



## Lectio Divina. Third Sunday of Advent, Year B

**Ouagadougou, (Burkina Faso), *Sister CELINE SAWADOGO*, December 13, 2020 –  
“BEHOLD DAYS OF PEACE AND JOY!”**

Born in 765 B. C, Isaiah, also known as the Prophet of Emmanuel, begins his prophetic ministry in 740, announcing the destruction of Israel and Judah as punishment for their unfaithfulness. For half a century, his ministry was overshadowed by the growing threat that Assyria placed on Israel and Judah. He is the prophet of faith and hope, but also the greatest of the Messianic prophets. During the great crises that his nation goes through, he asks that they trust in God alone, the only way for salvation. He knows that the trial will be hard, but hopes that a remnant will come out of it and that the Messiah will be the king for them.

This Messiah that he announces, is a descendant of David, the one who will bring peace and justice on the earth and will communicate the knowledge of God. It is then, very clear that the announcement of the coming of the Messiah-Savior will be a great joy for Israel and all those who had waited for their deliverance. Indeed, Israel was looking forward to that wonderful day when the Lord will fulfill for them the oath that He had once sworn to their fathers, to free them from all their fears. Their trust in God and His promise remained firm and their hope grew with the support of the prophets

God Himself comes to save His people. Through his preaching, Isaiah wants to rekindle the hope of Israel, because their deliverance is near. Yes, He is near, the One who comes to save His people! This text continues to awaken not only the faith of the Christians of our time, but also that of the whole Church on pilgrimage.

### **INVOCATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

COME HOLY SPIRIT! Make room in me, so that the Word of Jesus, the only one who can save, may resound in me. Amen.

## FIRST READING

### Isaiah 61: 1-2, 10 – 11

“The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; He has sent me to bring good news to the afflicted, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, release to the prisoners.

To announce a year of favor from the LORD and a day of vindication by our God; to comfort all who mourn;

I will rejoice heartily in the LORD, my being exults in my God; For he has clothed me with garments of salvation, and wrapped me in a robe of justice, like a bridegroom adorned with a diadem, as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. As the earth brings forth its shoots, and a garden makes its seeds spring up, so, will the Lord GOD make justice spring up and praise before all the nations.”

## REFLECTION ON THE TEXT

The first reading of this Sunday, taken from the book of prophet Isaiah comes at the right time, because it clarifies the reason for the hope that gives rise to the joy to which he invites us. The Church, like Isaiah also invites us to rejoice, because the Lord is coming. As she advances in her preparations for the coming of the Savior, her hope increases. This is why she has named this Third Sunday of Advent, Gaudete Sunday, which means Sunday of Joy.

On that day, says the prophet that all will know joy and that “*an everlasting joy will shine on their faces...sorrow and mourning will be ended.*” (Is 3: 10 b). God will restore all things to their original splendor and dignity. The slave will breathe only after his/her liberation! This image of the slave helps us to better understand the joy that such an announcement brings to us who are waiting for the True Joy. This good news is also a reason for exultation for the whole creation. Faith that makes hope alive, leads us to welcome the Kingdom already there and yet to come.

## SILENCE AND MEDITATION

- Am I today so much aware of my slavery, fragility and servitude that I desire to see the coming of the Messiah in my life?
- The Savior comes for the poor, weak and small. Do I trust in the promise to the point of hoping against all the trials and tribulations caused by so many plagues and evils?
- In what way, am I poor, weak or small?
- From what do I need to be saved, to be set free?

Prophet reminds us that we cannot hope for salvation from God without placing all our trust in him. Therefore, the good news of His coming must rekindle our hope and make

us walk with a more active faith. The salvation of God is close to me even today; God continues to come to save us through the witness of those who believe in Him.

Moreover, Pope Francis through his encyclical "*Fratelli tutti*" challenges all of us to make our belonging to the universal fraternity more visible by promoting it and by working to break the barriers between people and to dispel the shadows from our closed world which suffocate or marginalize some of our brothers.

Let us remain vigilant and courageous in both our prayer and good witness! Let us show to the One who comes, our sincere desire to welcome Him with a life of repentance and solidarity with the poorest and entrust Him all our concerns and those of our world and societies!

### **PRAYER**

Let us contemplate this God so great, good, gentle and loving, this most Holy God who comes to meet man who is weak, poor, sinful, vulnerable and limited.

We thank you Lord, for your concern for each one of your creatures whom you love and want to save and for the joy that you bring to our hearts. Strengthen our faith and hope and grant us the grace to come out of our drowsiness, laziness and attachments which enslave us to go out to meet you.

**Make us see your love, Lord, and give us your salvation!**