

### Our Faith: Magnificat

This hymn of thanksgiving must surely rank as one of the most quoted of all Biblical passages. And as personal as Mary's message is, it also shows her understanding of her place within the history of the tribes of Israel. She knows that despite her humble position, she will be honoured for generations because God has done great things on her behalf. At once she understands what this will mean for her, but also to whom she owes this elevation. She understands that the blessings that all people receive come from God. How often do we forget God when things are going well in our lives, and only remember to turn our thoughts and prayers to him in times of distress? And yet these words are recited every day by Christians worldwide. Let us recall them at all stages of our lives.

### Advent Traditions: Rose

The Third Sunday of Advent is often known by the Latin name 'Gaudete'; literally, 'Rejoice'. This comes from the Latin entrance antiphon appointed for Mass (the sentence of scripture used at the beginning of Mass). It is a Sunday on which we briefly step out of the penitential feel of Advent (characterized by purple – the colour associated with repentance) and rejoice that God will send us a Saviour who will free us from the chains of our sins. As a sign of this, the colour of the vestments, and often the altar frontals and other hangings, lightens. The colour may sometimes look pink, but the correct name for the colour is rose. This colour reminds us that we are looking forward with joy and hope to the Feast of the Nativity of the one whose coming is the fulcrum of all human history, and the source of the world's salvation.

### Collect

*O Lord Jesus Christ, who at thy first coming didst send thy messenger to prepare thy way before thee: grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; that at thy second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight; who livest and reignest with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.*

17<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Third Sunday of Advent



### Witness

Advent is a time for us to revisit the foundations of our Christian faith and demonstrate it more accurately to the world. John the Baptist raises his powerful voice even before the Lord Jesus reveals his mission to us. He was the messenger, the witness who prepared the way. Can we do the same and raise our voice for those less fortunate than ourselves, preparing the way before the Lord returns? St Paul urges us to keep all that is good and use it for the benefit of all. Whatever takes us away from this mission is useless. Praying constantly and being happy as Christians is one way. Doing the Lord's work, caring for those less fortunate than ourselves and enabling those at the margins to participate in the life of the Church is another. 'Make a straight way for the Lord.'

*Today's Gospel: St. John 1: 6-8, 19-28*

### From the Fathers

God's sign is his humility. God's sign is that he makes himself small. He becomes a child. He lets us touch him and he asks for our love. How we would prefer a different sign, an imposing, irresistible sign of God's power and greatness! But his sign summons us to faith and love and thus it gives us hope – this is what God is like. He has power, he is goodness itself. He invites us to become like him. Yes indeed, we become like God, if we allow ourselves to be shaped by this sign, if we ourselves learn humility and hence true greatness; if we renounce violence and use only the weapons of truth and love.

*Pope Benedict XVI*