

# Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete)

December 17, 2023

### From the Desk of Fr. Leo

Toward the end of World War II, a squad of soldiers came to a little Italian village that had been bitterly fought over. In the village square, they found a statue of Christ lying on the ground, battered and broken. Some of the soldiers put it together as best as they could and set it back on its pedestal. But they could not find the hands. Finally, one from the group made a crudely lettered sign which read, "I HAVE NO OTHER HANDS BUT YOURS." Truly, the Christians are the living hands of Christ. They ought always to point to Christ by word and example.

When St. John the Baptist appeared on the scene, he soon won a large following. What attracted the crowds was both the appearance of the man and his intriguing message. St. John practiced what he preached. He was not clothed in fine garments, but in camel's hair which is rough and for a belt he wore a strip of skin that had been tanned. His food was that of the wilderness: honey extracted from wild bees' nests, and roasted grasshoppers. A more rugged picture of an ascetic can hardly be drawn. Yet this is what drew the crowds, for they knew that the prophets of old practiced rugged asceticism and were close to God. The people were hungry for God.

St. John the Baptist was a man of singular caliber. The crowds could not help being attracted by this gaunt ascetical figure, so utterly detached from material comforts in his dress and food habits, so fearless in denouncing the real culprits as "a brood of vipers", so gentle and understanding toward the common person, be he a soldier, official, or ordinary laborer.

The Church needs men and women today who will be witnesses to Christ the Light in all its stark reality: who are not afraid to stand up for the truth of the Gospel (not watering it down to suit the tastes of contemporaries); undaunted in upholding the law of God in the many and varied moral issues of the day which is not always the case in the so-called "theology of compassion"). Who know how, like St. John, to demand much of themselves but are gentle and understanding of others' weaknesses; and whose one goal is not self nor self-advancement, but solely Christ the Lord, in whose light they suffuse, that clear light of a witness sent by God.

There is no need to look for extraordinary opportunities to bear witness to Christ the Light. This

is best done in the little situations of the day, at home or at work, in school or at play: the honest word, the correct answer; a courageous not when affinity or friendship demands, which are contrary to the ideals of Christ, a fearless example when leadership is needed; a teacher's faith professed, a parents' belief manifested. These and many other ways prove the true witnesses to the one who is the Light Divine.

Fr. Leo Alban Asuncion

### Mass Intentions for the Week

Tues.	December 19	11:00AM
Joseph Rodillo †		Carmella
Wed.	December 20	11:00AM
Living Memorial		
Thur.	December 21	11:00AM
Paolo Coccé †		Sylvia
Fri.	December 22	11:00AM
Angelina & Carolos	Moniz†	Lisa & Family
Sat.	December 23	4:30PM
Thanksgiving		
Sun.	December 24	9:00AM
People of the Parish		
Port Costa		11:00AM
People of the Parish		
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### Sunday Collection - December 10th

St. Rose, Crockett	\$1009
Religious Retirement	\$339
St. Patrick Mission	\$ No Mass

Thank you again to all who support our Parish!

#### Poinsettias & Christmas Decorations

The poinsettias that decorate our Church during the Christmas season are in honor of our departed loved ones. Envelopes to add the memory of your loved one to the altar are in the vestibule. The donation for

each name is \$10, and needs to be to the office by December 19<sup>th</sup>.

This weekend, we will also be having a special second collection to help support all the beautiful Christmas decorations that add to our Advent and Christmas liturgies. Environment truly enriches our experience.

## Toys

Father Leo wants to try something different this year, and was hoping parishioners might be willing to donate a few small toys for the

children who attend the Children's Mass to receive. Please let the office know if you would like to participate, 510-787-2052. Toys should be dropped off in the office by Tuesday, December 19<sup>th</sup>.



This week, reach out to those in your community who may be alone this Christmas and invite them to Mass and to share part of your celebration. Help bring some joy to their holiday season.

### Our Christmas Crèche



The current tradition of displaying figures depicting the birth of Jesus Christ was started by St. Francis of Assisi, who made the Christmas crèche or manger for Christmas Eve of 1223, 800 years ago.

The blessing of the Christmas manger or nativity scene may take place on the Vigil of Christmas or at another suitable time. If you have a manger set up at home a wonderful custom is to have a family member bless your manger as well.

All make the sign of the cross as the leader says:

God of every nation and people, from the very beginning of creation you have made manifest your love: when our need for a Savior was great you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary. To our lives he brings joy and peace, justice, mercy, and love.

#### Lord,

bless all who look upon this manger; may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus, and raise our thoughts to him, who is God-with-us and Savior of all, and who lives and reigns forever and ever.

All reply:

Amen.