

LIVING FAITH

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 17, 2023



THE WORD OF GOD FOR TODAY: JOHN 1: 6-8, 19-28

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” He answered, “No.”

Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord’,” as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.” This took place in Bethany across the Jordan from where John was baptizing.

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Last week we heard about John the Baptist from the perspective of Mark who wrote the first and oldest Gospel. This week we hear about the Baptist from the fourth and last evangelist, John. By the time he wrote, the Christian community had had several years to reflect on the significance and meaning of Jesus and his mission.

In the meantime, a smaller group of people had come to believe that John the Baptist (not Jesus) was the Messiah. Because of that, John the Evangelist is at pains to emphasize that **Jesus** is the Messiah. Today’s gospel passage makes clear that John the Baptist was also sent by God – but his role was to *prepare* the way for the Messiah. (See the first three sentences of the gospel.)

And in the next paragraph, John himself says, “I am not the Messiah.”

When the Jewish religious leaders press him, John tells them he is simply the voice calling the people to join him in preparing the way for the Lord (Messiah) who is coming. We too are invited to join in and continue the role of giving witness to Jesus in the world. We do that mostly by how we *act*, but sometimes we also have the opportunity to *say* why we act the way we do. God continues to work with us as we point to Jesus by our efforts to love one another and to make the world a better place.

TALKING WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- Why would people have mistaken John the Baptist as the Messiah?
- The leaders asked John, “Why are you baptizing?” In our time, we might be asked, “Why do you believe in Jesus?” How would you answer them?
- In this time of preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus, how might you “prepare the way of the Lord”?



The Light of the World

Decode the message by finding each substitute letter.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
r	l	n	m	s	i	c	j	a	k	g	z	q	u	h	d	b	f	y	o	v	t	x	e	w	p

VOXAX GIDX I DIC YOT YIE EXCV RATD KTP; OFE
CIDX YIE HTOC. OX GIDX IE I YFVCXEE VT
VXEFRS GTCGXACFCK VOIV BFKOV, ET VOIV
VOATNKO OFD IBB DXC DFKOV QXBFUX. OX
OFDEXBR YIE CTV VOX BFKOV; OX GIDX TCBS IE I
YFVCXEE VT VOX BFKOV.

HTOC 1:6-8

Copyright © Sermons 4 Kids, Inc. • All Rights Reserved • www.sermons4kids.com

Used with Permission

Watch a short video about Advent from Busted Halo [here](#).

Once again, the CCCB has produced an Advent Video reflection series called Journey through Advent. This year's presenter is Most Rev. Bishop Jon Hansen, CSsR, Bishop of Mackenzie-Fort Smith. The reflection for the Third Sunday of Advent can be viewed [here](#).

Subscribe to our weekly Catechetical resource. E-mail: Familycatechesis@rcsj.org

THE CHURCH TEACHES

THE "O ANTIPHONS"

A TRADITIONAL WAY OF CELEBRATING THE LAST DAYS OF ADVENT

The "O Antiphons" are antiphons used at Vespers of the last seven days of Advent in Western Christian traditions. They are also used as the Alleluia verses on the same days in the Mass.

They are referred to as the "O Antiphons" because the title of each one begins with "O", followed by a name of Christ, one of his attributes mentioned in Scripture. You might recognize these antiphons from the verses of the popular Advent hymn, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." They are:

O Wisdom

O come, Thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things, far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show, and cause us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

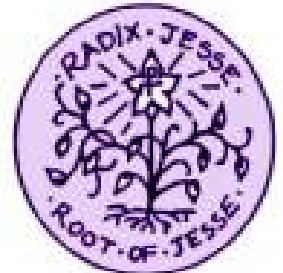


O Lord

O come, O come, great Lord of might,
Who to Thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
In ancient times didst give the law in cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O Root of Jesse

O come, Thou Root of Jesse, free Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save,
and give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!



O Key of David

O come, Thou Key of David, come, and open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O Dayspring, or O Rising Dawn

O come, Thou Day-Spring, come and cheer
our spirits by Thine advent here
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
and death's dark shadows put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!



O King of Nations

O come, thou King of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease;
fill the whole world with heaven's peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O Emmanuel (God with us)

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.

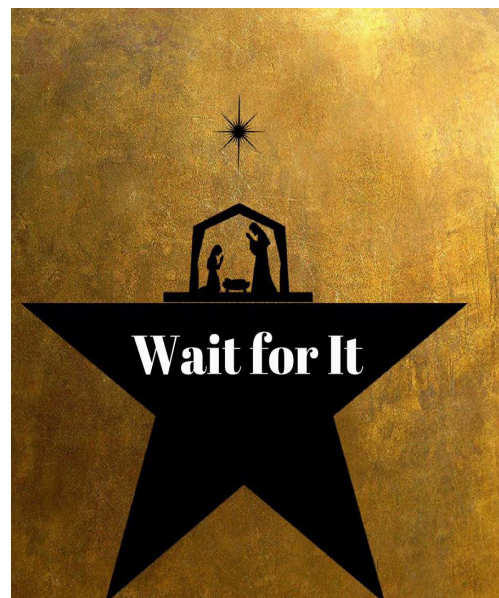
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!



THE CHURCH TEACHES WAITING IN ADVENT

People don't like to wait. We get impatient if we have to wait long at a doctor's office, or if the lineup for the cashier at the grocery store is very long. We complain if our computer is too slow, or if we are put on hold on the phone.

So Advent can be a bit of a challenge for us to get our heads around. What are we waiting for? The Christmas toys, candies and decorations have been out on the shelves in the stores since Hallowe'en. Many school and office parties have already happened by the middle of December. And hasn't Jesus already come, anyway?



All you have to do is look into the eyes of a child to know the wonder and anticipation of Advent, to see the joyful anticipation of waiting for Christmas. Children wait for family members to come home for the holidays. They wait for the treats that Christmas brings. They wait for Santa. They wait for gifts.

During Advent, we wait in joy, in hope, and in anticipation for the great event we are about to experience—the feast of Christmas, the celebration of the birth of Christ, who comes into our lives in new ways. And we also wait for the return of Christ in glory at the end of time. As the Church, we wait during Advent and look forward to celebrating the fact that God loves us so much that he sent his Son into the world to save us.



What about you? What gift would you like to receive this Christmas?
How would you like Jesus Christ to enter into your life?

**O COME, DIVINE MESSIAH! THE WORLD IN SILENCE WAITS THE DAY
WHEN HOPE SHALL SING ITS TRIUMPH, AND SADNESS FLEE AWAY!**