

Third Sunday of Advent

GOD'S JOY, OUR JOY

Zephaniah's description of God in today's first reading is quite striking. It is remarkable that after most of the book of Zephaniah paints a dark picture of God's judgment on the "Day of the Lord," we see God singing with joy, partying and celebrating, bursting with love for the Chosen People. Such is God's delight in us human beings.

In the scriptures, there seem to be two kinds of moments when God is especially delighted. First, during creation, when God creates something beautiful: not only the whole universe, but also individual human persons, made in God's image. Second, after times of separation, when God celebrates the restoration of intimacy with God's beloved.

As Paul writes to the Church in Philippi, those on the path of faith might somehow get swept up in God's joy. Because in Christ and through the Holy Spirit, God continually speaks and listens to those in united in faith. We participate in God's delight in creation when we are creative ourselves, when we add to the world's beauty. We also participate when we join in the work of reconciliation and act to heal human divisions and restore relationships.

BEGIN WHERE YOU ARE

In today's Gospel, those who listened to John the Baptist's prophetic preaching were quite troubled, and moved to ask "What should we do?" Although John had given dire warnings about what might happen if they did not sincerely repent, he did not suggest drastic actions. He recommended that people begin where they are, and work within their daily circumstances. Share generously. Treat people fairly. Be content with what you have. These were perhaps small steps turning them, in God's time, toward deeper change.

A first step for us might be to learn, however slowly, to listen to God speaking within the context of our lives. We can respond with small concrete actions and perhaps learn what God wishes to say through them. We can then listen anew for the next step.

Today's Readings: Zep 3:14-18a; Is 12:2-3, 4, 5-6; Phil 4:4-7; Lk 3:10-18

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LA ALEGRÍA DE DIOS, NUESTRA ALEGRÍA

En la primera lectura, la descripción que Sofonías hace de Dios es bastante sorprendente. Es notable que después de que la mayor parte del libro de Sofonías describa una imagen oscura del juicio de Dios en el "Día del Señor", vemos a Dios cantando alegremente, festejando y celebrando, lleno de amor por el Pueblo Elegido. Tal es el deleite de Dios en nosotros los seres humanos.

En las Escrituras, parece que hay dos tipos de momentos cuando Dios está especialmente feliz. Primero, durante la creación, cuando Dios crea algo hermoso: no solo el universo entero, sino también a cada uno de los seres humanos, hechos a imagen y semejanza de Dios. Segundo, después de los tiempos de separación, cuando Dios celebra la restauración con la intimidad del amado de Dios.

Así como Pablo escribe a la iglesia de Filipo, aquellas personas en el camino de la fe podrían de alguna manera ser arrasadas por el gozo de Dios. Porque en Cristo y por medio del Espíritu Santo, Dios continuamente habla y escucha a quienes están unidos en la fe. Participamos de la alegría de Dios en la creación cuando somos creativos nosotros mismos, cuando aportamos a la belleza del mundo. También participamos cuando nos alegramos en el trabajo de la reconciliación y obramos para sanar las divisiones entre personas y restauramos las relaciones humanas.

EMPIEZA DONDE ESTÁS

En el Evangelio de hoy, aquellas personas que escuchan la predicación profética de Juan el Bautista estaban bastante preocupados y preguntaron "¿Qué debemos hacer?" Aunque Juan ya había advertido acerca de lo que podría pasar si no se arrepentían sinceramente, él no sugirió acciones drásticas. Él recomendó que las personas empezaran donde estaban, y trabajaran dentro de sus circunstancias diarias. Compartir generosamente. Tratar a las personas justamente. Contentarse con lo que se tiene. Estos fueron quizá pequeños pasos que los convirtieron, en el tiempo de Dios, hacia un cambio más profundo.

Un primer paso para nosotros podría ser aprender, aunque sea lentamente, a escuchar que Dios nos habla en aquello que ocurre en nuestras vidas. Podemos responder con pequeñas acciones concretas y quizá aprender lo que Dios desea decir por medio de ellas. Entonces podemos escuchar el siguiente paso.

Lecturas de hoy: Sof 3:14-18a; Is 12:2-3, 4, 5-6; Flp 4:4-7; Lc 3:10-18 Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co., Inc.



Please Pray for the Sick

Prayer List Updates



Francisco Angel Perales	Jesse Diaz	Aurora Perez
Anselmo A. Perales	John Ruiz	Frances Lozano
Mario Andres Perales	Pastor Stuart Julec	Alfredo M. Moreno
Martha Lucy Vega & Children	Victoria Cepeda	Celina Herrera
Jesse Vega	Mario Moreno	Yolanda Verastegui
Jesse Mario Vega	Arturo M. Moreno	Amy Gomez
Orlando L. Vega & Children	Annmarié Vasquez	Virginia & Jose Ponce, Jr.
Roxsandra Gallardo	Roland Martinez, Sr.	Daniel Rogers
Paul Sifuentes	Roland Martinez, Jr.	Santos Aguilar
Lucy Clare Treviño	Olivia Ibarra	Olivia Lopez
David Santoyo	Baby Violet Flores	Hortencia Rodriguez
Lupita Gomez	Connie Flores	San Juanita Sanchez
Irene Perez	Philip Saldaña	Douglas Montey
Katelynn Rae Ramirez	Linda Davila	Delia Riojas
Louie & Estefana Reyes	Elva Benavides	Cecilia Espinoza
Frances Ramirez	Marco Mermea	Estela De La Vega
Alex Hernandez	Robert Campos	Diana Ledesma
	Petra P. Chavez	Suzanne Gutierrez
	Sister Louise - OLLU	

We thank God for the healing of so many sick parishioners. Please be courteous and call the Parish Office if your loved one is no longer suffering or sick. Thank you.

YOUR STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE

December 15 & 16, 2018

5:00 PM	-\$1,301.00	(116)
8:00 AM	-\$ 525.50	(078)
10:00 AM	-\$1,058.00	(137)
12:00 NOON	-\$ 912.00	(228)
Children's Basket	-\$ 16.15	
School Mass	-\$ 52.08	
Immaculate Conception	-\$ 356.00	
Retirement Fund for Religious	-\$ 760.55	2nd Collection
2018 Gift of Giving	-\$ 240.91	
Mail In	-\$ 477.00	
TOTAL	- \$5,699.19	

2018 GIFT OF GIVING

Contributions 12/15-16, 2018	\$ 240.91
RUNNING BALANCE TOTAL	\$17,296.19

Mass Intentions FOR THE WEEK

Saturday, December 15

5:00 p.m. † Dolores Verastegui - Hector & Diana
† Ignacio & Beatrice V. Gomez - Virginia Valdez
† Eusebio Arocha - Family
† Tillie Hernandez - Mary
Gift of Life Arturo Parra - Family

Sunday, December 16

8:00 a.m. † Guadalupe Treviño - Nora Treviño
† Juan Silva - Familia
† Hilda Valdez - Gloria
10:00 a.m. † Margaret & † Martin Burrell - Daughter
† Daniel C. Arzola - Family
† Gregorio Ramirez - Family
† Susie Meza - Robert & Rosie Gallegos
† Nico Gutierrez - Friend
12:00 p.m. For All Holy Souls in Purgatory

Monday, December 17

12:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 18

12:00 p.m. † Luis Duran, Sr. - Family

Wednesday, December 19

8:15 a.m. † Juanita e. Castillo - Family
† Murray Eby - Daughter
Gift of Life Coach Robertson

Thursday, December 20

12:00 p.m. † Lucy Hermosa Villarreal

Friday, December 21

12:00 p.m. † Baby Brennan Ramirez

Saturday, December 22

5:00 p.m. † Richard Muñoz - Muñoz Family
† Tillie Hernandez - Mary
† Arturo F. Salinas - Family
† Leticia Ann Salinas - Family
† David Solis - Thomas & Olga Diaz

Sunday, December 23

8:00 a.m. † Guadalupe Treviño - Nora Treviño
† Victor Garcia - Willie Garcia
10:00 a.m. † Eloy Alvarado - Family
† Daniel C. Arzola - Family
† Ryan Sanchez - Sanchez Family
† Albert Sr. & Albert Jr. - Family
12:00 p.m. For the People of our Parish Community

In Loving Memory

We pray for the souls of our dearly departed who have passed from our parish community:



Sanctuary Light

† Ignacio & Beatrice V. Gomez



From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Parishioners:

Much appreciation and thanks is given to each and every one of you who participated at Our Lady of Guadalupe celebration and also attended the Christmas concert. I appreciate each choir and their director: Martha Hidalgo, Itza Zentella, Roy Sanchez, Elida Gonzales and Javier Saucedo. A special thanks to Roy Sanchez for spearheading the concert and the students from our school for participating.

We are preparing for the second coming of the Lord. Jesus Christ who was born in Bethlehem of Judea. He became a man and took our human condition in order for us to be saved. He died on the cross and gave us life everlasting. He promised us to return and take us all home to be with his Father, our Father, forever. As we prepare for Christmas, these next couple of weeks, let us anticipate that second coming of the Lord in our lives. May His presence transform us and make us better people. May His presence also bring us together as the people of God rooted in love, kindness, forgiveness and compassion. We pray that the kingship of Jesus Christ of humility, understanding, service, acceptance, mercy and love characterize this Advent Season.

Christmas Gift of Giving is open to families or anyone in need of assistance this Christmas. Feel free to acquire the application form after each mass in the foyer or speak to me in person for more information. You may also refer a family with children that may benefit from this Christmas Gift of Giving. I thank each one of you for your generosity and continued support for the needy of our community.

I am proud to announce to you that we have secured three major projects in our community for the purpose of enhancing the infrastructure of our Church. The projects are: 1) new ramp in the formation house, 2) eight video cameras surrounding the perimeters and interior of the church and 3) interior acoustical panels. The ramps will facilitate the entrance to the Formation House especially for those struggling to climb the stairs. The cameras will improve the security of our property and make us safer. The acoustical panels will have better control of the sound and allow the community to hear the Word of God better. We hope these additional projects will improve the infrastructure of our community and expect them completed by Christmas. Thank you for your generosity in accomplishing these projects.

May God bless you always,



Father Fidèle Okitembo Dikete, Pastor
fr.fidele@stjohnberchmans.com

Announcements

www.stjohnberchmans.com

TODAY'S READINGS

First Reading - Your God will sing joyfully because of you, as one sings at festivals (Zephaniah 3:14-18).

Psalm - Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel (Isaiah 12:6).

Second Reading - Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! (Phil 4:4-7).

Gospel - Whoever who has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. Whoever has food should do likewise (Luke 3:10-18). The English translation of the Psalm Responses from *Lectionary for Mass* © 1969, 1981, 1997, International Commission on English in the Liturgy

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Mon: Gn 49:2, 8-10; Ps 72:1-4ab, 7-8, 17; Mt 1:1-17
Tue: Jer 23:5-8; Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19; Mt 1:18-25
Wed: Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a; Ps 71:3-6, 16-17; Lk 1:5-25
Thu: Is 7:10-14; Ps 24:1-6; Lk 1:26-38
Fri: Sg 2:8-14; Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21; Lk 1:39-45
Sat: 1 Sm 1:24-28; 1 Sm 2:1, 4-8; Lk 1:46-56
Sun: Mi 5:1-4; Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19; Heb 10:5-10; Lk 1:39-45

Events of the Week ~ December 16 - 23, 2018

Sunday, December 16

7:30 a.m. Divine Mercy - Church
8:00 a.m. **Spanish Mass** - Church
CCD BAKED GOODS & TACO SALE AFTER MASSES
10:00 a.m. **Mass** - Church
12:00 p.m. **Mass** - Church

Monday, December 17

12:00 p.m. **Communion Service** - Chapel

Tuesday, December 18

12:00 p.m. **Mass** - Chapel
6:00 p.m. Christmas Play - Church

Wednesday, December 19

8:15 a.m. **Children's Mass** - Church
9:15 a.m. Rosary Makers - Offsite
6:00 p.m. Christmas Play - Church

Thursday, December 20

12:00 a.m. **Mass** - Chapel
6:00 p.m. Christmas Play - Church
7:00 p.m. Youth Ministry - Formation House

Friday, December 21

12:00 p.m. **Mass** - Chapel
7:00 p.m. Posada Ceremony - Church

Saturday, December 22

5:00 p.m. **Mass** - Church

Sunday, December 23

7:30 a.m. Divine Mercy - Church
8:00 a.m. **Spanish Mass** - Church
10:00 a.m. **Mass** - Church
12:00 p.m. **Mass** - Church



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2018
9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Please join us every Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in our Chapel. Exposition of the Holy Eucharist is the REAL presence of our Lord and Savior. Just as you can't be exposed to the sun without receiving it's rays, neither can you come to Jesus exposed in the Blessed Sacrament without receiving the divine rays of His Grace, Love and Peace.

CHURCH CLEANING MINISTRY

Our parish is always in need of a few good hands every Saturday morning to help us clean our beautiful church. It takes a lot of work and assistance from many individuals to prepare our church for Mass. We thank you for your commitment to our place of worship and to our community.

Cleaning Schedule of Ministries

December 22, 2018 - Eucharist Ministers/Lectors

AS YOU SET YOUR GOALS FOR 2019 REMEMBER:

Commit
to the Lord
whatever you do,
and all your **Plans**
will **Succeed.**
Prov. 16:3

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Sunday: Third Sunday of Advent;
Las Posadas begins
Tuesday: International Migrants Day
Friday: St. Peter Canisius; Winter begins



BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

All requests must be sent by email to osantoyo1104@gmail.com and will be finalized for approval by Father Fidele. We ask that you submit your requests at least two (2) weeks in advance for placement in the bulletin.



NEW TO OUR PARISH AND WANT TO REGISTER AS A NEW PARISHIONER?

If you are interested in registering as a new parishioner at St. John Berchmans Church, please contact our Parish Office at 210-434-3247 to fill out a registration form.

Announcements

www.stjohnberchmans.com



GAUDETE SUNDAY

The Third Sunday of Advent is called Gaudete Sunday. Today we light the pink candle on the Advent wreath (hence the 'pink candle' Sunday) This time is marked by the third candle of our Advent wreath, which is rose colored. Rose vestments are worn to emphasize our joy that Christmas is near.

Gaudete means "rejoice" in Latin. This day reminds us of the joy that is to come, and serves, amid this season of penance, as a kind of 'break' when we recall the hope we have because of the coming of Our Lord Jesus.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

We will be taking orders for poinsettias through Thursday, December 20. If you would like to order a Christmas Poinsettia in memory of your loved one, please call the Parish Office at 210-434-3247 and ask for Mrs. Rosa Moreno. The altar will be decorated with the poinsettias and they may be picked up in the office after Christmas. The cost per poinsettia is \$10.00. Thank you!



ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN ANTONIO OUTREACHING TO VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE BY CLERGY AND/OR OTHER CHURCH PERSONNEL

Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller, MSPS, and the staff of the Archdiocese are committed to assisting in the healing process for victims and survivors of sexual abuse by clergy or church personnel. If you or someone you know, has been a victim of such abuse and is in need of services, call the Office of Victims Assistance and Safe Environment (OVASE) at 210-734-7786 or toll free 988-700-1888.

UPCOMING IMPORTANT CHURCH EVENTS:

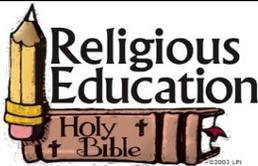
Friday, December 21, 2018 - Posada Ceremony in Church - 7:00 p.m. - Reception to follow

Monday, December 24, 2018 - Children's Mass (English) 6:00 p.m.

Christmas Carols 11:00 p.m.

Bilingual Mass - 12 Midnight

Tuesday, December 25, 2018 - Nativity of the Lord - Bilingual Mass - 10:00 a.m.



REMINDER TO ALL PARENTS AND STUDENTS

Due to our Christmas break there will be **no** Religious Education classes held on **Sunday, December 23 and Sunday, December 30, 2018.**

Classes will resume on Sunday, January 6, 2019!

***"The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst
you have no further misfortune to fear".— Zephaniah 3:15b***



REJOICE!

Today has traditionally been called "Gaudete Sunday." The Latin tag is derived from Paul's appeal in the second reading to "rejoice always in the Lord," and the Latin Mass text based on that reading. The irony and paradox of this Christian joy is underlined by the fact that Paul wrote those words in prison. But from there he could see the progress of God's work.

Is it obvious to us? We feel that this is not the time for joy when there is so much suffering and moral evil. It is interesting, then, that the first reading is from the prophet Zephaniah, who is almost exclusively concerned with gloomy visions of Judgment Day. Today the Church selects the only optimistic text in Zephaniah, in which the prophet has been touched by the spirit of joy.

This, we are assured on all sides, is "the season of joy." Let us recapture that feeling of joy in our lives and reflect it to those who are joyless. Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Knowing that God is in our midst, how can I answer the questions from the Gospel: "What should I do?"