

Week 3: Joy



Opening prayer

As we light the third candle on our Advent wreath, we celebrate the good news of great joy for all people brought by the coming of Christ. Lord, help us share your joy.

(Light the first, second and third candle on your Advent wreath.)

Scripture

My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour,
for he has looked on his servant in her nothingness,
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.

The Almighty works marvels for me.
Holy his name!
His mercy is from age to age
on those who fear him.

He fills the starving with good things,
sends the rich away empty.
He protects Israel, his servant,
remembering his mercy.
(Luke 1:46-50. 53-54)

Reflection

In this third week of Advent we light the pink candle on our Advent wreath. With Mary, we allow our spirit to rejoice in God our Saviour. Mary sings of a world that has been, is being and will yet be, turned upside down by God's liberating justice and compassion. In the longest passage spoken by a woman in the New Testament, her great song of social justice is a hymn of hope for the poor, disenfranchised and marginalised.

These words were first spoken in Mary's own troubled time of occupation and conflict, but they could have been written today. We too live in a world of violence and inequality, where too many people are cold, hungry and oppressed.

Rejoicing is radical. In the face of grief, suffering and loss we lift our voices to sing of God's love, joy and justice. We proclaim Mary's transformative vision of a world made new and celebrate that God is at work even now, among and through us, to move those promises from hope to fulfilment.

For discussion

- When has joy come to you in unexpected ways? How have you shared joy with others?
- What connections can you make between joy and justice?
- How can we sing Mary's song of joy, even in difficult times?

Closing prayer

In times of despair,
we seek comfort in your presence.
We wait in hope for you.
Come, Lord, source of joy.

Move us to be good news in our world
and to stand alongside
our sisters and brothers in need.
Come, Lord, source of joy.

Lead us in your ways
as together we make a change
so all people may rejoice and be glad.
Come, Lord, source of joy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Scripture texts taken from The Jerusalem Bible © 1966 by Darton Longman & Todd Ltd and Doubleday and Company Ltd.