



A LIGHT

The Third Sunday

IN THE DARKNESS

What Then Should We Do

Luke 3:10-18

Expectation was high for the Messiah's coming; in fact, many asked John the Baptist whether he was the Messiah. But as he explained to the crowds who gathered, his water was no match for the fire of the Holy Spirit to come.

As a prelude to this Gospel reading, John issued a warning: "Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (Lk 3:9). This prompted the worried listeners to ask, "What then should we do?" (v. 10).

While John's directions were specific, the meaning is relevant today: share with anyone who has none; take only your fair share; be satisfied and just and honest. We are to prepare for the Lord by creating "good fruit" from all that he's given us.

- Do I represent Jesus' teachings in my interactions with my children, family, friends, and neighbors?
- Do I live with the integrity of a follower of Christ?
- Am I preparing my heart for the birth of Jesus?

In your Advent prayer, ask yourself, "What then should I do?" When you act with the intention of preparing for the Messiah, the possibilities for the fruit that you might bear are endless. With God, nothing is impossible!

ADVENT
Prayer



**Thank you, God,
for all of your
blessings,
especially for the
people in my life.**

*Please help me to stay
on the Advent path,
and keep my heart
focused on Christ
in all that I say and do
as I prepare for his holy
birth at Christmas.*

Amen.



INSPIRATION FOR THE SEASON



Gaudete Sunday

This Sunday, the Third Sunday of Advent, is known as Gaudete Sunday, or Rejoice Sunday. How great is that? It's a reminder that our preparation, though it includes repentance and efforts to bear fruit, is a joyful endeavor. Our Lord is coming!

On the first Sunday of Advent, we were encouraged to live so that our hearts are not weighed down with the worries of this world. Today's first reading from Zephaniah is a reminder to celebrate. God brings goodness and salvation! By the pink candle that we light this week during our Advent meditation, we can see that the time is near. The light is returning to the world. What happiness we can enjoy as we make straight the paths! We can be full of joy knowing that when the Messiah comes, we will celebrate with him.

FOR REFLECTION:

How might we live more joyfully this Advent and Christmas season?



Daily LIVING

"It is Christmas every time you let God love others through you."

— Mother Teresa of Calcutta

FAMILY FOCUS

Recycle Christmas Cards

With your kids, make gift tags using old Christmas cards. Cut the backs off the cards and punch a hole in one corner. (You may cut the cards into smaller cards if they are large.) Tie a piece of ribbon

or yarn through the hole and you have a homemade gift tag! Put six tags in a baggie and give them to members of your community to use with a local parish or community toy collection.



TALK About It

As you're making this craft, ask the children: "Why do we celebrate Jesus being born each Christmas? Why do you think this is 'Good News'?"

SYMBOLS of the Season

Advent is rich with sacred symbols. The Scriptures are filled with images of light and darkness, cacophony and silence, waiting and fulfillment. The season's color is deep purple, reflecting the penitential and preparatory nature of the season. Watch for these symbols:

- **Candlelight** – Christ is the light of the world
- **Evergreen** – In Jesus, we are given the gift of eternal life
- **Water** – We recall our baptism and are born anew in Jesus
- **Chant** – We await the birth of the babe in the manger
- **Angels** – Witnesses to the Good News
- **Star** – The cosmic sign that the King of Kings has been born

Catechism CONNECTION

"Let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice" (Ps 105:3). Although [we] can forget God or reject him, He never ceases to call every [one of us] to seek him, so as to find life and happiness."

— *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 30