

ALL SAINTS NEWS

11th December 2022
Advent 3

Third Sunday in Advent – Gaudete Sunday A Look at Today's Readings

The third Sunday of Advent is known as "Gaudete Sunday." In the readings, we hear about miracles associated with the Messianic age, its coming, and what we need to do to prepare. We also learn about the doubts of John the Baptist, how he dealt with them, and the blessing that makes us even more fortunate than John was.

The third Sunday of Advent known as Gaudete Sunday

Its name is taken from the entrance antiphon of the Mass, which is:

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near.

This is a quotation from Philippians 4:4-5, and in Latin, the first word of the antiphon is Gaudete (Latin, "rejoice"; pronounced in three syllables: gau-de-te).

The significance is that:

Advent is the season of preparing for the arrival of the Lord Jesus (both his first coming and his second coming), and by the third Sunday of Advent, we are most of the way through the season. Thus, it is appropriate to rejoice as we see the goal of the season approaching: "The Lord is near."

The Old Testament Reading - Isaiah

The first reading is Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10. It opens with a prophecy that the desert region will rejoice and sing and bloom with abundant flowers. The reason is: "They will see the glory of the Lord, the splendour of our God." It then contains an exhortation to strength and courage, and explains the reason why:

Here is your God, he comes with vindication.

With divine recompense he comes to save you.

Then will the eyes of the blind be opened, the ears of the deaf be cleared.

Then will the lame leap like a stag, then the tongue of the mute will sing.

Those whom the LORD has ransomed will return and enter Zion singing, crowned with everlasting joy; they will meet with joy and gladness, sorrow and mourning will flee.

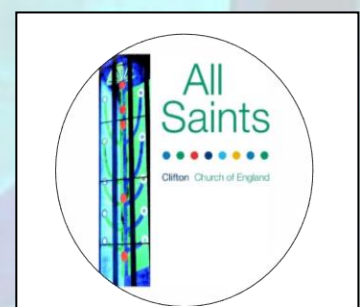
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The Prophecy

This prophecy uses nature imagery to convey the sense of joy that the Jewish people would experience upon their return from exile. This is what is meant by the statements that the desert will sing and be covered with flowers that “see the glory of the Lord.” It depicts God’s coming with vindication to save his people after their exile, and it depicts urges patience until it arrives. It portrays God working miracles among his people, such as healing the blind, the deaf, the lame, and the mute. It promises that he will bring back those he has ransomed and give them everlasting joy, from which sorrow and mourning will flee.

Taken up into the Christological realm, this passage points to the joy of those God redeems through Jesus from their sins and the deliverance and spiritual homeland that he provides. It contains elements that point forward to both the first advent of Christ—when he performed miracles such as curing the blind, the deaf, the lame, and the mute. And it contains elements that point forward to the ultimate consummation that will occur with his second advent, when “death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away” (Rev. 21:4).

What about the Psalm?

The responsorial Psalm is Psalm 146:6-10. It contains a series of praises of God, stressing the good things that he does: He keeps faith forever, secures justice for the oppressed, gives food to the hungry, sets captives free, etc. Among the notable things that the Psalm declares is this:

The Lord gives sight to the blind.

The LORD shall reign forever; your God, O Zion, through all generations.

The Psalm Maintains the Theme:

The Psalm gives voice to the worship of God’s faithful on behalf of his wondrous deeds, including miracles, such as the restoration of sight to blind people. This particular miracle was also mentioned in the third reading, and it will become significant again in the Gospel reading. The conclusion of the reading—the statement that God will reign forever—gives voice to our confidence in God and his ever-present providence in our lives.

On a Christological level, it also points to the eternal reign of the Son, which has been inaugurated with the first coming and which will be consummated at the second coming.

Second Reading is from the Epistle of James (thought to be the brother of Jesus)

The second reading is James 5:7-10. It contains an exhortation to be patient until the coming of the Lord. James compares the patience the reader must have to that of a farmer, who must wait until his crop “receives the early and the late rains.” As in the Psalm for today, James exhorts the readers to strength and courage (“Make your hearts firm”) because “the coming of the Lord is at hand.” He also tells them not to complain about each other, that they may not be judged. Finally, he tells them that the Judge is standing before the gates and that they should follow the prophets as an example of hardship and patience.

What was James’ Message?

Rain did not fall year-round in Israel, but only at certain times. The early rains took place from mid-October to mid-November, and later rains took place from mid-December to mid-January. There were also rains in March and April. Farmers were thus dependent on the arrival of these rains for the success of their crops and had to wait patiently for the rains to come and the crops to ripen.

The prophets, likewise, had to endure hardship and patience, particularly because their prophetic mission caused opposition—just as the Christian message did (and does). These facts make both the farmers and the prophets models of patience and endurance for Christians in James’s day—and in ours. Ultimately, God will reward our faith and patience, but we must be prepared to wait and to endure hardship.

As we do so, we must live in harmony with each other. One manifestation of this is resisting the urge to complain about each other, for in the way we judge others, we too will be judged. (That is, if we are unmerciful to others, we will obtain less mercy for ourselves.) This latter statement is noteworthy because of how well it harmonizes with things Jesus says. James does not directly quote his kinsman, Jesus, in his letter, but as this passage shows, his thought was permeated by that of Christ.

And Today's Gospel

The Gospel reading is Matthew 11:2-11. The reading contains two parts:

In the first, John the Baptist, who is in prison, sends messengers to Jesus to ask "Are you the one who is to come or should we look for another?" Jesus replies by telling them to report to John what they have seen: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them. He adds: And blessed is the one who takes no offense at me.

In the second part of the reading, as the messengers are preparing to leave, Jesus pays tribute to John the Baptist by asking the crowd a series of rhetorical questions about why they went out into the desert to see John when he was ministering. The implied answer to the questions is "no" (no, they did not go out to see a reed shaken by the wind or someone dressed in fine clothing) until he names going out to see a prophet. At this point Jesus affirms that they did go out to see a prophet, "and more than a prophet." He then identifies why John is more than a prophet: He is the fulfilment of Malachi 3:1, in which it is said:

Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way before you.

Amen, I say to you, among those born of women there has been none greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

How do we understand this?

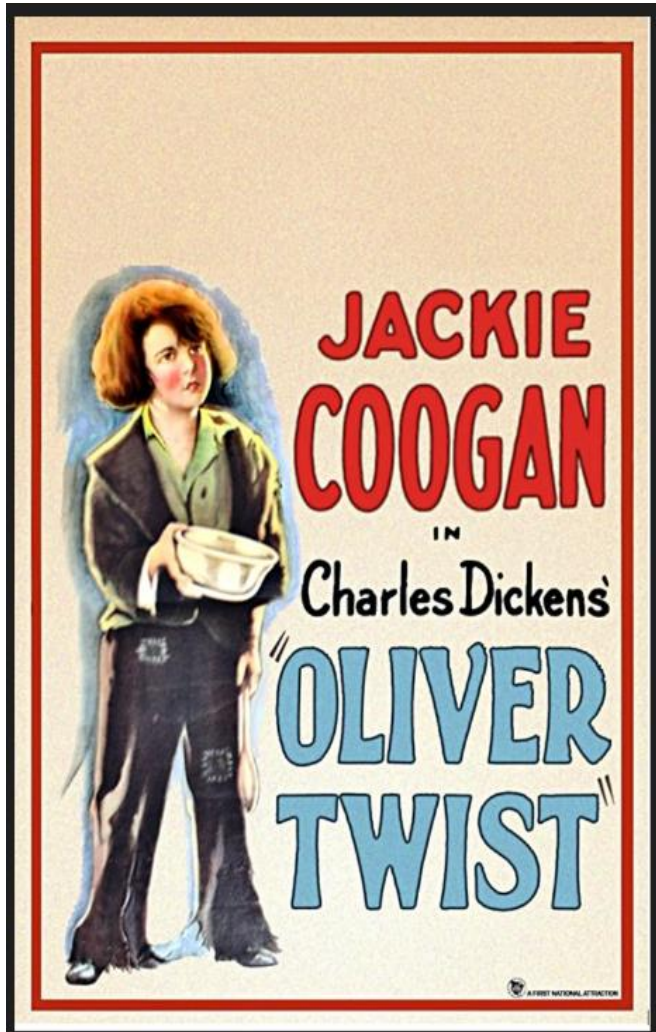
The Jewish people in Jesus' day had certain ideas about what the Messiah would be like and what he would do. It was common to envision him as an earthly king who would deliver Israel from the dominion of the hated Romans by violent revolution. John the Baptist may have shared some of this expectation, for even though he had received a revelation pointing to Jesus as the Lamb of God.

Despite this revelation, Jesus' subsequent actions (his failure to start a revolution?) apparently caused John to question whether Jesus was the Messiah. Rather than lose faith or let his doubts eat away at him, John decided to confront the issue directly, and so he sent his disciples to ask Jesus if his understanding of Jesus' Messiahship was correct. Jesus indicated that it was, pointing to the fact that he had been fulfilling the predicted miracles and the preaching of the good news proper to the Messianic age.

One of these miracles was the recovery of sight to the blind (already mentioned in the first reading and the responsorial Psalm). Jesus then states that those who do not take offense at him (i.e., who do not reject him) are blessed. In the original context, it applies to John the Baptist (he will be blessed for maintaining faith in Jesus, despite his doubts).

The same principle, however, applies to us as well. As John's messengers are departing, Jesus pays tribute to their master, stating that he was a genuine prophet—and even more than that—he was the messenger prophesied in Malachi, who would be the herald of the Messiah. This makes him the greatest prophet of all, which is why Jesus says that among those born of women, none has been greater than John.

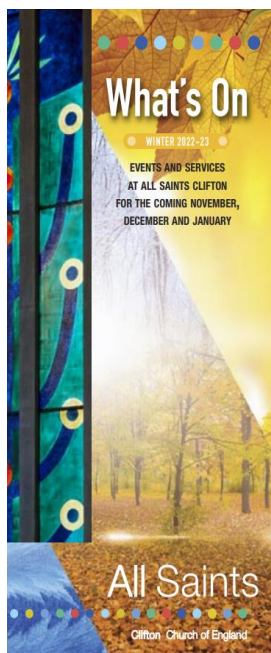




The Bristol Film Festival is delighted to be returning to All Saints Clifton for another silent film screening with live organ music, to celebrate the centenary of Oliver Twist, a movie once believed lost for good.

Join us after dusk – 7.00pm , Wednesday 14th December 2022 - to watch this piece of cinema history come to life. The film will be accompanied by a live, entirely improvised organ recital by the award-winning composer Dr. David Bednall, blending silent cinema with live music to create a unique performance that promises to bring the film to life in a dramatic new interpretation.

If you're on the All Saints' mailing list or a congregation member, contact the [Parish Office](#) for a 10% off special offer code for use when purchasing tickets from the BFF website!



This year the All Saints Christmas Message and Invitation to Christmas Services are included in a colourful guide to services and events covering the period between November 2022 and January 2023 .

Thank you to everyone who has distributed the guide to nearby homes in the Parish – there are just a few more to go out, please take some if you can find a moment.

The delivery of the Christmas Message and information about services and events at All Saints is a vital aspect of our continuing outreach work, your help is very much appreciated.

Thank you.

Fuel Costs: the £66 discount and redistribution

New figures released on 18 Nov 2022 show the Energy Bills Support Scheme successfully provided a £66 discount for 97% of eligible households in England, Scotland and Wales in its first month. This is the first payment made through the EBSS since it launched in October and will see households receive a £400 discount on energy bills paid in 6 monthly instalments.

Vouchers were sent to all 2 million customers with traditional pre-payment meters.

At All Saints, a process has been set up for any of us who might like to redistribute some of this money so that it reaches those who really need it.

Sister Teresa, of the Sisters of the Church, already gives £20 a month (specifically for the pre-payment meters) to around 23 people who are on very low incomes. This £20 tends to last about a week.

If anyone would like to redistribute this discount, or any part of it, to top up these payments, please email martinrobinson56@yahoo.co.uk for details of the Sisters of the Church bank account. Gift Aid can be claimed

Thank you. Georgina Harford and Martin Robinson

All Saints Christmas Carol Service followed by mulled wine

6:00pm to 7:00pm,
Thursday 22nd December

The All Saints' annual Christmas Carol Service
A service of readings and carols followed by mulled wine and mince pies
All are welcome!



All Saints
Clifton Church of England

December 24th

4.30 pm
refreshments from
4.00 pm

The Christmas Story

A short service for all ages telling the story of the first Christmas, with familiar carols around the Crib, Come at 4.00 for hot chocolate and festive nibbles

Christmas at All Saints



CHRISTMAS 2022 SERVICES AND EVENTS

THURSDAY 22ND DECEMBER

All Saints Christmas Carol Service 6:00pm-7.00pm

The All Saints' annual Christmas Carol Service. A service of readings and carols followed by mulled wine and mince pies. All welcome!

SATURDAY 24TH DECEMBER

• Christmas Eve – The Christmas Story 4:30pm

Join us in the Atrium at 4pm for refreshments before The Christmas Story, a short service for all ages, telling the story of the first Christmas with familiar Carols and Blessing of the Crib.

• Christmas Midnight Mass All Saints 10:30pm-11:30pm

Join us for the first Mass of Christmas



SUNDAY 25TH DECEMBER

• Christmas Day Parish Mass 10:00am-11:00am

Christmas Eucharist with Carols All-ages welcome!



It's time to decorate the All Saints Christmas Tree !



If you would like to help put up and decorate the tree for Christmas please come to Church on Saturday 19th December at 10.00am.



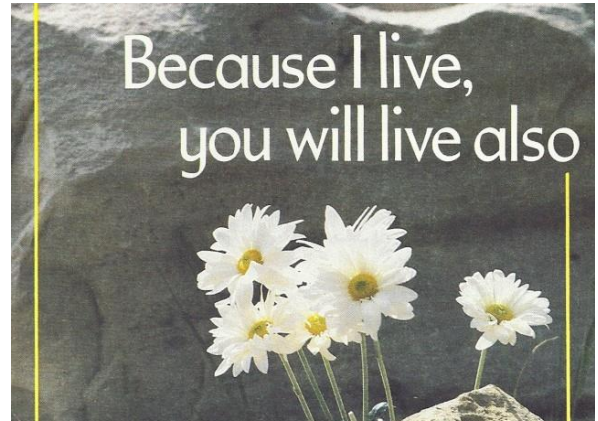
Strong people, tall people and small people are needed to fulfil this important task !

Prayers Requests

'In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live.'

(John 14: 19).

Please let Fr Charles know of anyone who would like to be remembered within the weekly prayer list or anyone who you would like to be remembered in prayer



Those who we remember in our Prayers

Sunday Tabitha Clark, Ruth and Richard Harding, Katie Norman, Neal Gordon, Jean Callow, Joyce Shepherd, Cynthia Ashford Sarah Bradley Sue Hilliar Steve Cooper Ruth Marson Valerie Donkin Alexander and his family

Monday

Tuesday. Diana Verity

Wednesday , Katrina and Katherine King, Philip Miles, Samantha Tucker, Hugh Farry, Ros Hawkins

Thursday

Friday Charlotte Hopkins, Andy & Gina Ford, Elisabeth Morgan, Caroline Semon

Saturday

The Departed

Drusilla Esam Peter Butterfield Molly Sharpley James Johnson-Brown
Jane Selby

Years' Minds - this week we remember

John Marsh Paul Hancock May Brunsden Doreen Joan Tong Peter Bradford
Dulcie Mason John Dowden Joan Flynn

ALL SAINTS PRAYERS

Mon 12	We pray for the people of Mexico. Trump actively campaigned against Mexico's national interests and has caused an existing rift to enlarge. We pray for Mexican immigrants who fear mass deportations. (Today is Poinsettia Day).
Tue 13	Lucy, Martyr at Syracuse, 304 Samuel Johnson, Moralist, 1784 Pray for those who suffer visual impairment or loss. Issues concerned with sight are hugely disabling and often put individuals on the periphery of society. Pray for all who work to reduce the suffering, research the causes, provide medical treatment and campaign for change for positive impact.
Wed 14	Mass 10.00am John of the Cross, Poet, Teacher of the Faith, 1591 Pray for all who suffer from poor mental health. In particular we pray for those who suffer depression, anxiety disorders, relationship problems, grief, addiction, ADHD and learning disability, mood disorder. Pray for their families, carers and medical and support staff.
Thurs 15	Pray for those whose lives are enriched by their 'Companion Animals'. Human lives are often transformed through befriending dogs and cats (and horses) – the lonely, disabled, housebound, poor mental health, prisoners, those in recovery. (Today is Feline Day)
Fri 16	Mass 10.00am Pray for our Emergency Services – the 'Blue Lights'. Christmas normally is a time for joy. Decorations are set up, parties ensue, presents are given and laughter commences. Not many people remember those in law enforcement, fire fighting, ambulance workers and so many others who work tirelessly during the holiday season to keep people safe. Blue Christmas is a holiday dedicated to those who work in that field, giving them an opportunity to be thanked for their services and celebrate Christmas their own way.
Sat 17	Eglantyne Jebb, Social Reformer, Founder of 'Save The Children', 1928 O Adonai (O Lord) and leader of the House of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush and gave him the law on Sinai: Come and redeem us with an outstretched arm.
Sunday 18	4th Sunday of Advent O Radix Jesse (O Root of Jesse) O Root of Jesse, that stands for an ensign of the people, before whom the kings keep silence and unto whom the Gentiles shall make supplication: come, to deliver us, and tarry not. Early Worship 9.00am Parish Mass 10.30

If you would like to give regularly to the Church, please set up a standing order to the church account, details below ;

Parochial Church Council of All Saints

Account No. 65256747

sort code 08 92 99

Gift Aid forms are available from the office

office@allsaintsclifton.org

