

Enthusiasm for God

Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1: 6-8, 19-28

There is an enthusiastic ring to all of the scriptures this week. Each selection announces, in some way, that the Advent Season has reached the halfway point in our spiritual journey towards Bethlehem. We are called on this Gaudete Sunday to rejoice that the Lord's presence is in our midst. We light the pink candle to express our joy. How can we not be caught up in this great enthusiasm for God?

Isaiah announces that **"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 poor, 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."** These are the words that Jesus will recite in the synagogue as He begins his public ministry. These are prophetic words for us today, the very job description for every baptized Christian.

St. Paul tells us to, **"Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing."** There is a passion here that tells us that our prayers of thanksgiving for the great gift of Jesus Christ should never cease. Our lives are to be so wrapped up in the working of the Spirit that our lives reflect the holiness and goodness of Christ.

This same enthusiastic theme moves on into our gospel with the announcement that **"A man named John was sent from 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."** This very gospel is the one proclaimed on Christmas Day. The Church, in her wisdom, gives us a "sneak-peek" at how important and how passionate the gospel writer was to proclaim the truth about Jesus. There is no holding back this week as the scriptures are shouting the Truth in joy! We are called to embrace and to live this same enthusiasm with our lives, proclaiming as the responsorial psalm does this week, **"My soul rejoices in my God."**

Happy Advent!

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