

# Read

Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10

Psalm 146:6-7, 8-9,  
9-10

James 5:7-10

Matthew 11:2-11

## LIVING THE WORD

### Third Sunday of Advent

December 15, 2019



#### REFLECTION

When the disciples of John the Baptist asked Jesus, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?" they probably hoped for a yes or no answer (Matthew 11:3). While their question was pretty straightforward, Jesus' response is not so easily understood. Instead, Jesus invites John's disciples to reflect on the things that they have seen and heard.

On this Third Sunday of Advent, we celebrate Gaudete Sunday, a day of great rejoicing (the word *gaudete* is Latin for "rejoice"). Now more than half-way through Advent we take a moment to celebrate and rejoice in what we have seen and heard. Like John's disciples, we have experienced the incredible works of the Lord. We see and hear dozens of instances of joy, comfort, health, and well-being every day. The Lord is no longer just coming soon. The Lord is close at hand! We have many reasons to rejoice!



#### ACTION

Create a Gaudete prayer table for home to celebrate this special point in the Advent season. First, cover a small table with a piece of rose-colored fabric (the color of the day may be violet or rose). Then, create an Advent wreath with three violet candles and one rose candle. Finally, fill the table with items or symbols of the things that cause you to rejoice. Invite your friends and family members to add items to the prayer table, as well. For one week, gather at the Gaudete table once a day to share your reasons for rejoicing with each other. Rejoice in the companionship of family and friends. Rejoice in the blessings and gifts you enjoy. Rejoice that the Lord is near!



**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to you, O Israel.**

#### ? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How do you rejoice in God each day?
- ❖ What are some things that may prevent you from fully rejoicing during this Advent season?



December 15, 2019

## THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

### LECTIONARY #7A

Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10

Psalm 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10

James 5:7-10

Matthew 11:2-11

## Prepare for the Word

*The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.*

### Leader's Context

The imprisoned John sent disciples to ascertain the identity of Jesus, to see if he was the "one who is to come" (Matthew 11:3). Jesus' identity was clear to John, who learned of Jesus' great works; John's identity was clear to Jesus, who told that John was the messenger from Isaiah. We too are called to know our own identities; that is, know who we are in Jesus.

**Q FOCUS:** *We are claimed by Christ and find our identity in him.*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

This week we observe St. Peter Canisius, a saint from the Middle Ages who was committed to the renewal of the Church (December 21, optional memorial). May all young Christians be committed to the growing and maturing of faith, and answering God's call to future vocations.

### Church Teaching Connection

"The church, in Christ, is a sacrament—a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of the unity of the entire human race" (*Lumen gentium*, 1).

## Hear the Word

*Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.*

### Gospel Acclamation

*Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.*

Alleluia, alleluia.

### Gospel

Matthew 11:2-11

**Reader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

*All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.*

When John the Baptist heard in prison of the works of the Christ, he sent his disciples to Jesus with this question, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?" Jesus said to them in reply, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them. And blessed is the one who takes no offense at me."

As they were going off, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John, "What did you go out to the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? Then what did you go out to see? Someone dressed in fine clothing? Those who wear fine clothing are in royal palaces. Then why did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written: / *Behold, I am sending*

*my messenger ahead of you; / he will prepare your way before you. / Amen, I say to you, among those born of women there has been none greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."*

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Everyone may be seated.*

## Reflect on the Word

*When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:*

Before John was imprisoned he had a vibrant ministry—we heard it proclaimed at Mass last week. John had a following of disciples, and they were people who listened carefully to John and trusted his leadership. While in prison, John was still in contact with his disciples, so sent them to question Jesus about his identity—they asked, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?” (Matthew 11:3) Instead of a direct answer, Jesus gave the disciples a list of miracles he was performing and they reported back to their imprisoned leader. This list of miracles told John that, without a doubt, Jesus was the one from God for whom they had been waiting. Jesus told the crowds that John was more than a prophet, that he was sent to prepare the way, and he was the “messenger” from Isaiah.

John, like any Jewish man of his time, would have been keenly aware that God had promised to send a Messiah. The world ached for God's son to arrive on the Earth, even if they did not yet know for whom they ached. A holy man who would have had been profoundly aware of what Jesus' abilities meant, John's eyes were open and searching for the Messiah.

John clearly saw in Jesus his identity as the Christ. In seeing this identity, John beheld God's own son, coming to the Earth as God's promise to

humanity. He could see that through his miracles Jesus was making wrongs right again by making the blind see, healing lepers, making the paralyzed walk and the deaf hear. John heard that the poor were hearing the “Good News” that Jesus could share with them. In this ministry, John saw Jesus doing things so miraculous that only one sent by God could perform them.

Looking back through Scripture we too can see Jesus' identity emerging as the Christ, the holy one of God, the one who is to come. Miracles happen—the people see the sick healed of their ills, and people's bodies are restored to normal function. Disciples are gathered, apostles called, and they continue to witness Jesus' miracles. As time progresses in the Gospels, Jesus' disciples become aware of who he is too, and they identify him, just as John identified him.

The disciples identified Jesus, and Jesus identified and claimed us. Our Lord claimed us as his own. We find our identity in Jesus Christ. Our identities are in Christ by virtue of our baptisms; in that sacrament we begin our initiation into the Church.

### ► What does that mean for us?

It means that we live by God's grace, we live under his love and within his order, and it means that we are called to be like him. Like Jesus we are called to be hope for the hopeless. We are called to show God's love to others. Living our lives in service to our fellow humans, we are meant to love and care for all the people in our world.

## Wrapping It Up

*Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the “Church Teaching Connection” on page 88.*

**What does it mean to understand ourselves through Christ? Through what lenses do you view yourself?**

**Most students in your group received baptism as infants. What are the ways we recommit ourselves to our faith both at Mass and on our own?**

In this reading we recall that the ancient Jewish people waited for the Messiah to come to earth. We are waiting for the Christ child this Advent. What is your wait like? How can your wait transform you?

## Act on the Word

### Identity in Christ Impacts Action

*Type or insert direction text here.*

As you interact with friends and family and school and at home, consider how your interaction with others is a reflection of your identity in Christ. Can others see Christ in your choices, in your words, and even in your tone of voice? What do others learn about Christianity through you? How do you represent your faith to others? Our Gospel reading this week reminds us about Jesus' identity and our own. Consider these questions this week, and prayerfully consider how you answer them. Decide if you are happy with the answers or if you wish to make changes in yourself.

### Closing Prayer

*Lord of the prophets,  
you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way.  
Heal us and cleanse us  
that all we do may be accomplished  
in sincerity of mind and heart.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

### For Next Sunday

*To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at [www.ltp.org/lwgr](http://www.ltp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.*