

December 15th A.D. 2013
The Third Sunday in Advent

Meditation

Epistle and Gospel Readings for this Sunday

The Epistle of Blessed Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians; Book I, Chap. 4, Vss 1 - 5

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew; Chap. 11, Vss. 2 - 10

(1928 Book of Common Prayer, Page 94)

(People's Anglican Missal, Pages A6 & A7)



Christ cites His miracles of healing to prove to the disciples of St. John the Baptist that He is the expected Messiah. He then gives a beautiful tribute to John, claiming him as His Fore-runner.

MORE THAN A PROPHET

The Gospel account for this Sunday opens with our Lord being visited by two disciples of John the Baptist, who himself is in prison by order of King Herod. Jesus knows the question that the two will ask before they even open their mouths; “*Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?*” He gives the only answer that He can; “*Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.*”

Those who know the ancient prophecies so well can't fail to see that Jesus' claim to fulfill the signs concerning the Messiah given by Isaiah have come to pass: “*God himself will come and save you. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened : and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart (a deer), and the tongue of the dumb shall be free.*” - *Isaiah, Ch. 35, Vss. 4-6.* The answer of our Lord reveals so well His heart of mercy, and it satisfies the two men, and they return to John. As they give their report to John, we can, in our mind's eye, see John smile. This is what he wanted to hear...this is what his life was all about.

John gave up all in order to give all. From his first meeting with Christ before his birth, all earthly things had become worthless to him. He accomplished his task in the light of that first encounter, and in the hope of the next. When John at last saw Christ coming towards him, in the desert, he called to the people who were with him; “*Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.*” With his own mortal hand he plunged the head of that spotless Lamb into the waters of the Jordan. He saw the dove descending upon him, and heard the voice of the Father say: “*This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.*” The Lord's way was prepared; the time had come when He would advance, and John would recede into the background.

In his prison cell, another joy awaited John in the form of the words our Lord gave to John's two disciples. The Lord's words seemed to be His thanks to His faithful servant; “*But what went ye out to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is He, of whom it is written, behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.*” *Luke; Ch. 27, Vss 26 – 27.* Those words of Jesus tells us a lot about the qualities He prized in His followers. His love for John is obvious. His admiration of John's great courage is in His words. John was indeed, the precursor...the Fore-runner.

In that light, John went to his martyrdom in the sure and certain hope of a blessed eternity in the presence of Christ.

PREPARING THE WAY

As we reach the middle of this Advent we are in the midst of our preparations to receive Christ. Who can better help us than John the Baptist? We find him in the desert. Our own hearts are also in the desert, full of the thorns of self-love, and pride...and being blown about by the winds of worldliness and political correctness, blinding us to those things that are real and eternal. A way must be prepared through all of it; not our way, but *the way by which God chooses to come to us.* How can we do it, we ask ourselves? If we “pull up the weeds”...they will only sprout again. If we push against “the world” it pushes back, and with so much more strength than we possess. St. John teaches us that if we would meet Christ, we *must* leave the rest. He tells us that the thorns, the winds, and the wiles of this desert world will be rooted out when we have been purified by His (Christ's) love.

We Christians are supposed to be the fore-runners of Christ today in the world that we are living in.

3.)

We are supposed to prepare the way for Him. By our possession of Christ in our hearts, we are intended to awaken the longing for Him in the hearts of our fellow human beings. Our Lord wants to use us.

O Lord Jesus...to be Your fore-runner! To be another John! To do his work! But, when we compare ourselves with John and the standards You lay down in this gospel, we are afraid. You can make us what You want us to be. St. John was strong in his love for You because You were first strong for him by Your grace. Dear Lord, please use that grace on us too. Come, Lord Jesus! Come and possess us as You did John, so that You can use us in the same way You used him. Come, stir up our *hearts* to prepare thy ways! Let us echo and seek to make real in our hearts the words in prayer of St. Alphonsus Ligouri: “ *I love thee, Jesus my love; I repent of ever having offended Thee. Never permit me to separate myself from Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.*”

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Behold, I send My Messenger before thy face.



John sees Christ through the words of his disciple while in prison.

From a 15th century Prayer book wood cut illustration

4.)

Gaudete Sunday ... In a Nutshell



The Third Sunday in Advent is also called **Gaudete Sunday**, which comes from the Latin word “*Gaudete*”, meaning : *To Rejoice*. The name coming from the first word of the Introit (also called the *Entrance Prayer* or *Entrance Psalm*) of today's Mass:



Translated: “*Rejoice in the Lord, always, again, I say rejoice.*”

This act of “nicknaming” (if that can loosely be applied!) Sundays by the first word of its Mass Introit prayer, was widely used throughout the Medieval Church...especially in England. This practice continues to this day in many Anglo-Catholic parishes as well as Traditional Roman Catholic parishes. The Mass was celebrated in Latin in those days, so it was a handy way for the clergy to refer to the particular Sunday, as services books varied in quality (remember, they were all hand transcribed, so, the better quality of the book, the more it cost!) often lacking title pages to separate the various Sundays. Those of the laity who possessed hand-missals and prayer books also possessed varying levels of Latin comprehension, so this way served as a handy guide for them. Last, for those who were illiterate (which was most of the population then), this was an easy way for them to remember where in the liturgical year they were without having to try to memorize the vast and often confusing cycle of liturgical prayers that the year contained.

On **Gaudete Sunday**, **rose** colored vestments may be worn in place of the **violet** or **Sarum blue** ones, as parish traditions allow. On the Advent wreath, a **rose** (or **pink**) candle is lit in honor of this Sunday. Despite the rather somber readings of the Advent cycle, on this Sunday, the readings are joyous in anticipation of our Lord's coming. We have mentioned before, the penitential aspect of Advent, in that it has always been a good time for inner reflection and a bit of spiritual “house cleaning”...hence, the accepted tradition of making ones' Advent confession before making their

Christmas Communion.

We are seeing that the spirit of the Advent liturgy is one of expectation and preparation for the joyous season of Christmas as well as for the second coming of Jesus Christ. The penitential exercises suitable, in that spirit, are suspended for this Sunday in order to symbolize the joy and gladness for the promised Redemption that is to come. ***Gaudete Sunday***, and its Lenten counterpart, ***Letare Sunday***, are sometimes referred to as “Refreshment Sundays” as parishes often hold little celebrations after Mass with various treats and sweets to highlight the festive atmosphere of the day. Those who are keeping a fast, are allowed to break it and and, in this spirit of refreshment, rejuvenate themselves by the partaking of foods not consumed during the fast... albeit in moderation !

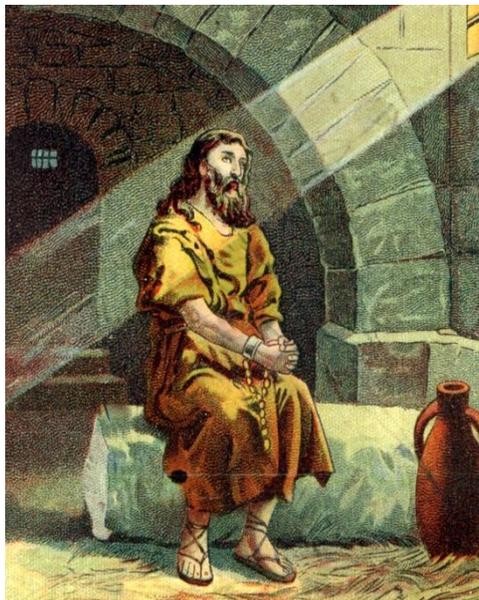
--- Excerpted from: *The Chipmunk's Nutshell Library*, By Br. A. Chip Monk, OSB

A short Prayer for the Week

Grant us by Thy Holy Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort.

- - - - -

“ Thou art not the more holy for being praised, nor the more worthless for being dispraised. What thou art, that thou art : neither by words canst thou be made greater than what thou art in the sight of God.” - - - Thomas A Kempis



John the Baptist in prison (from an old illustration)

6.)

Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory
4 Shaw Road
Raymond, Maine 04071

**PLEASE NOTE: PUBLIC SUNDAY MASSES WILL RESUME IN THE SPRING.
CONVENTUAL MASSES ONLY FOR THE WINTER.**

KALENDAR

Holy days and Saints days for the week of December 15th to December 22nd A.D. 2013 as observed at the Priory.

Sunday, December 15 th ...	Third Sunday in Advent (Gaudete Sunday)...	<i>Octave Day Concep. Of B. V.M.</i>
Monday, December 16 th	* <i>The Great " O Antiphons" begins at 1st Vespers at Magnificat: O Sapientia.</i>	
Tuesday, December 17 th		<i>O Adonai</i>
Wednesday, December 18 th		<i>O Radix Jesse</i>
Thursday, December 19 th		<i>O Clavis David</i>
Friday, December 20 th		<i>O Oriens</i>
Saturday, December 21 st ..	St. Thomas, Ap.	<i>O Rex Gentium</i>
Sunday, December 22 nd . . .	Fourth Sunday in Advent	<i>O Emmanuel</i>

KEY: *Ab.* = Abbot, *Ap.* = Apostle, *Bp.* = Bishop, *C. or Conf.* = Confessor,
Doct. = Doctor of the Church, *M.* = Monk, *Myr.* = Martyr, *P=* Priest *Po.* = Pope, *Vir.* = Virgin,

Note: * December 16th is marked in the English Kalender as *O Sapientia* drawing from the Sarum use & that which was customary throughout England. In the Roman Usage, Dec. 17th is so marked. Thus in our Anglo-Catholic Usage, the eight days that constitute the period of the *Great O Antiphons*, (sometimes called *Sapientiatide*) constitute a Novena (rather than an Octave, as in the Roman Usage) in preparation for Christmas, and the ferial (daily) Office takes on a special character.

- *excerpted from the Anglican Breviary, Pg. C26.* FMI about obtaining the Anglican Breviary, go to the website: www.anglicanbreviary.net This is a devotional book no Catholic, Anglican or Roman can afford to be without, as it is considered to be the most comprehensive breviary published.

MISCELLENIA:

SUBSCRIPTIONS; If you know of anyone who would like to be on our e-mailing list to receive this weekly offering, please either feel free to copy and pass this along to them, or have them send us their e-mail address and we will gladly add it to our mailing list.

CANDLE OFFERING: HELP! Our supply of altar candles is nearly exhausted. We would gratefully welcome all monetary offerings to help us replenish our supply in time for Candlemas (Feb. 2nd) ...the traditional date for the blessing of candles to be used in the new year. Please send your donations to our address: Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory, 4 Shaw Road, Raymond, Maine 04071 , marked "Candle Offering". If you would like to make your offering as a memorial, please include the name(s) of those you want remembered. God Bless you for your generosity!

