



# Bringing Home the Word

Third Sunday of Advent (A)  
December 14, 2025

## Joy: A Sign of God

Fr. Joseph Juknialis

Once, as I was teaching a college theology course, I made an offhand comment that the purpose of life is not to be happy. The students were shocked. “What’s wrong with being happy?” they protested.

“Nothing,” I said. “It’s simply not the purpose of life.”

“But God wants us to be happy,” they insisted.

Of course, God wants us to be happy, but that’s simply not what life is about. Happiness is something that comes in the back door while we wait at the front door. If we go looking for happiness, we never find it, but if we forget about

ourselves and seek to bring joy into the lives of others, then happiness seems to find us. It comes in the back door of life. Curiously, that seems to be the dynamic of these Advent/Christmas days. We send cards, give gifts, think of making others happy, and overlook faults. In the process, there is a sense of joy that overtakes us without our realizing it.

The prophet Isaiah proclaimed that it is God who would crown them with everlasting joy; that they would meet with joy and gladness and sorrow, and mourning would flee away. (See Isaiah 35:10.) Joy is God’s doing, not ours.

Leon Bloy, a French novelist in the nineteenth century, observed, “Joy is the most infallible sign of the presence of God.” God is love, and God is also joy. Joy is so much more than happiness. Rather it is an inner quality— peaceful, serene, and nurturing—even when life may be unsettled. †



*If we go looking for happiness, we never find it, but if we seek to bring joy into the lives of others, then happiness seems to find us.*

## A Word from Pope Leo XIV

There are many settings in which the Christian faith is considered absurd.... Yet, precisely for this reason, they are the places where our missionary outreach is desperately needed. A lack of faith is often tragically accompanied by the loss of meaning in life, the neglect of mercy, appalling violations of human dignity, the crisis of the family, and so many other wounds that afflict our society.

HOMILY, ROME, MAY 9, 2025



## Sunday Readings

### Isaiah 35:1–6a, 10

Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God...he comes to save you.

### James 5:7–10

You too must be patient...because the coming of the Lord is at hand.

### Matthew 11:2–11

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.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- When have I known true joy?
- What can I do this week to bring joy to someone else?



# How Do We Prepare?

Mark G. Boyer

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell;  
O come with us, abide with us, Our Lord, Emmanuel!

“O Little Town of Bethlehem,” Verse 5

***We sing together  
about the Lord’s  
mighty deeds.***

**T**he evidence speaks for itself, Jesus tells John the Baptist’s disciples. They have heard the rumors and seen Jesus’ deeds of restoring sight to the blind, ambulation to the lame, healing to the lepers, hearing to the deaf, and life to the dead. Likewise, James presents as evidence the patience of the farmer awaiting rain and the fruit of his labor. Even though the earth is bare, a seed has been planted. The rain will nourish it and it will flower and flourish. The evidence declares that God has descended in the person of Jesus and saved his people, as Isaiah declared centuries ago.

Once we have the evidence, we must be patient. The coming of Christ is at hand, so we prepare by not complaining. We use as our model the patience of the prophets, who spoke glad tidings in God’s name and waited for God to act. The last of these mighty preachers was John the Baptist, declared by Jesus to be the greatest among those born of women. He prepared the way; we prepare a throne. He sang alone in the desert; we sing together in joyful song about the Lord’s mighty deeds as we await his descent in glory. One day he will be born in us, come with us, and abide with us forever. †

From *Caroling Through Advent and Christmas* by Mark G. Boyer (825248). © 2014, Mark G. Boyer. To order, call 800-325-9521 or visit [Liguori.org](http://Liguori.org).

## Wisdom from Catholic Update

From “Advent and Christmas Signs and Symbols”

The giving tree unites us to the great message Jesus continues to give us at Christmas: “Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me” (Matthew 25:40). Church communities sponsor a tree decorated with tags that indicate gifts for children in need at Christmas. Clothing sizes and ages are connected with the requests on the tree so that the parishioner taking the tag can easily get the needed item(s) and return the gift(s) to the parish church by a designated date. The gifts are then distributed to the children before Christmas. We practice this teaching by reaching out to the brothers and sisters of Jesus who are in need—during Advent, at Christmas, and all year long.

*Catholic Update*—a subscription newsletter published eleven times a year—explores Church tradition and teaching on contemporary topics. For more information, call 800-325-9521 or visit [Liguori.org](http://Liguori.org).



Lord Jesus, so that every person on this earth may know that they are loved, we pray—  
Be born in us,  
be born in our world.

The Redemptorists

## WEEKDAY READINGS

December 15–20

**Monday**, Advent Weekday:  
Nm 24:2–7, 15–17a / Mt 21:23–27  
**Tuesday**, Advent Weekday:  
Zep 3:1–2, 9–13 / Mt 21:28–32  
**Wednesday**, Advent Weekday:  
Gn 49:2, 8–10 / Mt 1:1–17

**Thursday**, Advent Weekday:  
Jer 23:5–8 / Mt 1:18–25  
**Friday**, Advent Weekday:  
Jgs 13:2–7, 24–25a / Lk 1:5–25  
**Saturday**, Advent Weekday:  
Is 7:10–14 / Lk 1:26–38