

ADVENT REFLECTION 2018

Week 3: Joyful expectation

*Shout for joy, daughter of Zion, Israel, shout aloud!
Rejoice, exult with all your heart, Daughter of Jerusalem!*
Zephaniah 3: 14

The mood for the third week of Advent changes to one of joyful expectation as we reach the half way stage in our time of preparation. This day is known as Gaudete Sunday – the Latin for ‘Rejoice’ – its jubilant theme echoed in the pink priestly vestments. Looking forward to the birth of our Saviour is an opportunity to focus on all that is good in our lives and to give heartfelt thanks.

Yet conflicts continue to rage in many parts of the world and for those who suffer the consequences of war and famine there is no cause to rejoice.

PRAYER AND REFLECTION

*Lord God of peace, hear our prayer!
We have tried so many times and over so many years
to resolve our conflicts by our own powers
and by the force of our arms.*

*How many moments of hostility and darkness
have we experienced;
how much blood has been shed;
how many lives have been shattered;
how many hopes have been buried ...
But our efforts have been in vain.*

*Now, Lord, come to our aid!
Grant us peace, teach us peace;
guide our steps in the way of peace.
Open our eyes and our hearts,
and give us the courage to say:
“Never again war!”
“With war everything is lost”.*

*Instill in our hearts the courage to take concrete steps
to achieve peace.
Amen.*

Pope Francis, 2014

Download resources for Peace Sunday, 20 January 2019

<http://paxchristi.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2019-Peace-Sunday-Booklet-final.docx>

ACTION IDEAS

- Discover inspiring stories of forgiveness and reconciliation from The Forgiveness Project www.theforgivenessproject.com
- Become a member of the Catholic Peace organisation Pax Christi www.paxchristi.org.uk
- Support Aid to the Church in Need www.acnuk.org
- Share a ‘good news’ story with others

*When all the people asked John, ‘What must we do?’
He answered, ‘If anyone has two tunics he must share
with the man who has none, and the one with something
to eat must do the same.’*

*There were tax collectors too who came for baptism,
and these said to him, ‘Master, what must we do?’
He said to them, ‘Exact no more than your rate.’*

*Some soldiers asked him in their turn, ‘What must we
do?’ He said to them, ‘No intimidation! No extortion!
Be content with your pay!’*

Luke 3: 10-14

Our modern world is so immediate that we have lost the joy of waiting patiently. The build-up to Christmas can be so frenetic that it’s easy to lose sight of its true meaning. It’s great to buy gifts for our loved ones, but do we need to spend so extravagantly?

To prepare well for the Christmas celebration during this Advent season of waiting it can be helpful to slow down; to make space to sit quietly for a few minutes in the presence of God; to take time to wonder at the beauty of creation and to give thanks for all that is good.

*Lord, there is so much bad news in our world: famine;
natural disasters; violence; war; acts of terrorism;
cruelty; prejudice; self-interest.*

*And yet there is also much that is good: love; concern;
solidarity; friendship; small, unseen acts of kindness.*

*For the times I have focused only on the bad and failed to
see the good, I ask your forgiveness.*

*For the times I have looked the other way because I was
embarrassed and didn’t know how to reach out to those
in need, I ask your forgiveness.*

*For the times I meant to do something, became
distracted and forgot my good intentions, I ask your
forgiveness.*

Grant us your light, O Lord

*Grant us your light, O Lord,
that the darkness in our hearts
being wholly passed away,
we may come at last to the light that is Christ.
For Christ is the morning star,
who when the night of this world is past,
brings to his saints the promised light of life,
and opens to them eternal day. Amen.*

Bede