

Late Advent -

Almost Christmas Reflection

for RCIA teams and parishes

*D*uring this wonderful season of Advent which marks the beginning of the new Liturgical year, our Scriptures are full of gems that give us much-needed hope and consolation and that bring us closer to the celebration of Christmas and the new life made possible for us by the Incarnation.

Throughout this season which reminds us to make preparations to welcome the comings of Christ into our lives, the themes running through the liturgy remind us powerfully of the presence in our lives of the God of history. Words of hope and promise, of life and light, of joy and peace, of love and mercy speak to us of a God who cares passionately for all of us and whose desire is that we be one family, bound together by love and compassion. Words such as these have been spoken down through the ages and are as vital to us today as they have been in the past.

The themes of joy, excitement and anticipation are very evident in the readings for the third Sunday of Advent which we have just celebrated. The Prophet Zephaniah spoke of a God who is so full of delight for God's people as to sing and dance for joy. St. Paul reminds us that the Lord is near and we have nothing to worry about because our God will always be there for us, encouraging us to be people of faith and tolerance towards everyone. If we are in any kind of need, the Lord who desires to come close to us, will provide. Paul urges us to continue to praise and thank God, safe in the knowledge that God's peace is ours and that we are encouraged to be happy in the Lord.

As we begin this new liturgical year with these messages in mind, it is good also to stop and reflect on what it is that we are doing when we invite and welcome new members into our communities. It is the whole community that welcomes, accompanies, supports and nurtures new members in the catechumenate journey, and we do it in the spirit of the early Christian community:

Life among the believers: (Acts 2:43-47)

“Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with **glad and generous hearts**, praising God and having the good will of all the people. And day by day, the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.”

As we move closer to the celebration of Christmas, let us be united in our prayer and model the ways of the early Christian community. We pray that all who have been welcomed as candidates at the beginning of Advent will know of the love and support of our parish communities, and we pray also that together, we will all experience the joy and peace of the Lord, seeking to find a home in our hearts.

Kathy Horan
RCIA Coordinator