

Rejoice and Be the Light

1st Reading: Is 61:1-2A, 10-11

2nd Reading: 1 Thes 5:16-24

Gospel: Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

GROW: The prophet's words in the Book of Isaiah are bursting with hope: "The Lord ... has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the Lord." As we enter the third week of Advent, these words may resonate more deeply for many of us as we look back on 2020. We know that for many of the world's people, struggle can be an everyday reality; however, after this year marked by pandemic, mourning, racial injustice, and mounting unemployment, the prophet's hope-filled words may hit home more acutely. Regardless of what 2020 has been like for us, Advent is a reminder that we have reason for hope: in Emmanuel, God with us. Let us prepare our hearts and our minds for Christ's coming through prayer, confident that the Lord will fulfill the promises of the prophet.

GO: Light! In some parts of the country like Alaska, and even some parts of the world, in December people do not see nearly enough of light. Some folks purchase a "happy lamp" and vow to "up" their vitamin D intake. Perhaps that is why I was taken by the line in today's Gospel describing John the Baptist: "He came ... to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him." As predicted by John the Baptist and the prophet, Christ came to dwell among us, and remains within us through the Eucharist and the working of the Holy Spirit. We, like John the Baptist, can "testify to the light" by sharing Christ's presence through our witness to others.

WITNESS: Last week we focused on making God's kindness visible through our words and actions toward the people with whom we live and interact regularly; this week, let our witness focus on testifying to the light in our digital presence and encounters. Make your words be those that foster hope and promise rather than incite division.

St. Paul enjoins us in today's second reading to "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." Make these words a part of your daily life during these remaining days of Advent.

God bless you.

--Fr. Anthony Ahamefule
Parish Priest