

## Homily – Third Sunday of Advent

“Are You the One?”

Today the Church tells us to rejoice. Gaudete Sunday. The rose candle. A pause in Advent that feels lighter, brighter. But if we listen closely to the Gospel, we realize something important: this joy does not come from comfort. It comes from a question. John the Baptist is in prison. The prophet who once thundered in the wilderness now sits behind stone walls. The man who pointed so clearly to Jesus now sends messengers with a question that sounds almost painful in its honesty: “Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?” This is not

the question of a casual observer. This is the question of a man who has given his entire life to God. A man who has staked everything on the promise that God is coming to save His people. A man who has suffered for telling the truth. And now, in the darkness of prison, John dares to ask what many of us are afraid to ask out loud: “Lord, are You really the one?”

Advent is honest like that. Advent allows real questions. It does not demand pretend faith or forced certainty. It allows even the greatest prophet to ask from the depths of confusion and suffering: “Is this really how God comes?” John expected judgment. He expected fire. He expected the axe at the root of the tree. And instead, Jesus is healing the sick, restoring sight, raising the dead, feeding

the poor, welcoming sinners. The Messiah John announced is not acting the way John expected. So John sends the question. And Jesus does something very important in response. He does not answer directly. He does not say, “Yes, I am the one.” Instead, He says: “Go and tell John what you see and hear.” This is the heart of today’s Gospel. Jesus does not argue. He does not explain Himself. He does not correct John’s theology. He invites John —and us—to look again. “The blind regain their sight. The lame walk. The lepers are cleansed. The deaf hear. The dead are raised. The poor have the good news proclaimed to them.” In other words: “Pay attention. Look closely. Recognize what God is doing.” This is the third movement of Advent. The first week,

we were called to wake up the eyes of the heart. The second week, we were called to clear the path, to remove what blocks our vision. And now, in the third week, we are invited to recognize Christ as He actually is, not as we imagined Him to be. This is where joy comes from. Joy does not come from getting everything we want. Joy does not come from everything making sense. Joy comes when we finally recognize God's presence— sometimes in surprising, even unsettling ways. John the Baptist had to learn that God's power is not always loud. That God's judgment is often mercy. That God's victory begins in healing, not destruction. That the Messiah does not come to crush, but to restore. And Jesus adds one final line that cuts very close to the heart: "Blessed is the

one who takes no offense at me.” In other words: Blessed is the one who does not stumble over the way I choose to come. That line is for us. Because many people lose faith not because they stop believing in God, but because God does not act the way they expected. Because prayers are answered differently than hoped. Because suffering remains. Because justice seems slow. Because the world still feels broken. And so the question rises in the heart: “Are you the one, Lord? Or should I look for another?” Jesus does not reject that question. He answers it the same way He answered John: “Look at what is happening. Look at what is being healed. Look at where life is returning.” Look at the quiet victories. Look at the small restorations. Look at the mercy that keeps

breaking through. Look at the poor who hear good news. Look at the blind who begin to see—not just physically, but spiritually. This is why today is a Sunday of joy. Not because everything is easy. Not because everything is resolved. But because Christ is already at work among us. Joy is born when recognition dawns. When we say: “He is here.” “He is among us.” “He is working in ways I did not expect, but ways that give life.” That recognition changes how we wait. We stop waiting with clenched fists. We stop waiting with bitterness or disappointment. We begin waiting with trust. And this is the joy Advent wants to teach us: the joy of discovering that God is faithful—even when He comes quietly, gently, unexpectedly. So this week, maybe our

prayer should be the same as John's—but said with openness, not accusation: “Lord, help me recognize You as You are, not as I imagined You.” “Help me see the signs of Your presence.” “Help me rejoice in the good You are already doing.” Because Christ is already here. He is already healing. He is already restoring. He is already bringing light into dark places. And blessed are those who are not offended by the way He comes. As we light the rose candle today, let it remind us: Joy begins when recognition breaks through doubt. We are closer now. We are seeing more clearly. We are learning how to recognize His face. And soon, very soon, we will welcome Him fully. Amen.