

# Fr. Rito's Homily

For the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

December 17, 2017

**5PM Vigil Mass, 12:15 PM Mass in Spanish**

Today, we celebrate the third Sunday of the Advent Season, a Sunday of joy. Jesus, the Messiah is coming to be born in our hearts and to fill us with his divine grace.

The arrival of the Messiah is the source of our joy. As Christians, we celebrate this joy, because Jesus comes to meet us and share his mercy, his kindness and his love with all those who receive him with a humble heart.

God the Father anointed and sent his Son to announce the good news to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, give us forgiveness and freedom; and to proclaim a year of favor from the Lord.

Jesus brings comfort to the poor and for those who are suffering. The word of Jesus has the power to change the hard heart of the human being, to a generous heart.

In Jesus, God has shown himself greatly for all. We do not have the words to respond to so much generosity from God. This is our joy. God has considered us important, despite our weaknesses and sins. Christ comes to give us forgiveness and redemption. The arrival of Christ brings peace and joy.

To receive the salvation that comes from Christ, it is necessary to prepare with a sincere and repentant heart. We have to examine our interior and correct our mistakes. Jesus wants to live in a pure heart.

The prophet Isaiah, compares our spiritual life to the trees that sprout from the earth and bear fruit. In the same way God, through his Son Jesus, will make justice and peace sprout for all nations.

You and I have a great mission: to be builders of peace and joy for Jesus! We have to be an instrument of God, sowing his peace and fraternity. We are very tired because the world is sowing violence, war and hatred. In many hearts the light of Christ does not shine, because the darkness of ambition and selfishness extinguishes this light.

John the Baptist gives a testimony of his mission. His word has transforming power, because he lived in humility and truth. This is how we, the Christians, have to live in the truth of God. John presents himself as a witness of light, like the voice that cries out in the desert. He is not the light, but a witness of the light. John is aware that he is only an



instrument of God. Christ is the light of hope for those who are sad. Christ is a presence of gratitude which responds to a society guided by violence. Christ is the light that shines in our lives in order to recognize the value of people and the good they have.

When the Pharisees ask John, "*Are you the Messiah?*" John humbly replies that he is not. John reveals the identity of the Messiah with these words: "*there is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie.*"

We need the voice of John the Baptist that resonates in our ears once again, to become aware of our mission and responsibility in today's society. John the Baptist proclaimed Jesus' mission at the Jordan River, when he exclaimed, "*Behold the Lamb of God. Behold him who takes away the sin of the world.*" (Jn 1:29)

John, as a witness of the light and the voice that cries out in the desert, is satisfied and happy for the presence of the Messiah among his people. When John discovers that Jesus makes the signs of God, with great confidence he says: "*it is necessary for him to grow and for me to diminish.*"

Today, we need Jesus as the light of our lives, to heal our selfishness and forgive our sins. In Jesus, we find the reason to live, be joyful and have freedom. Jesus teaches us the value of life and where we will find the truth that we seek.

**If you and I experience the presence of Jesus in our lives, we will never be sad, alone, or discouraged, because Jesus is a source of spiritual joy. And this is a joy that no one can take away from us, because we have it inside.**

Christ comes to inaugurate among us the year of the Lord's grace. Our joy is to recognize that Jesus shares with us His love and mercy. To unite our life to Jesus is to share with him the time of grace, of benevolence, of joy, and of generosity. God is a grace that never ends and if you want this grace, and if you desire it, you have to be humble, in order for Jesus to come into your life.

Let us ask the Lord, in this last week of the Advent season, to grant us the grace to share his joy with those who are sad and alone. May Jesus give us a heart disposed to intensify prayer and correspond to his love with gratefulness.

**Let us ask the Lord Jesus, to make from each one of us, an instrument of his joy and peace, in this approaching Christmas season.**

Fr. Rito's Homilies are on our parish website:  
[www.EmmausParish.org](http://www.EmmausParish.org).

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