

# The Third Sunday of Advent/Gaudete Sunday/Year B

– 16/17 December 2017 –

Collection monetary donations for Good  
Neighbors/Knights of Columbus “Keep Christ in  
Christmas” Poster Contest (Finnerty Hall)

– Our Lady of Victory Parish Community –

## HOMILY

### 1<sup>st</sup> Reading:

Isaiah 61:1-2a; 10-11

- “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the lowly, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the Lord and a day of vindication by our God. . . . As the earth brings forth its plants, and a garden makes its growth spring up, so will the Lord God make justice and praise spring up before all the nations.”

### Responsorial Psalm:

Luke 1 ff – *Sung*

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

- “Rejoice always. . . . In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. . . . May the God of peace make you perfectly holy and may you entirely, spirit, soul and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will also accomplish it.”

### GOSPEL:

**JOHN 1:6-8; 19-28**

- “A man named John was sent by God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light. . . . ‘I am ‘the voice of one crying out in the desert, make straight the way of the Lord,’ . . . there is one among you whom you do not recognize – the one who is to come after me –“

i. There is a story that several years ago, Franciscan preacher, Father Richard Rohr, was presenting a workshop. One of the participants posed this question to Father Rohr: "I am a devout Catholic and I hope someday, with God's grace, that I will attain Heaven. But, it would really help me if I had some idea of what Heaven is like. I know that it is more than pearly gates and angels singing. So, what is there in our tradition that describes heaven? Can you describe Heaven for me?" Father Rohr responded, "That is a difficult question. There really is not much of anything in the tradition that describes heaven." But then he stopped and said, "No, there is one thing. There is one thing that is very clear in our tradition about heaven. **Heaven is not about you.** In heaven, God's power and glory are so clear that each of us, while remaining ourselves, are nevertheless taken up into God's love."

Knowing that, perhaps, by sharing this story I have just disappointed many individuals who want to know "just what is Heaven like?", there may be some more disappointment with this next statement.

You see, if heaven is a model for how we are to live our lives now . . . and, if it is true that "our relationship to God in heaven is not about us", then, it is also true that

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“our relationship with God on **earth** is not about us.

II. I’m not suggesting that **we** do not matter . . . you . . . me . . . others . . . we **do** matter . . . greatly . . . God would not have created us if this were not true.

But . . . while we matter greatly . . . especially in the eyes, mind and heart of God . . . We are God’s sons and daughters . . . each of us blest with real and particular gifts, talents . . . abilities . . . that God calls us to use for transforming this world . . . but, our **role** in life is not primary . . . it is a **supporting** role . . . one given over to serving **God’s** plan . . . not yours . . . recognizing **God’s** power . . . not yours . . . **God’s** glory . . . not yours.

Have you ever heard someone say, “It’s not about **me.**”, only to add “**but**, it would be nice if we did it my way”?

“I am the voice of **one** crying out in the desert, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord.’

John the Baptist **got it.** It was **never** about John . . . but always about the Lord whom John, “sent from God”, spent his earthly life pointing to . . . directing others to . . .

**III.** We live in a world that, more often than not, argues against this . . . **"Be great! Be king or queen for a day! Be in charge!"** . . . and while we should, using our God given gifts and talents, always do great things to help transform the world . . . always be faith filled witnesses that **lead** others to Christ . . . we need to be reminded that ours is a supporting role and always at the service of God working in and through us. . . .

We need to be reminded that there may be times when we get "stuck on ourselves", and see that differently. "Stuck" because we have become convinced we are the most important . . . "stuck" because "we believe" we have nothing of value to offer . . . "stuck" because we think "we", and how we live out our faith, make us more holy than others . . . "stuck" because we believe that we are a more horrible sinner than another . . . "stuck" because we have allowed envy or jealousy or the popularity of another to cause us to think we have been deprived and just don't matter . . . Yes, we can become "stuck" on ourselves and consequently "get in the way" of God acting . . .

John the Baptist reminds us this very day, "Make straight the way of the Lord." In other words, "get out of

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the way" . . . "set yourself aside" . . . "and let **Christ** come through you" to continue transforming the world . . . giving way to others recognizing . . . it is always God's plan that matters . . . God's power that is real . . . God's glory that will forever shine forth.