

# ADVENT REFLECTION 2019

## Week 3: Joyful expectation

### SCRIPTURE

*Let the wilderness and the dry lands exult,  
let the wasteland rejoice and bloom,  
let it bring forth flowers like the jonquil,  
let it rejoice and sing for joy.*

**Isaiah 35:1**

The mood for the third week of Advent changes to one of joyful expectation as we reach the half way stage in our preparation. Known as Gaudete Sunday (Latin for 'rejoice'), its jubilant theme is echoed in the pink priestly vestments. Here is an opportunity to focus on all that is good in our lives and to give heartfelt thanks. We rejoice in anticipation of the birth of our Saviour and reflect on our responsibility to care wisely for all creation.

### PRAYER

Lord, there is so much bad news in our world: war; famine; natural disasters; cruelty; prejudice; self-interest; greed. And yet there is also much good: love; concern; solidarity; small, unseen, unselfish 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 what to do, I ask your forgiveness.  
For the times I have felt powerless to make a difference so took no action, I ask your forgiveness.

Open my mouth, Lord, to speak out boldly against injustice. May I be a willing advocate for those who live in despair.  
Open my eyes to see the careless waste of our natural resources. May I be a faithful steward of the world you have entrusted to us all.

### LIVING RESPONSIBLY

*Never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home  
as we have in the last 200 years. We are not God. The  
Earth was here before us and was given to us.*

*The exploitation of the planet has already exceeded  
acceptable limits and we still have not solved the problem  
of poverty.*

*We must regain the conviction that we need one another,  
that we have a shared responsibility for others and the  
world, and that being good and decent are worth it.*

**Pope Francis *Laudato Si'***

### PRAYER OF FRANCISCAN CONVERSION

*Living God, where there is waste,  
let us bring recycling;  
where there is recycling,  
let us bring reuse;  
where there is reuse,  
let us bring sustainability;  
where there is sustainability,  
let us bring justice;  
where there is justice,  
let us bring love.*

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### SCRIPTURE

*It is the Lord who keeps faith forever,  
who is just to those who are oppressed.  
It is he who gives bread to the hungry,  
the Lord, who sets prisoners free.*

*It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind,  
who raises up those who are bowed down,  
the Lord, who protects the stranger  
and upholds the widow and orphan.*

*It is the Lord who loves the just  
but thwarts the path of the wicked.*

**Psalms 145: 6-9**

### ACTION IDEAS

- Spend less on presents and donate to Church Action on Poverty ([www.church-poverty.org.uk](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk))
- Help serve Christmas lunch at a homeless shelter.
- Choose from the World Gifts catalogue (CAFOD [www.cafod.org.uk](http://www.cafod.org.uk)) to help fund a community project or provide a farm animal.
- Send a greetings card to a prisoner of conscience (Action by Christians against Torture [www.acatuk.org.uk](http://www.acatuk.org.uk))
- Visit an elderly neighbour who lives alone.
- Give the gift of your time and friendship.
- Avoid buying expensive new items - reuse or adapt.
- Swap skills and resources with friends and family.
- Give hand-made cards and gifts or bake Christmas biscuits.