

DECEMBER 12, 2021



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THIRD
Sunday
OF *Advent*

Whoever has two cloaks should share
with the person who has none.
And whoever has food should do likewise.

Luke 3:11

Rejoice

The prophetic writings we hear in today's scriptures call us to rejoice and celebrate the goodness of God. Zephaniah, Isaiah, Saint Paul, and John the Baptist in Luke's Gospel all follow the rich tradition of the Biblical prophets, a tradition that reaches full expression in Jesus. The prophets warn that human failings have truly disastrous consequences. All are summoned to repent, and to change their lives. Today we hear the Good News that God's gracious love exceeds and overcomes all human corruption. God has not given up on us. Indeed, God keeps pursuing us, and eagerly seeks to reconcile with us. God's initiative to set the world aright culminates with Jesus, whose coming John the Baptist announces. John's prophetic message summons us to join in God's reconciling work, by living generously and justly in our daily lives. As we rejoice in God's grace, we then extend the fruits of this grace to all.

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Saints and Special Observances

Sunday: Third Sunday of Advent
Monday: St. Lucy
Tuesday: St. John of the Cross

Readings for the Week

Monday: Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a; Ps 25:4-5ab, 6, 7bc-9; Mt 21:23-27
Tuesday: Zep 3:1-2, 9-13; Ps 34:2-3, 6-7, 17-19, 23; Mt 21:28-32
Wednesday: Is 45:6b-8, 18, 21b-25; Ps 85:9-14; Lk 7:18b-23
Thursday: Is 54:1-10; Ps 30:2, 4-6, 11-12a, 13b; Lk 7:24-30
Friday: Gn 49:2, 8-10; Ps 72:1-4ab, 7-8, 17; Mt 1:1-17
Saturday: Jer 23:5-8; Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19; Mt 1:18-25
Sunday: Mi 5:1-4a; Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19; Heb 10:5-10; Lk 1:39-45



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Today's Readings

First Reading — Shout for joy! Sing joyfully! Be glad and exult! The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a mighty savior (Zephaniah 3:14-18a).

Psalm — Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel (Isaiah 12).

Second Reading — Rejoice! The Lord is near. Make your requests known to God (Philippians 4:4-7).

Gospel — John tells his hearers to share their possessions with the needy; be honest; do not threaten or accuse others falsely (Luke 3:10-18).

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Prayer Of The Week

O God, who see how your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord's Nativity, enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Reflection question:

How am I faithfully awaiting the Lord's Nativity?

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Treasures From Our Tradition

Years ago, the trick question on religion quizzes would be to name all the liturgical colors, or the colors of the vestments worn at Mass. Rose is a color seldom seen, used at most two days a year. Today, "Gaudete Sunday," is one of those days. The name of the day is drawn from an opening verse in the old Latin Mass texts: Gaudete is Latin for "Rejoice!" This year's Gospel certainly reflects that mood as Elizabeth feels her infant within her leaping for joy at the presence of Mary. Mary's visit to her aged cousin is an act of compassion between women, as two kinswomen who are bearing children into the world share their joy.

Some churches retain the custom of having the priest wear rose vestments today, and many will use a rose candle in the Advent wreath. Violet is the official color for Advent and Lent, but many parishes employ different hues for each season, trying to keep them distinct. In medieval times, dye was costly, and poor parishes used unornamented plain cloth for vestments. Dyes were expensive and some colors, particularly purple, difficult to achieve. In England, purple dye was made from mollusks, yielding at best a deep indigo or blue and not the desired violet. Thus, the color of Advent in the British Isles has long been a deep blue, reminding many people of Mary's presence at the heart of the Advent mystery. That theology is largely unplanned: it's all because of the clams!

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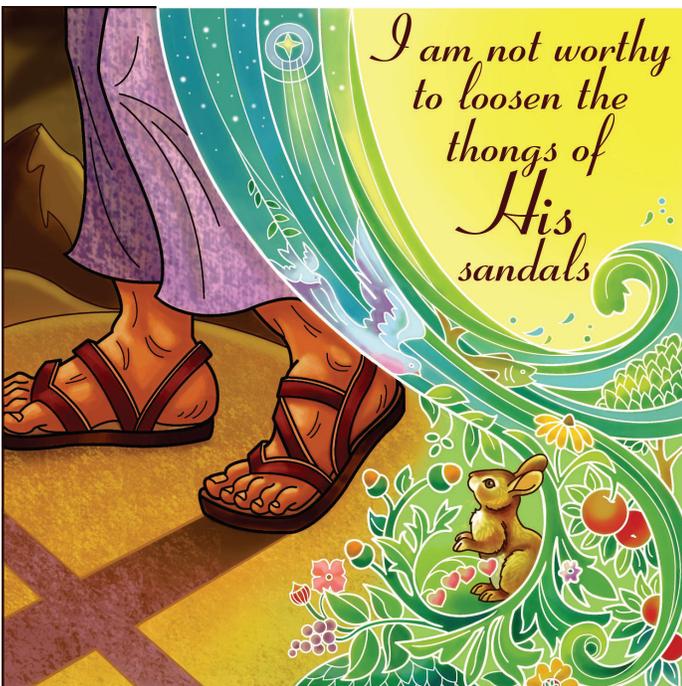
Not Ready? No Problem!

While Advent is a beautiful time to prepare for the coming of the Lord, we often get so caught up in all the things we do to prepare for Christmas that we forget Advent all together. The readings remind us that in spite of the stress we may feel thinking about how close Christmas is, we are called to rejoice for the Lord is near.

The stress we feel may be from fear: Fear that I won't get the shopping done by Christmas, fear that people won't like the gifts I bought, or fear that I forgot someone that should be on my list. But did you ever notice how much easier it is when you have someone to shop with you, or write the Christmas cards, or decorate the tree? "Shout for joy. . .fear not!" says the prophet Zephaniah in the first reading. (Zeph 3:14) He tells us the Lord is not coming to punish us for waiting till the last minute to put up the tree. The prophet says the Lord is in our midst, we are not alone. "He has turned away your enemies" (Zeph 3:15), enemies like fear, doubts, and loneliness.

And as if that wasn't good enough, he says that the Lord rejoices over us! How many times have you wondered if you could ask the Lord for help? Zephaniah reminds us that the Lord is happy to help. And St. Paul says the same thing in the second reading: "Have no anxiety at all. . .make your requests known to God." (Phil 4:6) That is where Advent comes in. We can look forward to the Lord's presence in our lives. We can be confident of his love for us. That is why faith and hope are central to the theme of Advent. Our faith in God's love for us gives us hope that he will support us in our weakness and fill us with the joy he has over us.

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An Advent Prayer

May the God of peace make us completely holy.
May God keep us blameless in spirit, soul and body
for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Forever faithful is the One who calls us—God our Father!

Expectant, let us live in joyful hope
for the revelation of the glory
of our God and Savior, Christ Jesus!

To him be glory forever!

Come, Lord Jesus! Your grace be with us all.

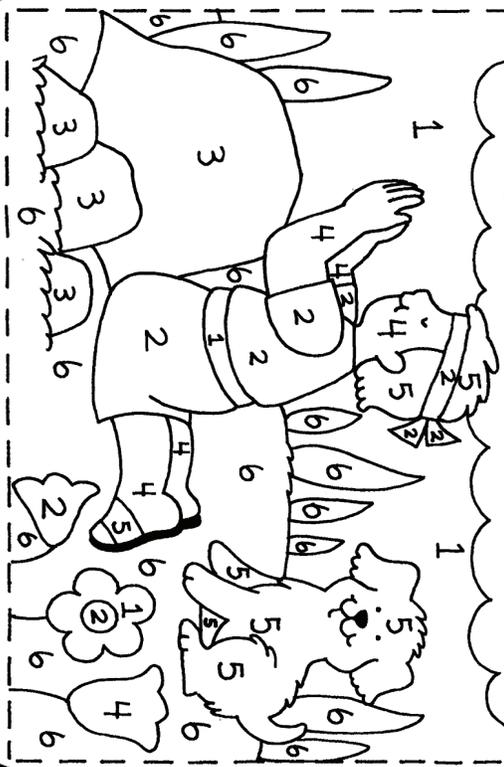
—From Come, Lord Jesus by Lucien Deiss, CSSp, copyright 1976, 1981, Lucien Deiss. Published by World Library Publications. p. 127

God's Word for Children

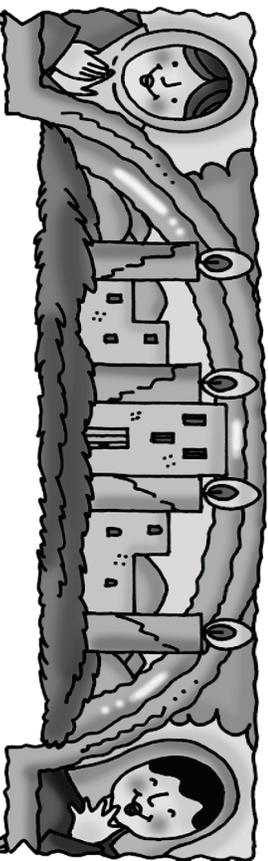
God loves us very much and wants us to come to Jesus with our problems. Color this picture by the numbers. Then cut it out and hang it in your room.

- 1=blue
- 2=yellow
- 3=gray
- 4=pink
- 5=brown
- 6=green

When you are worried and upset —
 Don't let these thoughts increase.
 Pray to God about them
 And give thanks for God's peace.

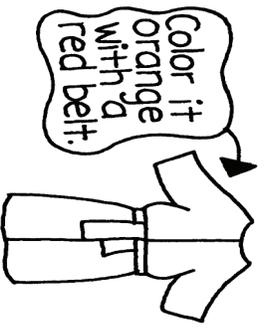


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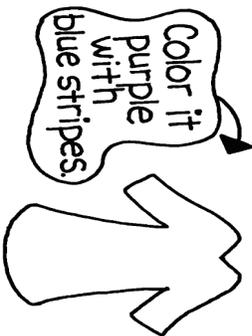


Third Sunday of Advent

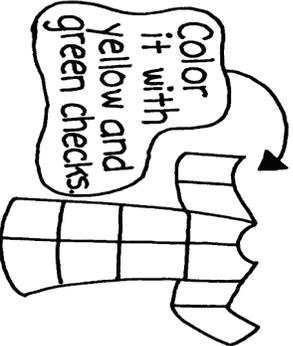
John the Baptist wanted people to share. Pretend that these coats are yours and you have let your friends wear them. Color each coat according to the directions. Then draw a happy friend inside of each one.



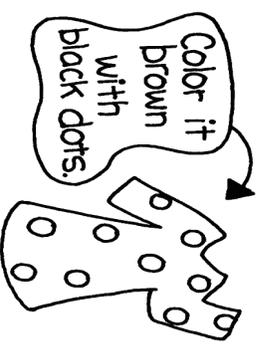
Color it orange with a red belt.



Color it purple with blue stripes.



Color it with yellow and green checks.



Color it brown with black dots.



CATHOLIC CORNER

GAUDETE!

The Third Sunday of Advent is called Gaudete, the Latin word meaning "Rejoice!" Today's readings contain many words with the same meaning as "rejoice." They are printed here.

Color and decorate them so they really represent rejoicing.

Why do we rejoice this day? Because Christmas is almost here!

The priest wears rose-colored vestments at Mass today.

We light the third candle on the Advent wreath, the pink one, to remind us that now there is more light than darkness.

Christ our Light will soon be here!

Sing Joyfully

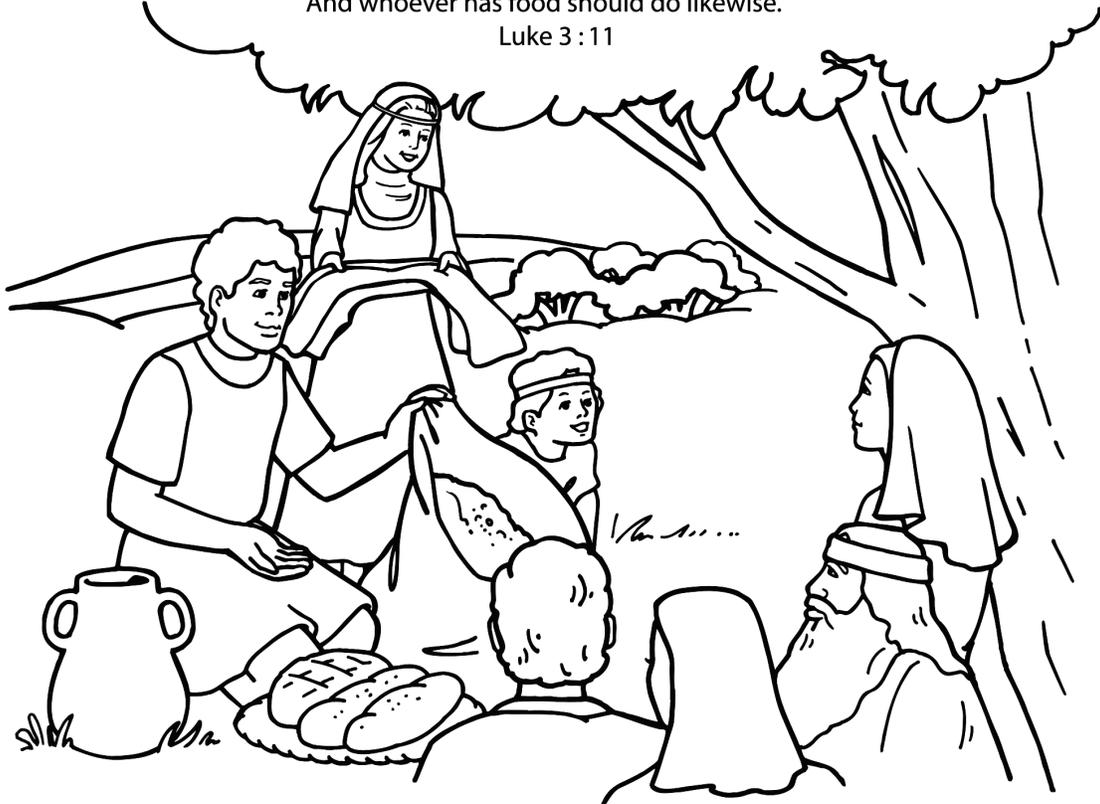
Be Glad

Shout for Joy

Cry out with Joy

"Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none.
And whoever has food should do likewise."

Luke 3 : 11





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REJOICE

Today is known as *Gaudete*—Rejoice—Sunday, the day’s Latin nickname is taken from today’s ancient official Entrance Antiphon, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near.” The optional rose vestments—reminiscent of winter’s early morning skies as the solstice draws near, the festal organ music, the floral arrangements, all these ancient traditions together with the antiphon are meant to anticipate, in sight and sound, the soon-to-break-upon-us Christmas joy. How well today’s scriptures illustrate the struggle between Advent’s contrasting moods: “joyful expectation” in light of Christ’s nativity, and “serious repentance” inspired by John the Baptist’s preaching, reminding us that Christ’s next coming—at death or at the end of time—will be for judgment as well as redemption.

JOY AND EXULTATION

Joy and exultation ring through the first reading, as Zephaniah’s ancient messianic prophecy pictures God “rejoicing over (us) with gladness, renewing (us) in his love, singing joyfully because of (us) as one sings at festivals.” This joyful God is not distant: the prophet declares twice that God “is in your midst.” Zephaniah so trusts this joyful God’s love for us that he declares our deliverance “a done deal”: both from inward fear and guilt—“the Lord has removed the judgment against you”—and from external threats: “he has turned away your enemies.” The Responsorial Psalm, from Advent’s principal prophet, Isaiah, echoes an exultant joy that should prompt us to be “confident and unafraid,” “for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.” Paul likewise exhorts the Philippians—and us—to joy, to a kindness that should be evident to all, to prayer free from anxiety, serene and thankful.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

But then John the Baptist cries out on Jordan’s bank: Repent! Prepare for a Messiah whose baptism “with the Holy Spirit and fire,” unlike John’s water baptism, will utterly transform its recipients. His winnowing fan will clear away the dead wood, bundling wheat and burning chaff in unquenchable fire. If this is going to be “good news” for us, then well might we, like the crowds, tax collectors, and soldiers who first heard John, ask “What should we do?” When John responds to the people then, and to us today, the answer, while supremely challenging, is almost surprisingly simple. Nobody is ordered to abandon the place in which their personal life’s journey or the realities of a history beyond their control have put them. God saves us not despite or apart from our real-life circumstances but in them and through them. Our call now is to practical, generous charity: we are to share clothing and food; practice justice and professional and personal integrity; and be honest toward others and with ourselves. Such is the teaching of the Messiah that John heralded.

TODAY’S READINGS

Zephaniah 3:14–18a
Isaiah 12:2–3, 4, 5–6
Philippians 4:4–7
Luke 3:10–18

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