

Third Sunday of Advent

13 December 2020

There is one among you whom you do not recognize. (John 1:26)

Today is Gaudete Sunday, or “Pink Candle” Sunday, as some children call it. It’s a day for rejoicing, to rejoice “without ceasing” and “in all circumstances,” St. Paul tells us (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18). But why rejoice today? Because Jesus is near!

In today’s Gospel, some Jewish leaders are interrogating John the Baptist about who he is. John replies that he isn’t the Christ who would come to save Israel. He is merely testifying to him, proclaiming, “Make straight the way for the Lord” (John 1:23). But then he turns the conversation toward them. “There is one among you,” John says, “whom you do not recognize” (1:26). *He* is the Messiah. He is so holy that John wouldn’t even untie his sandal. John hoped that they would rejoice that the Messiah was near—but these men couldn’t see him.



Jesus is near to us too, but sometimes we have trouble recognizing him. In the flurry of our Christmas preparations. In our grieving over a deceased loved one. In our worries about the future. Our faith tells us that Jesus is there, but it feels hard to sense his presence in our midst. Even John had trouble: “I did not know him,” he says later, but “now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God” (John 1:33, 34).

So who makes the difference? The Holy Spirit. Jesus calls him the “Spirit of truth” who guides us to all truth (John 16:13). The Spirit is the One who makes Jesus present to us and helps us understand who he is. John tried to show his questioners that they were missing something important. Similarly, the Spirit can open our eyes so that we don’t miss seeing Jesus present in our lives.

Jesus isn’t hiding; he gave us the Spirit so that everyone can know him. And that’s a reason to rejoice.

“Open my eyes, Holy Spirit. Help me to recognize Jesus today.”

Called to Serve,

~Deacon Mark Race, Administrator

Safeguard the Children VIRTUS Sessions

The Office of Safeguard the Children is proud to sponsor a series of VIRTUS® Protecting God's Children Zoom Sessions during December 2020/January 2021. These sessions are for Clergy, staff, and essential volunteers. Those whose current VIRTUS® certificate has expired and need to take Keeping the Promise Alive or are new to their position have never taken the Protecting God's Children training. If you want to register for a session, please contact Felecia Johns at 323.291.1136 (office) or 323.600.5159 (cell) for more details.

Did You Know?

Gifts and toys should inspire joy, not cause injuries.

Avoid safety hazards while gifting with these tips from [the American Academy of Pediatrics](#) and the [US Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) : Toys are age-rated for safety, not for children's intellect and physical ability, so be sure to choose toys in the correct age range; choose toys for children under 3 that do not have small parts that could be choking hazards; for children under 10, avoid toys that must be plugged into an electrical outlet; be cautious about toys that have [button batteries or magnets](#) , which can be harmful or fatal if swallowed; and when giving scooters and other riding toys, give the gift of appropriate safety gear, too; helmets should be worn at all times and they should be sized to fit. For more information, visit <https://www.nsc.org/home-safety/tools-resources/seasonal-safety/winter/holiday>

Thank you

The beautiful **flowers** on the altar were donated by *Cynthia Richardson* in loving memory of her father **MILTON KEYS**. If you would like to donate flowers, please call the rectory for more details.

Stewardship Thought

*“Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” – 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16 - 18*

This scripture reading sums up Stewardship. “Rejoice always” means place your trust in God; He will provide all that you need. “Pray constantly” means prayer should be a running conversation with God throughout the whole day, every day. “Give thanks in all circumstances” means even in bad situations, thank God. Suffering a little bit helps build empathy for others in similar situations and shows our dependence on God.

Weekly Offering for December 6, 2020

\$15,415.00 Tithe and Offering

Pray for the Sick

LaVerne Agnew, Brian Argusta, Vivian Burgess, Brownie Cain, Alberto Casanova, Christopher Chestnut, Sister Ann Paul Clare, Edward Cousin, Juanita Davis, Carolyn Didney, Beverly Colvin-Dorsey, Cynthia Fortier, Michael Frierson, Sherie Frierson-Chenier, Avis Gibbs, Barbara Harris, Darren Harris, Aaron Katz, Briana Katz, Barbara Lagarde, Irwin Lagarde, Mercedes LeBlanc, Vylfred Manor, Dorothy Okoye, Sally Price, Wiley Pugh, Andrea Raggette, Dana Semien, Dudley Semien, Mike Simon, Joan Spencer, Annie Starks, Leila Thomas, Iris Turner, Mabel Walton, William Warrior, and Alice Williams.