

Week Three



Sunday, 15th December 2019

A meditation based on Matthew 11:2-11

*Are you the one who is to come,
or should we look for another? (Matthew 11:3)*

What a strange question, especially from John the Baptist. Not only was John Jesus' kinsman, but he had baptized Jesus and seen the Spirit descend upon him. But now that he is in prison and awaiting execution, John seems uncertain. Was he wearied by suffering? Did he need reassurance that he had not laboured in vain? Or had he heard rumours of plots to kill Jesus and couldn't conceive that God's Messiah would suffer death? We just don't know.

But perhaps John wasn't uncertain at all. Maybe it was all part of the plan. What if John was doing exactly what he had always done: helping people recognise the Messiah? Maybe his question wasn't for Jesus himself but for his disciples - to help them believe in Jesus.

John's time was short. Concerned for his followers, he wouldn't want them to fall away once he died. His mission had always been to lead people to Jesus, and he was determined to be faithful to that mission right up to the very end. So it makes sense that before he died, John would want his disciples to know for themselves that Jesus was the Messiah. It makes sense that meeting Jesus would persuade them far more than John's words.

John's question resonates in our hearts too. Is Jesus really who he says he is? Can we find joy in him no matter what? Of course, we already have faith in Jesus, but don't we all need more? So John sends us to Jesus, along with his disciples, so that we can hear and see him.

Today is Gaudete Sunday, a day to rejoice that the Messiah is near. So when you see Jesus on the cross in your church, when you hear him in his word and receive him in Communion, echo John's question: "Are you the one my heart is searching for?" Try to quiet your heart, and listen for his answer. Let him convince you of his love and his grace. And then rejoice with him.

TODAY'S OTHER READINGS

Isaiah 35:1-6, 10

Psalms 146:6-10

James 5:7-10



The 3rd Sunday of Advent symbolizes Joy with the "Shepherd's Candle" reminding us of the Joy the world experienced at the coming birth of Jesus.



As the pink candle sheds additional light on this Advent season, perhaps it can caution us against being killjoys. Might we, in the words of the prophet, share with each other the "oil of gladness" (Isaiah 61:3)? By bringing comfort, compassion, and companionship to all of our holiday activities we infuse each one with joy. In the process, we might reclaim a child-like delight in simple gifts that express our love and happiness at being beloved by a God of infinite joy.

The Tradition of *Antiphons*

The Octave of Advent and tradition of praying the "O Antiphons" begins on December 19th. Plan a time to pray these prayers and to spend time in reflection or discussion with your family or class. [Click here for the prayers](#)

Pray...

"Lord, I believe you are the Son of God."