

FR.TK.REFLECTIONS 3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR -B- 2024:

WHAT ABOUT US! WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

The 3rd Sunday of Advent is liturgically known as **Gaudete Sunday (Joyful Sunday)**. The first Sunday was **hope**, second was **peace**. All these we need as we prepare for the coming of our Lord. Today is the midpoint of Advent there is change from **repentance to joyful waiting**.

Our first reading (Zep. 3:14-18) The prophet is speaking about darkening cloud of judgement that is looming, but there is a shift with sunlight emerging as he gives **hope** of the coming **joy of deliverance, Shout for joy daughter of Zion**, the Lord is in your midst, mighty Saviour. He is giving them hope that God will renew them. Don't we all need this assurance when we are about to give up?

St. Paul's letter (Phi 4:4-7) shares too message of joy, **rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again rejoice**. Don't confuse the fact that despite the joy, Paul was not writing this letter from a beach resort somewhere in North coast of Mombasa, Watamu Kenya, or from beautiful Malibu beach Southern California while enjoying a glass of wine from Napa, no he was writing from prison, yet he is telling the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord. He is too inviting us to rejoice despite the challenges and hardships we might be undergoing in life. Perhaps you recovering from **surgery, illness, loss of a loved one, loss of job, broken unfaithful relationship, failed marriage with impending divorce, family dispute due to property inheritance, challenge in decision making over your vocation or perhaps having midlife crisis** which is depressing and stressing

you, Paul is giving us a remedy from prison to have **courage, trust and** rejoice in the Lord for our salvation is near. It doesn't matter on whatever condition or environment we are in what matters for our joy is our **connection and relationship with the Lord**. Let us not be pulled down by challenges of daily undertakings, we have a life to live and we are not alone. Christ is there and he will calm the rough sea within us and give us tranquility.

The season of advent may not bring us physical joy and peace as Christmas preparations are so much focusing on the outside and can produce a lot of **friction, tension, anxiety, exhaustion and even debts**. All trying to make everything look perfect, **christmas trees, decorations, perfect food, presents, cards** and even **guests**, all will cause stress, anxiety, anger and even resentments due to external manifestation and we end up in forgetting to prepare and decorate our hearts. We need to balance the inside and outside.

The proper inner Christmas preparation is manifested in the gospel today (Lk. 3:10-18) with a focus on the inside. After John preaching on **repentance and forgiveness of sins**, many were touched by the spirit and reacted by asking **what should we do**. The answers were given accordingly, **anyone with two tunics to share with who has none, those with food to share with those have nothing, tax collectors called not to collect more than prescribed, soldiers not to practice extortion, bribes false accusation, government, officials, politician to stop fooling people with empty promises and empty soothing rhetoric, preachers to preach Christ not themselves or other people, keeping off entertainments in homilies thus avoiding long homilies!** John is calling all of us to look into ourselves and see what to rectify and change. His preaching is

prompting us to soul search and see the best way to prepare for the Lord. we must find ways and means to welcome him by changing our hearts. We must remove the darkness of **bad deeds** manifested in **cheating, corruption, greedy and intimidations through repentance thus making space in our hearts for light, life, love, peace, joy sharing and caring these** are practical ways John is calling us to act on as we prepare for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ this Christmas.

COME LORD JESUS CHRIST: