

This Week's Readings

First Reading: Zephaniah 3: 14-18a.

God is in our midst and will renew us by his love.

Second Reading: Philippians 4: 4-7.

We must rejoice, because now the Lord is very near.

Gospel: Luke 3: 10-18.

The people learn from John how to prepare for the coming of the Messiah.

Points for Reflection

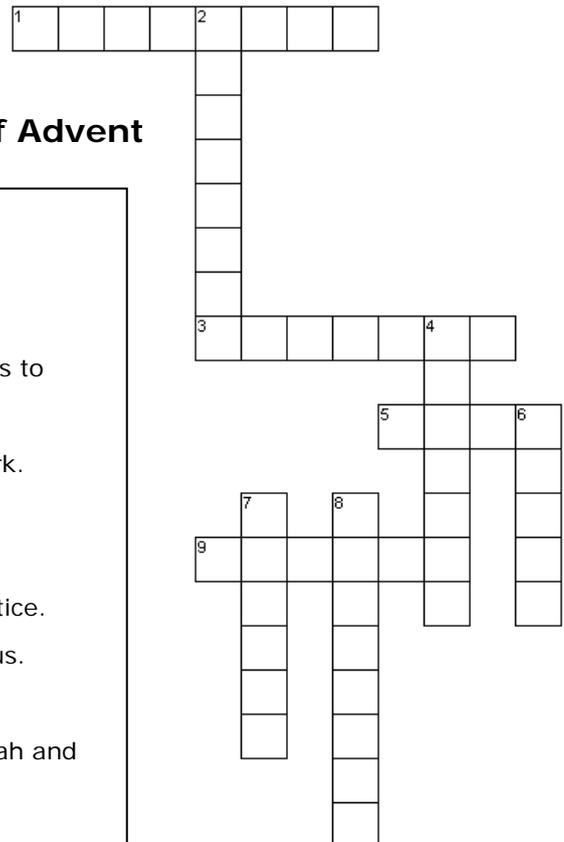
1. This Sunday, the 3rd Sunday of Advent, is designated 'Gaudete Sunday', meaning *Rejoice Sunday*. With Christmas drawing near, the liturgy invites us to be joyful because of the great salvific event we are soon to celebrate, and simultaneously exhorts us to conversion.
2. In the **First Reading**, the prophet Zephaniah preached to the people of Judah and Jerusalem in a period of religious degradation. Pagan idols were worshipped even in Jerusalem, and he chastised the chosen people for their infidelity to God. But he concluded with words of hope and consolation: *"Shout for joy, oh daughter Zion. Sing joyfully, oh Israel. The Lord has removed the judgment against you."*
The motive for such happiness is not only the restoration of Jerusalem, but also the promise of the Messiah, which gives the prophet a foretaste of the presence of God among his people: *"On that day, it shall be said . . . The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a mighty saviour."*
'That day' will be the day that Jesus is born in Bethlehem, then the Lord will be present in the world and will become man among men to be the saviour of all. If Jerusalem rejoiced in waiting for 'that day', the Church now commemorates it every year with an immensely greater joy. Then it was promise and hope, now it is reality, an accomplished fact.
3. St Paul (**Second Reading**), writing to the Philippians from a prison, where he was in chains, urged them to shout for joy: *"Rejoice in the Lord always."* The same exhortation is addressed to us, and the reasons for our joy are crystal clear. God loves us, cares for us, accepts us as we are, lives in us with his grace, is grafting us into his divine nature, and incorporates us into his body to form the mystical body of Christ. He accompanies us every moment of our pilgrimage, he nourishes us with the Eucharist, pardons our sins, comforts us in our sufferings and trials, he has given us his Holy Spirit, Our Lady, the Church, and he is waiting for us in heaven where we will enjoy forever his vision.
4. As preparation for the Lord's coming, St Paul recommends goodness as well as rejoicing. The **Gospel** insists on the same theme through the preaching of John the Baptist, which is aimed at preparing for the coming of the Messiah. Many of those who flocked to hear him were willing to change their heart. *"What shall we do?"* The answer from John was prompt and practical. He proposed a programme of charity and justice. He did not ask for great things but for love of neighbor, expressed in concrete ways, for generosity towards the needy and for the honest practice of one's own profession. In other words, he urged everybody to fulfill all the obligations inherent in their vocation, state and profession. The lesson is clear. It demands practice.

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Parish Priest: Fr Carlo Tei (E-mail: carlotei@gmail.com) Fr Sergio Ticozzi, Fr Augustine Zaw, Sr Mary Leung (helping on Sundays)	Anticipated Sunday Mass Saturdays: 6.00 pm (English) 7.30 pm (Chinese) Public holidays: 8.00 am (Chinese) Weekdays: 7.00 am (Chinese)
Secretary: Miss Tse Choi Ping Office hours: Mon-Fridays: 9.00am – 1.00pm; 2.00pm – 6.00pm Saturdays: 10.00am – 12 noon Sundays: 8.45am – 12 noon	Confessions: Sundays before Mass; Weekdays on call
Parish Council Chairlady: Miss Candy Chan Tel: 23265322	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Thursdays: 2.30 pm 1 st Thursday of the month 8.00 pm

Kids' Corner

Directions: Read the clues and put your answers in the correct boxes of the crossword puzzle. If you need more help, read the *Points for Reflection* on the first page.



The Third Sunday of Advent

Across

1. St Paul recommends rejoicing and g_____.
3. This Sunday is called R_____ Sunday.
5. In the Second Reading, St. _____ encouraged the Philippians to "Rejoice in the Lord always."
9. John the Baptist encouraged people to be _____ in their work.

Down

2. John the Baptist asked people to love their _____.
4. John the Baptist proposed a programme of ch_____ and justice.
6. We should "rejoice in the Lord always" because God _____ us.
7. We must be j_____ because Christmas is coming.
8. The name of the prophet who preached to the people of Judah and Jerusalem in the First Reading.