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| 3rd Sunday of Advent – Gaudete Sunday |
| Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11 |
| 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 |
| John 1:6-8, 19-28 |

**A. Text and Context**

* The author of the gospel that we have today is John the evangelist and he wrote about the man named John the Baptist
* So do not be confused, the gospel writer is John the Evangelist and he writes about the prophet John the Baptist
* And as the gospel elaborates today, John the evangelist describes JB as the man sent by God to prepare for the coming of Jesus
* And the people are curious who this JB is? There is an investigation or a scrutiny as to who JB is. They asked questions are you a prophet, are you the Christ, are you Elijah?
* The people are curious because he is doing baptism, and so it means that there is something new
* Because baptism is practiced in the New Testament times as a ritual of purification. What is happening?
* People still know that John is the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth and Zechariah is a high priest in the temple in Jerusalem
* That is why the people who asked JB who he is are actually priests and Levites. They are the members of the priestly families in Jerusalem
* And what is the reply of JB? I am not the Christ, I am not Elijah, I am not the prophet
* If you are not Christ, Elijah or the prophet then why do you baptize? Here, JB answered that I baptize you with water but there is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one coming after me whom even the strap of his sandal I am not worthy to untie
* There is a hidden message why JB gave the answer that someone among you whom you did not recognize
* There is something greater that will unfold before their very eyes someone who will soon come, who will perform greater than the ordinary rite of purification or cleansing because that someone is no other than the Messiah who will save them
* Mashia – Hebrew - Anointed one
* The Jews believed that the anointed one or the Messiah is the one sent by God to take care of the chosen people, to take care of them whom they have waited for thousands of years. All the Jews are waiting for the Messiah

**B. Human Situation**

* In our ordinary life as Christians how do we relate ourselves to the joyful waiting of the Messiah?
* We are all aware that the Messiah has already arrived. By December 25 it will be 2000 and 20 years since Jesus was born
* And we keep on repeating this celebration in the liturgy for more than 2020 years! Why?
* Because God is constantly reminding us to renew ourselves, to mend our ways, to turn away from our bad actions in order to prepare ourselves to embrace Jesus anytime that he will suddenly come
* That is why what God is asking us is conversion. And what kind of conversion it is? It is daily conversion
* But we ask this question has humanity improved? Or is the world more peaceful today because Jesus came to bring peace to the people in the world
* It seems not. In fact, it seems the world has more troubles than ever. Our very selfish neighbor seems to be even more selfish
* Our friend who is very mean is even getting meaner. What is the reason why there is no change?
* When I was younger I cannot understand why Jesus has to save us again when he already saved us when he died on the cross
* Later on, I begin to understand even though we are already saved we still have many things to comply in order to cooperate the with the gift of salvation
* And that is to follow all he has taught us, to be charitable, to be forgiving and Jesus teaches us to be charitable especially to those who wronged us
* But every time that we see your neighbor you dislike so much, you don’t even want to cross the line
* How can we prepare ourselves for our own salvation if that is the situation?
* So salvation is free but you have the choice to accept it or not because God respects our freedom
* If we accept it, we have to satisfy the conditions required. If not, we continue with our own sinful ways
* That is why it is now 2020 because God is constantly waiting, patiently waiting for all of us to be converted whole and entire to go back to him
* If you have followed carefully the message of Fatima, the visionary Lucia was told by Mary that the cup of justice is already overflowing and what year was that? That was in 1917
* We really don’t know when will be the Parousia or the 2nd coming but a message like that should hasten us all towards conversion because God will not be forever waiting
* Definitely, the patience of God will also run out and the hour of mercy will also end and where the hour of mercy ends the hour of justice begins and if we have not renewed ourselves it will all be late at that time

**C. Challenge**

* This is the essence of the 3rd Sunday of Advent. It is the joyful waiting for the Messiah
* If we have already prepared ourselves and we are ready, naturally, we are excited of the arrival of the Messiah
* But if we are not yet prepared, we will be like the Jews of Long ago who did not even recognize Jesus when he arrived
* They have to investigate and scrutinize first if he is really the Messiah and if we are now sure that would be the time to believe in him? That will be too late
* We do not need to scrutinize anymore. All we have to do is to practice daily conversion
* To practice the teachings about love, charity, forgiveness, reconciliation etc. in our daily work, daily obligations, daily duties
* This joyful waiting is pictured in the first reading I rejoice heartily in the Lord, in the psalms Mary rejoices in bearing the Messiah in the 2nd reading St. Paul said rejoice always; because these people are ready for the arrival of our Lord
* We will only wait in sorrow if we are not prepared. We wait in fear when the master will soon come and we have so many errors still uncorrected
* The spirit of joyful waiting cannot be separated from our daily renewal of our lives
* Is it not beautiful that everyday in our lives we are always happy and joyful while we still wait for the 2nd coming of the Lord?