

3rd Sunday of Advent
W
Gaudete Sunday
December 12, 2021

1st Reading: **Zephaniah 3:14 – 18a.**

God is with us in our midst.

Psalm: **Isaiah 12:2 – 3, 4, 5 – 6.**

Cry out with joy and gladness; for God is among us.

2nd Reading: **Philippians 4:4 - 7**

Always rejoice in the lord because God is nearby.

Gospel: **Luke 3:10 – 18.**

God's way is prepared by the Baptist and now us.

God is good, **All the time**; All the time, **God is good**.

We lit our 3rd candle today, the rose one. We have reached the halfway point of our preparation time: certainly, a great reason to rejoice, but not our only one. In ancient times, back when I was kid, this was known as “Gaudete Sunday.” That title came from the first word of the Latin collect (opening prayer). Our readings today certainly lead us in this direction as well: rejoice, be glad and sing it out, maybe even dance a little down the aisle.

The prophet Zephaniah tells us to sing, to raise the rafters if you will, because our God is among us singing God’s song which has just two notes justice and peace, it’s a duet. We sing about this with our Christmas of carols; but God’s song is heard whenever we regain the duet of justice and peace, and we need to ask ourselves how do we contribute/participate in God’s song? Rejoice, be glad and sing it out, maybe even dance a bit.

St. Paul reminds us that God is with us and this is cause for celebration and great joy. Do we believe it? If I were to ask you to make a list of your priorities, would God be on the top? In the top 5? God is with us, rejoice, be glad, sing it out. Sing the song and sing it loud.

Luke's Gospel introduces us to Jesus' cousin, John, the singer God placed in our world to prepare the way. I hear the song from *Godspell*, "Prepare the way of the Lord." All the different components of Jewish life are questioning him asking "what is it we are to do now?" John is very clear with each of them and us: "if you have 2 coats give 1 away," do not extort others, don't shakedown or blackmail, don't be arrogant or use your privilege and power to put others down. He was so convincing they were sure he was the Messiah; but he set them straight there as well. He was only the stagehand, or the second fiddle if you like, the lead singer who would clean house was coming and he will change us from the inside out. Come sing the song, sing it twice, sing it loud, God loves us and won't leave us alone. Certainly, a cause to rejoice and sing and dance.

Fr. Paul really got me thinking when he quoted Ralph Abernathy, "I do not know what the future holds, but I know who holds the future." As Dietrick Bonhoeffer says that the one who celebrates Christmas correctly is the one "whoever lays down all power, all honor, all reputation, all vanity, all arrogance, all individualism beside the manger." WE all need to prepare ourselves to be mother's of God. We need to do the internal housekeeping to become a "team" player. To help us accept our role in the body of Christ, the choir that sings God's duet in our world. Rejoice, sing the song, our king is coming, rejoice.

What is it that brings me joy? On this Gaudete Sunday? Our Lady of Guadalupe who chose a poor, humble person in Juan Diego to sing God's duet. Normally celebrated on December 12th when it is not Gaudete Sunday. Lillie's baptism later this morning, she was a real prayer warrior in my time of need a year ago. Let's all work on God's duet as we move forward this Advent. "let us cry out with joy and gladness; for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel!"

God is good. All the time. All the time. God is good.

