this same impact on others, we never know to whom or to how many our testimony will impact. We are called to be faithful and when we are faithful, God will use us.

Why is oneness important in giving testimony? In the court of law, if two or more witnesses give testimonies that contradict each other, the case could be thrown out altogether. Imagine what the world must think if they see the witness of thousands of Christians, and those Christians are all contradicting each other. This lack of unity causes many people to have thrown out the case for Christ.

How does the Catholic Church provide oneness or unity in its testimony? Each person's calling in life is to know, love and serve God. Our knowledge, love and service is our greatest testimony. One of the four marks of the Church is that we are "one". We are one in our knowledge, one in authentic love and one in true service of God. Our common doctrine helps us to know God. Our common liturgy, sacraments and prayer helps us to love God. Our common morals and imitation of the Life of Christ helps us to serve God.

What gives us the strength to be His witnesses and to give testimony? It is only through the Holy Spirit that we are able to be His witnesses and give testimony. The Holy Spirit is given at Baptism and strengthened in Confirmation. "The sacrament of confirmation strengthens the baptized and obliges them more firmly to be witnesses of Christ by word and deed and to spread and defend the faith."[24] This quote from the Code of Canon Law says it all. Our witness must be in word and deed. We must be conscience of our words and deeds and ask if we are giving witness to Christ. This is why at the Mass we pray, "...that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do..."[25] Our goal is to spread and defend the faith, both of which are vital in our time and in every moment of time.

who helped give this testimony as well. After His Resurrection and Ascension, it was His Apostles who gave testimony. Even today, we see those who question if Jesus was truly the Son of God. We see those who attack Christians, but we can never be afraid to bring the Gospel to all we meet.

[\[See Also Link to Liturgy Lesson: You will be my witnesses\]](#)

Where do we see Jesus and our faith being put on trial? And for what do we see Jesus and our faith being put on trial? Where have we personally been put “on trial” because of our belief in Jesus Christ?

What if someone gives false testimony? Unfortunately, there are many people who do not share in the fullness of truth. For many of them, it is purely out of ignorance. Servant of God, Archbishop Fulton Sheen, once said, “There are not one hundred people in the United States who hate The Catholic Church, but there are millions who hate what they wrongly perceive the Catholic Church to be.”[22] There is only one testimony because there can only be one truth. With the Holy Spirit, the Church has been led to give the true testimony of Jesus Christ. We must be willing to instruct the ignorant, in kindness and in generosity, through our testimony.

How do we give testimony? To give testimony is to bring the light and faith in Jesus Christ just as Saint John the Baptist did. We are all called to bring joy, peace and happiness to all we meet. We do this by our life; we show it in our thoughts, words and actions everyday throughout our whole lives. We must continue to study and learn from those who have passed on the testimony through the Scriptures, the Church Fathers and the Magisterium. We must also be “witnesses” as Jesus commanded His Apostles in the Acts of the Apostles. The translation for “witness” in the Book of Acts means, “martyr”, and while we may not be killed for our faith, we must be willing to die to ourselves and face a public death in order to bring testimony of the fullness of truth to the darkness of the world. We also give testimony to Christ through our oneness. The Sacraments “contribute in the greatest way to establish, strengthen, and manifest ecclesiastical communion.”[23] The fact that we all prepare, receive and live a Sacramental life gives testimony to Christ and His Church.

VIDEO – Champions of Faith Extended – POP CULTURE

was the light of the human race...”[12]. As true man, Jesus is born of the Virgin Mary and therefore being born in time and as a human, taking on flesh, He can now call all of humanity His brothers and sisters.

It is only because God became man that we are now able to share in the Father’s love and can truly call God, “Our Father.” This is why at Mass the priest says, “At the Savior’s command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:”[13] We only dare to do this because Jesus Christ is God, and became man, we are now able to call God, Father and to call Jesus our brother. We are also now able to call others “brothers and sisters” in Christ Jesus. This is why in the Penitential Act of the Mass, the priest will say, “Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.”[14] The congregation then says, “I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters...”[15] We should give more thought to these words at Mass. We should remind ourselves why it is that we are brothers and sisters with one another and why we are able to address God as “Our Father”. Both of these are only a possibility because God became flesh. It is for this reason that Saint John Baptist was telling people that someone would come who would be greater than himself. Saint John the Baptist was not able to make all of humanity “brothers and sisters” nor was he able to unite humanity to God, enabling them to cry out “Our Father”.

It is Christ that brings us to glory. How glorious to call God “Father” and Jesus “Brother”. “For it was fitting that he, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the leader to their salvation perfect through suffering. He who consecrates and those who are being consecrated all have one origin. Therefore, he is not ashamed to call them ‘brothers,’ saying: ‘I will proclaim your name to my brothers, in the midst of the assembly I will praise you’”[16]

We must also remember that our title as “brothers” gives us a type of hierarchy and humility. This title reminds us that we are human and Jesus, Our Lord and Master, is human and is God. We can never lift up another “brother or sister” giving them a “godlike” status. Pagans have done so, and in our culture we do it as well when we elevate celebrities and/or athletes to the status of a god. “As for you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’ You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers.”[17] Even after Jesus

is resurrected from the dead, He calls us brothers. “Do not be afraid. God tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.” His Resurrection proves that He is the Son of God, and the His words after the Resurrection give testimony that we remain His brothers as He sits at the right hand of the Father, now by Grace, “Our Father”.

How do we get to call God “Father” and Jesus “Brother”? “If any man be outside the Church he will be excluded from the number of sons, and will not have God for Father since he has not the Church for mother.”[18] Saint Cyprian was the first to state the necessity of the Church as Mother when he said, “He can no longer have God for his Father who has not the Church for his mother.” It is through the Church that we get to call God “Father” and Jesus “Brother”.

How is the Church our Mother? The Church is the “Bride of Christ”. They were married and unified together at Calvary and through His Resurrection. The Church is the means by which all are able to become sons and daughters of Christ. The Church is where we are born again in Baptism. “Baptism, the gateway to the sacraments and necessary for salvation...Through baptism men and women are freed from sin, are reborn as children of God, and, configured to Christ by an indelible character, are incorporated into the Church.”[19] The Church is like a womb for the soul. The Church in her Sacraments sustains the life of souls. Once the soul is born (Baptism) it needs to be strengthened or made firm (Confirmation) and needs to be nourished (Eucharist). This soul, when sick needs to be healed (Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick). The soul, just like a child, needs to learn what its purpose is. What will it do when it grows up? How will it serve God and others? (Marriage and Holy Orders). This soul is not alone; it has the Church as its Mother and Mary as its Mother, since she is the Mother of the Church. It has God as its Father. It has Jesus, and all those who lived the Life of Christ, the Saints, as its siblings.

Jesus on Trial – Lesson and Discussion

“He was not the light, but came to testify to the light.”

In the Gospel Reading, we read about how Saint John the Baptist was to give “testimony” to Jesus Christ as the Messiah. When we hear the word testimony, we think of someone who is on trial, as the courts hear testimony for or against someone’s case. Jesus was on trial His whole life, from His birth till his

death.

Who else gave testimony? Besides Saint John the Baptist, all those who encountered Jesus gave testimony, from the Samaritan woman, to the healed leper, the crowds who heard and saw His miracles, the Spirit, and His disciples.

VIDEO – Who Is Jesus? NYC Street Survey – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 2:38

<http://youtu.be/johNLhZ5y48>

What if we fail to give testimony to Jesus? There is a grave danger if we do not speak about Jesus correctly and imitate Him in our life. If we do not share Jesus with the world, the world will not know Him. If we share misinformation about Him, people might even reject Christ and God altogether. Why is it that some of the people in this video say the things that they do about Jesus. **Do any of the statements on the clips offend you? Why?** They might be offensive to us because we know they are false testimonies, and a false testimony hurts. It is like gossip that destroys a person’s character, and in this case it is the character of Christ.

To what did they give testimony? John the Baptist was “to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.”[20] We are all called to testify that Jesus is the Messiah, the Anointed One. Jesus is the one who was promised to come and bring salvation to the whole world. Our life is to be a testimony to the Life of Christ. When our life is not a testimony to the Life of Christ we have failed to testify to the Light and thus keep our self and others by our poor example in the dark. “G.K. Chesterton once said that the best argument against Christianity is Christians. That is certainly true of Catholicism. Pope John Paul II, putting it politely, says, ‘The Catholic Church does not forget that many among her members cause God’s plan to be discernible only with difficulty.’ (*Ut Unum Sint*, 11). But is that really an argument against the truth of the faith? I don’t see how. To argue that Catholicism is untrue because it doesn’t transform the lives of those who don’t practice it, is like arguing that aspirin doesn’t work because it doesn’t relieve the headaches of those who don’t take it.”[21]

Why was Jesus constantly on trial? Jesus is still being held on trial. During His life on earth, Jesus had to prove to others that He was truly the Son of God. There were people during His life