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**Year B** 3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

## Sunday Mass Readings

**First Reading:**

Isaiah 61:1-2a,10-11

**Responsorial Psalm:**

Luke 1:46-50,53-54

**Second Reading:**

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

**Gospel:**

John 1:6-8,19-28

*"I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"*



image: canva.com

## Hear

Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading. Don't have one? No worries, you can find this week's readings online [here](#).

Check out [this video](#) on the readings for children.

## Pray

In the Gospel today we reflect further on the mission of John the Baptist and focus on the gift of Joy this Gaudete Sunday!

- What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this piece of Scripture? How do these words resonate with you personally?
- On the Third Sunday of Advent, we light the pink candle of JOY. Are we sharing JOY with those around us – all people – family, friends, strangers? Prepare a manger bed for baby Jesus.
- Every day this week, write the name of a person you love and want to pray for on a small strip of paper and place it in the manger. Keep adding names to the manger bed until Christmas Day. On Christmas Day place baby Jesus on the bed of love you have prepared for Him.

## Talk

In today's readings we hear about John the Baptist and his mission for the Messiah's coming.

- John was a witness for the Messiah: he was just pointing the way.
- Is there someone in your life whose witness of faith has inspired you in your own journey of faith? What was it about them that struck you?
- What are some of the ways that you could give witness to your faith to those around you?
- What are some of the things that prevent you from witnessing and speaking about your faith to others?

## Family Challenge!

Today is also known as Bambinelli Sunday - a tradition which encourages people to bring the Baby Jesus from their crib to be blessed, then placed in a special place until He is moved to the crib on Christmas Eve. If you weren't able to get your little figure of Jesus blessed, then you can use the suggested prayer found at [www.catholicgrandparentsassociation.org](http://www.catholicgrandparentsassociation.org)

# DO WE RECOGNISE JESUS?

This Sunday's Gospel invites us to continue our reflection on the person and mission of John the Baptist. Today we depart from the Gospel of Mark and read a selection from the Gospel of John.

The Gospel for today combines a brief passage from the prologue to John's Gospel with a report about John the Baptist. As in Mark's Gospel, the Gospel of John contains no birth narrative. Instead, John's Gospel begins with a theological reflection that has come to be called the "prologue." This prologue places the story of Jesus in its cosmological framework. It speaks of Jesus' existence with God since the beginning of time. In John's Gospel, Jesus is presented as the fulfilment of the Old Testament and the culmination of the Word, the light that is coming into the world's darkness.

Following this prologue, John reports on the ministry of John the Baptist. We learn about the attention that John the Baptist received from the Jewish authorities. Messengers from the Jewish priests, the Levites and the Pharisees question John about his identity and the meaning of the baptisms that he is performing. John's Gospel uses these questions to establish the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist. John the Baptist is not the Messiah, nor is he Elijah or the Prophet. In John's denials, we hear echoes of the kind of messianic expectations that were common in first-century Palestine.

The only affirmative response that John the Baptist gives is when he quotes the prophet Isaiah. Upon answering the next question, John announces that the saviour they seek is already among them, but as yet unrecognized. John's response highlights for us an important Advent theme: Jesus has already come into the world as our saviour. During Advent, we pray that we will be able to recognize Jesus' presence in our midst. Advent also reminds us that Jesus will come again to fulfil the promise of salvation. We pray that we will continue to be watchful as we anticipate that great day.

The third Sunday of Advent is also called Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete, a Latin word which means "rejoice," is taken from the entrance antiphon for Sunday's Mass. This theme is echoed in today's second reading from the first Letter to the Thessalonians. It is a reminder that Advent is a season of joy because our salvation is already at hand.

Taken from Loyola Press - Sunday Connection

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**PREPARE JOYFULLY!**

How are your Christmas preparations going for you? Shopping done? Outfits planned? Events in the diary? Decorations up? Or is it all still a muddle? Does it even feel like you're approaching Christmas yet? Sometimes it all gets so busy doesn't it, and other things like exams and visits and more mundane jobs get in the way of excitement and joy. Maybe it's even stressful, or a lonely time of year for you if you have lost someone you deeply loved. Today is Gaudete Sunday, the Sunday we're called to pause and reflect on joy in the Advent season - because Christmas is the season of Joy: Joy Incarnate was born at Christmas time, and that's a good thing to remember in the midst of a dark and dreary month of December! It's a hard thing to remember though when we see so much suffering around us in our own communities and in the world at large. But today we can hit the pause button and take a good look around us to choose to find the joy! Jesus asked John the Baptist's disciples to look for signs of His Kingdom - to see the Good News already present through His actions. We can do the same thing in our own world. Make a conscious effort this week to notice goodness and kindness around you, and to bring that joy to others too! Make your heart a joyful place for Jesus this Christmas time.

## This week:

Make a decision today to live advent joyfully and preparing to welcome Jesus. Take a look at your daily schedule. Where can you fit five to ten minutes in each day for prayer? Can you set your alarm to go off earlier? Can you cut out a few minutes of tv / gaming / music? decide FOR WHOLE-HEARTED JOYFUL PREPARATION - IF YOU DON'T DECIDE, IT WON'T HAPPEN!

 "Advent: More than a chocolate calendar" (Fr Mike)

 **Make Room (Casting Crowns)**

To the Heights Youth Resource also available



## Family Prayer

*As we draw near to you, Lord God, keep us aware of your presence in all we do. Come with power to enlighten us by your grace, that we may live in praise and peace all our days. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## EVENTS

**Live Crib in St. Mary's Parish, Cahir:** December 16th, Saturday, 4-8pm with the Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother.

**Monastic Shop: Sisters of Mary Morning Star:** Weekdays 2 - 5.30pm. Please ring doorbell. Handmade gifts: Lemon Curds, Jams, Greeting Cards, Rosaries, CDs, Pictures, Calligraphies, Candles, Woodwork. The Friary, Lady Lane, Waterford.

**A Thrill of Hope: Taking a look at Scripture: Preparing for Christmas** led by the Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother. 3 Thursdays of Advent: 7, 14, 21 December. 6pm Scripture Talk in the Parish Rooms, 7pm Advent Holy Hour in the Main Church. (7th December Mass instead of Holy Hour). St Mary's Parish Church, Cahir, Co. Tipperary

**Lightfever:** Saturday 23rd December - Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity Waterford. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, candle light, music, silence, confessions available. Time to be confirmed.

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