

Third Sunday of Advent 2019

My beloved brothers and sisters, in today's world, it is so easy to give into discouragement as we see evil swirling around us in our society and even in the Church- it is the ultimate temptation to give into despair- hopelessness in the face of the darkness!

In the new Rectory, my main window faces East. I am so grateful! Every morning, in the early hours of the morning, I open my window to the glorious splendor of the morning sun arising in the East. One of the things I have noticed, on especially stormy days, the colors of the morning sky are at the most beautiful, with beautiful reds, pinks and blues. It is a reminder to me, that not even the storm can prevent the light of the sun from shining. The same is true in our spiritual lives. It is the theme of today's Mass in the colors we wear- Rose! It is a visible reminder that our God in Jesus Christ is always close to us!

In the first two weeks of Advent, we have meditated each day, on our need for God, our sinfulness, our helplessness, in achieving meaning and fulfillment in our lives that each of us longs for. In the Gospel for today, we are reminded by Jesus Himself, that He is the fulfillment of all of God's promises to us! John the Baptist was discouraged. He has faithfully proclaimed the call to repentance in preparation for the coming of the Messiah, and the consequence of his proclamation has gotten him thrown into prison. John sends Jesus the message: "Is it worth it?" Sometimes as we struggle for goodness and holiness and fidelity to Christ in our lives, we ask the same question: "Is it worth it? Nothing seems to change. It only seems to get worse!"

Jesus responds to John and to us, that our hope is rooted in the promises of God: open your eyes and see! God, in Jesus, is still fulfilling the promises of God in our time. All of the signs of His Divine Presence are still at work in the world and in our lives! Open your eyes and see! My beloved brothers and sisters, we often blind ourselves by our ignorance and selfishness, we choose to be blind, to limp along, to remain in the leprosy of our sins, to choose the works of death rather than life, and make ourselves deaf to the call of God to repentance. Jesus calls to us in the same way He responds to John: open your eyes, run to me, come to Confession

and let me wash away your leprosy, choose life, not death, open the ears of your hearts and hear the Good News for you! Stop your unbelief and begin to believe again!

Here is a very, very good and effective way of doing this: learn to look and see what God is doing in your life! At the end of each supper time, go around the table and ask each person what they are thankful for. At the end of the day, reflect how you have failed and be sorry for your sins and ask forgiveness, then ask God the Holy Spirit to help you see all of the ways God has blessed you throughout the day, and be thankful for the blessings. Thanking Him each day, will help you grow into a greater and greater awareness of His work in your life and in the world!