

Third Week of Advent Prayer for Families

“Christmas is joy, religious joy, an inner joy of light and peace.”

Pope Francis



Acknowledgement of Land

As we gather in God’s presence, let us connect our feet to the ground and remind us of the place that we are praying on. As we enter stillness, and open our hearts, we acknowledge the wisdom of the First Nations Peoples of this place, and their continued spiritual connection and relationship to place. Imagine what is possible when we listen deeply to the people of our place and speak the language of joy.

Third Week of Advent

Joy

The third candle of Advent symbolizes Joy. As we continue to approach Christmas Day, our joy grows more and more. The third candle takes us back to the joyful anticipation of the shepherds who journeyed to see Jesus in Bethlehem, even before the wise men. On this third Sunday of Advent, which the Church calls “Gaudete Sunday,” meaning rejoice or praise, we light the third candle and rejoice like the shepherds.

For this reason, the third candle of Advent is called the “Shepherd’s Candle,” and its colour is pink, the liturgical colour for joy.

“But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord.’

(Luke 2:10-11)

Scripture

A reading from the Holy Gospel of Matthew [Matthew 11:2-11]

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then 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,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.



Reflection

There is real comfort in this story. John the Baptist, the powerful, austere man who held such a sway among the Jews, still had his moments of darkness. Imprisoned in Herod's dungeon, he wondered: Am I a fool? Is this all there is? Was I wrong about Jesus?

He does not just brood on the question. He sends messengers to Jesus. And Jesus does not send back reassurances; he just asks the messengers to open their eyes and see the evidence of Jesus' life.

Do we see the signs of God's presence in the world today?

Are we 'seeing' as Jesus told his disciples?

Teach us Lord, to keep our eyes open to the signs of God's presence in the world today.

Leader: Let us pray (all together).

God of Joy,
Your son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us.
He is a sign of your joy for creation.
Help us walk in that joy during the weeks of
Advent, as we wait and prepare for his coming.
We pray in the name of Jesus, our Saviour.
Amen

Call to Action

- [Reflection Questions for the 3rd Sunday of Advent Year A](#)
 - Do I really believe in Jesus Christ as my saviour
 - Am able to be patient and show patience?
 - How can I bring the healing of Jesus into the world?

References

Context: Hallow (2022) Advent Candles and Advent Wreaths: The History and Meaning, Colors, Symbolism, Themes, and More. <https://hallow.com/blog/advent-candles-and-advent-wreaths/>

Reflection: Sacred Space (2022) *Sacred Space: your daily prayer online*
<https://www.sacredspace.ie>

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