



December 17, 2023

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Third Sunday of Advent

Is 61:1-2A, 10-11 | 1 Thes 5:16-24 | Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

“Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing.” Such simple words from today’s second reading. And yet it is not always easy to put them into practice. It is difficult to rejoice if we or people we love are hurting. It can be hard to pray when life is pulling us in a thousand different directions. But on this Gaudete Sunday, the Sunday of rejoicing, we are asked to focus on a truth that can make both rejoicing and praying easier: Jesus entered humanity in flesh and blood to save us from our sins. This truth means that even if we don’t feel like there is much gladness or joy in our lives today, we can rejoice in the knowledge that we all have the chance to spend eternity in a place where pain, disappointment and suffering will be no more. With our eyes focused on that prize, praying can become a natural part of our days.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Sometimes, I can make everything so complicated. I want to create charts and checklists to ensure that I am doing everything just right. But St. Paul’s words today make me realize that living well is really not that complicated. He writes: “Retain what is good. Refrain from every kind of evil.” That’s it! Of course, while this is not complicated, it does require us to make prayerful, faithful efforts toward this end – and it is an end for which God has given us his grace, the help of the Church, and the prayers of our brothers and sisters in Christ. This includes St. Paul, who prays for us, “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.” This is what is good in these dark days of Advent: the light of Christ is coming into our world. The Gospel says that John the Baptist testified to this truth – to the light. We can too! Let us continue to pray, to rejoice and to give thanks for God’s gifts, especially the gift of his Son.

Church of the Ascension

Saratoga, California

www.ascensionsaratoga.org

408-725-3939

Mass Schedule

(Sat) 5p; (Sun) 7a, 9a, 11a, 5p

(Mon-Fri) 8a; (Sat) 9a

SING *Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim*

One more light the bowl shall brim,

Shining beyond the frosty weather,

Bright as sun and moon together.

People, look east and sing today:

Love, the star, is on the way.

Appearance Isn't Everything

Isaiah presents himself as anointed by God and speaks with joy, which Paul tells us we should always do. John the Baptist, however, doesn't care how people respond to his appearance. It is his message that is important. He proclaims with joy that the Messiah is coming and coming soon. But John is not the cause for joy. Everyone will have to wait, even if it is just for a little while. And that is the meaning and message of Advent. We wait because the Messiah will change so much. Our joyful waiting, says Paul, should be prayerful because God has chosen us. We need to get ready. - *Father Dominic Grassi*

Quotes

"Every great movement needs an agitator. Every leader of spiritual ideals needs a John the Baptist." -*William A White*

"John is the voice that lasts for a time; from the beginning Christ is the Word who lives for ever" -*Saint Augustine*

O Antiphons

At evening prayer tonight (Dec. 17), the church begins to invoke seven names for Jesus traditionally called the *O Antiphons*. These names—Wisdom, Sacred Lord, Flower of Jesse's Stem, Key of David, Radiant Dawn, King of All Nations, Emmanuel—suggest to us how the stories of the Old Testament foreshadow the arrival of God-With-Us. As Mary Winifred observes in *Hasten the Kingdom: Praying the O Antiphons of Advent*: "The Word, which joyfully shouted all the galaxies into being, left All Power and came silently into the womb of a young girl." -*Takefiveforfaith.com*

Diocese's Impact Report

2023 Learn about the impact of the Diocese of San José ministries in 2023 that serve more than 528,000 Catholics in our county, including 54 parishes, missions and pastoral centers, and 34 Catholic schools.



Flower Fund

Your donations to the Flower Fund will help enhance the church environment this holy season and beyond. "Flower Fund" donation envelopes are available at the church's exits. Thank you for your generosity.

MASS INTENTIONS

Dec 16	Sat	05 pm	Clara Smith (L)
Dec 17	Sun	07 am	Christine B. Douglas (L)
		09 am	Ruby Welch +
		11 am	Remedios Doria +
		05 pm	Mackela Braddi (L)
Dec 19	Tue	08 am	John Sudano +
Dec 20	Wed	08 am	Fr. Ben Manding +
Dec 21	Thu	08 am	Charles Piligian +
Dec 22	Fri	08 am	Kin Foo Wong +
Dec 23	Sat	09 am	Joan Braddi (L)

WEEKLY OFFERING - DEC 10

-**\$9,316** (baskets: \$6,181; online: \$3,135). Weekly goal: \$6,500.
-YTD: **\$137,581**. Budget: \$156,300. Shortfall: \$18,719.
-Retired Religious collection: **\$2,618**.
Thank you for your generous support.

Radiant Reminders

Dec. 21 - O Radiant Dawn!

Monks, nuns, and others who take part in evening prayer are now chanting the O Antiphons, a rich series of references to the coming Christ recited from December 17-23. (Dec. 21) antiphon proclaims: "O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice: come and shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death." Look around you today and seek out the many lights associated with Christmas: Advent candles, strings of light, Posadas candles, fires for holiday gatherings. Let each one remind you of the light of Christ coming into the world.

-*Takefiveforfaith.com*

Parish Facilities Update

-The old cabinet island in the sacristy was replaced by a new one on the day before Thanksgiving.

-The steps around Worner Hall were replaced by ADA compliant ramps last Saturday.

-The cross that came down during a storm in February was back on the church rooftop - with lighting - on December 13.

These works are possible thanks to our Building & Grounds Committee, major donations, insurance coverage, and your financial support. Thank you all.

Serra Club Supporting Vocations

Serra Club is an international organization, founded in 1935. There are 1,100 Serra Club Chapters chartered in 46 countries around the world. The Santa Clara Chapter was formed in 1968. The main objective of Serra Club, is to foster and support vocations to priesthood, religious life, and the diaconate. Serra members follow in the footsteps of St. Junipero Serra, whose motto was "Always forward, never back."



We pray for the increase and perseverance of those vocations, support diocesan men's and women's discernment retreats, host receptions for the ordinations of new priests and deacons, support vocation programs for 8th-graders in our Catholic schools.

Consider joining us. For more information, please contact our president, Jack Oneto, at 408-379-8379 or Lavita at lavita.ferns@yahoo.com. We invite you to join us at the next Serra Club meeting on January 12, 2024, at 12:00 pm at Bill of Fare, 1069 Saratoga Ave. San Jose, CA 95129. Our guest speaker is Fr. Eric Piczon, Vocation Director. Please RSVP at johnoneto@earthlink.net.

December Calendar

SIMBANG GABI MASS CELEBRATION

-Dec. 15, Friday, 7:00 pm

-Dec. 16, Saturday, 5:00 pm

ADVENT CONFESSIONS

-Dec. 16, Saturday, 9:45am - 10:45am

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

-Dec. 24 (4th Advent Sunday): 7:00am, 9:00am, 11:00am

-Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve): 5:00pm, 8:00 pm

-Dec. 25 (Christmas Day): 7:00am, 9:00am, 11:00am.