

# ST. THOMAS INDIAN MISSION

**Third Sunday of  
Advent, Year B  
December 13, 2020**

**Fort Yuma, California | P. O. Box 1176, Winterhaven, CA 92283**

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**Fr. George "of the desert" Decasa  
Pastor**

**For the time being, our Sunday Masses are held outdoors, by the Parish Hall, on Saturdays at 4:30 PM and on Sundays at 8:30 AM. Please come in a face mask and observe social distancing (6 ft. between people of different households).**

**ADVENT IS A TIME FOR  
REPENTANCE AND  
NEW BEGINNINGS.**



## **1st Reading:**

**Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11**

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the LORD and a day of vindication by our God.

I rejoice heartily in the LORD, in my God is the joy of my soul; for he has clothed me with a robe of salvation and wrapped me in a mantle of justice, like a bridegroom adorned with a diadem, like a bride bedecked with her jewels.

As the earth brings forth its plants, and a garden makes its growth spring up, so will the Lord GOD make justice and praise spring up before all the nations.

*The Word of the Lord.*

## **The Response:**

**"My soul rejoices  
in my God."**

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked upon his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed.

**R.**

The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name. He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation.

**R.**

He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he has remembered his promise of mercy.

**R.**

## **2nd Reading:**

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-24**

Brothers and sisters: Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good. Refrain from every kind of evil.

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. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will also accomplish it.

*The Word of the Lord.*



## **R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor.

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

## **Gospel:**

**John 1:6-8, 19-28**

A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light.

And this is the testimony of John. When the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to him to ask him, "Who are you?" He admitted and did not deny it, but admitted, "I am not the Christ."

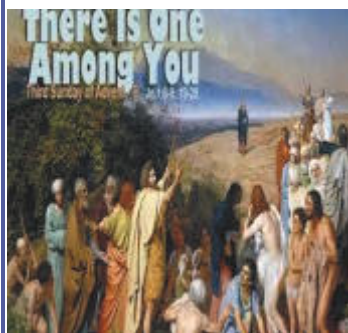
So they asked him, "What are you then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you, so we can give an answer to those who sent us? What do you have to say for yourself?"

He said: "I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, 'make straight the way of the Lord,'" as Isaiah the prophet said." Some Pharisees were also

sent. They asked him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ or Elijah or the Prophet?"

John answered them, "I baptize with water; but 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." This happened in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

*The Gospel of the Lord.*



## **Acclamation:**

Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection, you have set us free.

## REFLECTING ON THE WORD . . . . GUIDEPOSTS

### REJOICE, THE LORD IS NEAR!

The Third Sunday of Advent is called *Gaudete* or Rejoice Sunday. Let this be an opportunity to refocus our attention on the true reason we celebrate this time of year. Rejoice, the Lord is near! Today's readings are insistent about rejoicing in the gift of God's grace in and around you. And the rose vestment used today reinforces the joy we celebrate today as we near the end of Advent and clear the way to Christmas.

\*\*\*\*\*

The first reading from the book of Isaiah is a song of joy. We read, "I rejoice heartily in the Lord, in my God is the joy of my soul." This joy is the result of God's love and care for the human family. Rejoice!

Following the first reading, the response is not a psalm but Mary's *Magnificat* with the refrain, "My soul rejoices in my God." Mary is exuberant in proclaiming the incarnation, which brings salvation to all generations. "The Almighty has done great things for me" and "Holy is His Name," she proclaims. Rejoice!

In case you missed the message in the first two texts, we have another opportunity to grasp it from the first letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians. We hear, "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances, give thanks." God's loving-kindness brings life and grace to all. Rejoice!

By the time we get to the gospel, we've heard "rejoice" so many times that it's almost impossible to miss. Now the gospel provides the reason for our rejoicing. Our Savior is coming. We only need to prepare the proper way in order to encounter Him authentically or existentially.

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Thus, the celebration of *Gaudete* or Rejoice Sunday raises the question: How is Advent going for you thus far? As a response to the message of last Sunday, is a *metanoia*, an about face, going on in your life now such that you are able to celebrate this "Rejoice Sunday" existentially?

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The "Joy" of Rejoice Sunday is not the same as pleasure, which is a momentary feeling of satisfaction that comes from something external (a great meal, an unexpected gift, a romantic encounter). This joy is deeper, more spiritual, and it bubbles up from within. Read the following example.

The story is told of a Russian countess who accepted the Lord Jesus as her savior and testified about it openly. The czar was displeased and threw her into prison. After 24 hours the czar ordered her brought into his presence. He smiled sardonically and said, "Well, are you ready now to renounce your silly faith and come back to the pleasures of the court?" To his surprise, the countess smiled serenely and said, "I have known more real joy and more real happiness in one day in prison with Jesus than I have known in a lifetime in the courts of the czar."

### THE CHALLENGE TO RECOGNIZE THE LORD!

John tells the religious leaders that "there is one among you whom you do not recognize" (John 1:26). Throughout all of Jesus' public ministry, many of these same leaders failed to recognize him. It is our challenge now to recognize him.

Do we recognize him in the least of our brothers and sisters? Do we recognize him in our community, when two or three are gathered in his name? Do we recognize him in the Eucharist, his body and blood poured out for us? Do we recognize him in times of difficulty and uncertainty?

\*\*\*\*\*

Once there was a thriving community of active monks in a remote village, but it fell on hard times. Vocation dwindled and only a few old monks shuffled through the cloisters. On the edge of the monastery woods lived an old rabbi who was known for his wisdom and holiness.

One day the abbot of the monastery decided to visit the rabbi and opened his heart to him. With tears flowing from his eyes, the abbot confided his heartaches to the holy man. After a pause, the rabbi said: "you and your brothers are serving God with heavy hearts. I'll give you a message, but you can only repeat it once. After that, no one must say it aloud again." The rabbi looked straight at the abbot and said, "The Messiah is among you." After hearing that short message, the abbot left without saying a word.

Back in the monastery, the abbot gathered the monks together and told them that he received a message from the rabbi which, once told, the message must never be spoken aloud again. Then he looked at his brothers and said, "The rabbi said that one of us is the Messiah."

The monks were startled. "Is Brother John the Messiah? Or Father Thomas? Or Brother Francis? Am I the Messiah? What could this mean?"

As time went by, the monks began to trust one another with a very special reverence. They began to live with one another as men who had finally found something. That "something" was the awareness that Christ was in their midst.

The experience could likewise apply to us if we, too, become more aware that God, who is hidden in the humanity of people, is present in our midst.

### Scared of Last Judgment

A man says: "What scares me is when God says to Mother Teresa on Judgment Day, 'Teresa, you should have done more good works.' And there I am---right behind her!"

## PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

### Celebrant:

Let us pray, my friends, for the fulfillment of humanity's yearnings:

*Be born in us, O Lord, be born in the world.*

### Lector:

The church is called to rejoice and be grateful, and yet we yearn because there is so much more to come. . . so in hope and anticipation, we pray,

We have tasted peace, yet so many live in the midst of violence and war. . . so in hope and anticipation, we pray,

We promote justice, but so many live without work, housing, healthcare, or adequate education. . . so in hope and anticipation, we pray,

We live in freedom, but so many are held captive by inequality, prejudice, and lack of opportunity. . . so in hope and anticipation, we pray,

Our community is grateful for so much, but people among us are still sick, discouraged, dying, and grieving. . . so in hope and anticipation, we pray,

### Celebrant:

God of hope, we thank you and rejoice for all you have already done for us. We see your work in many ways and places. But our yearning is not yet satisfied, and there are those who have lost hope. Keep us mindful of your promises and ready to welcome your Son among us. We ask this in his holy name. Amen.

## **A 2ND COLLECTION WILL BE TAKEN JUST BEFORE THE FINAL BLESSING AT OUR MASSES THIS WEEKEND, DECEMBER 12-13, 2020.**

### **It is for the Retirement Fund for Religious.**

**Make a difference.** "Every dollar makes a difference in covering our expenses," says a Trappist abbot. Hundreds of US religious communities struggle to provide for aging members because most senior Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests served for little pay. Your gift to the Retirement Fund for Religious helps these communities bridge the gap, offering support for medications, nursing care, and other necessities.

**Please be generous.**

## REMINDERS:

Our St. Thomas Indian Mission 2021 CALENDARS are here. Please take one for your family.

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To all parishioners, please use your numbered official parish contribution envelope for your contribution. It will facilitate counting and posting of your Sunday contribution.

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Our Christmas Masses will be on Thursday, Dec. 24th at 4:30 PM and on Friday, Dec. 25th at 8:30 AM.

## The Boxes of Contribution Envelopes for 2021 are now ready for pick up after Mass.

### Some parishioners are assigned a new number.

**Reason:** We have 71 existing parishioners and there are 137 envelope numbers; 66 of those numbers are not in use; so it would help the parish save money by moving some parishioners into the empty slots. Sorry for the inconvenience.

### Below is the list of parishioners whose number will be changing:

The number on the left, before the name, is the existing number of the parishioner, until Dec. 31, 2020.

**The number on the right, after the name, highlighted, is the new number of the parishioner concerned, beginning January 1, 2021:**

72	Leatrice Brown	71
75	Margaret Niesen	69
76	Martha Herrera	68
80	Rick & Linda Hirsch	65
83	Stan & Patricia Krajewski	64
85	Amelia Lopez Ortiz	63
87	Dorothea Montague	61
88	Alexandra Morales	59
92	Lawrence & Sonia Thaczak	56
93	Tony & Barbara Sigala	55
95	Mary Scribner	50
97	Jennifer Rico	49
98	Hannah Finnegan	48
99	Gordon and Dolores Osborne	47
100	Joanne & Sharon Bradley	46
103	Carlos & Rosie Gonzalez	45
104	Michael Valdez	43
105	Richard Rasmussen	40
107	Francis & Karen Sanregret	39
109	Paul Skokandich	38
126	Steve Taylor	34
128	Juan & Ofelia Perez	30
129	Mr. & Mrs. McKeveny	29
130	Lorenza Garcia	27
137	John & Gina Arcenas	17

### Parishioners' Contributions:

December 5-6 Sunday Mass Collections = \$ 803.00  
December 1-6 Via Online Giving = \$ 435.00



Last Monday, December 7 at 1:00 pm, Bishop Robert McElroy held a zoom meeting with all of us pastors in the diocese of San Diego to address the new COVID 19 state regulations.

### California is on strict lockdown once more.

We are still allowed to celebrate Mass but only outdoors, even in winter. If it becomes too cold, we may use heaters or resort to streamed Masses again. Let us pray that God's will be done always.

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