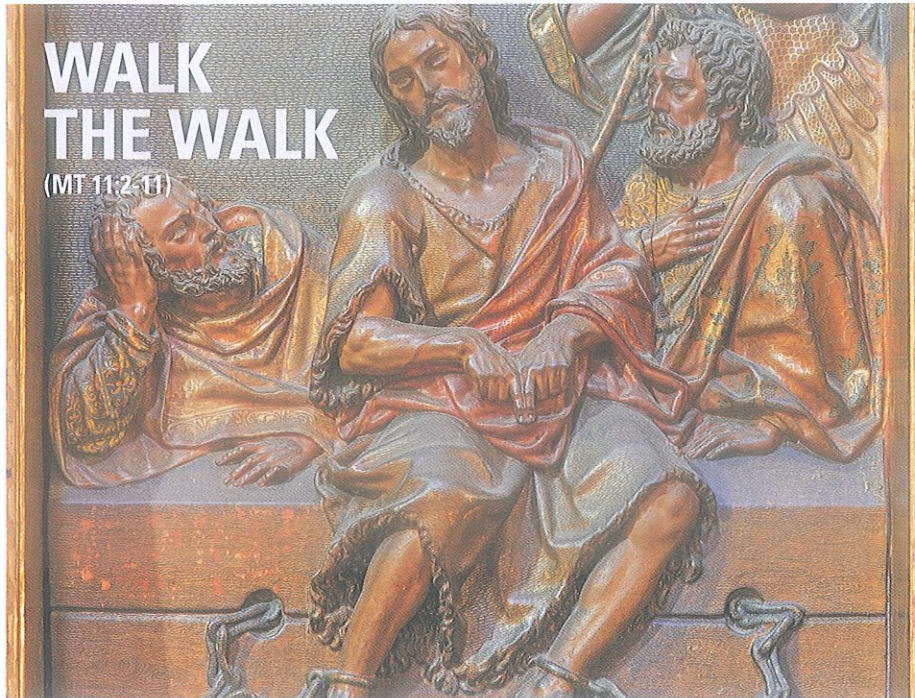


Sunday Message

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE WORD

Year A • 11 December 2022 • Colour: Violet • Psalter Week 3



A depiction by Martinez Montanes of St John the Baptist in prison

John the Baptist had given testimony to Jesus at the river Jordan. He had declared that Christ was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Now, from prison, John sends his disciples to ask: "Are you the one who is to come, or do we have to wait for someone else?" The Baptist seems less sure about Jesus at this stage. Why the apparent hesitancy?

Different reasons have been suggested. One is that John asked the question not for his own sake but for that of his disciples. Or it could have been that John was puzzled because his own early message had been one of impending judgement: the axe was already laid to the root of the tree, the chaff was being separated from the wheat, the divine fire of cleansing judgement had already begun to burn – and this heavy emphasis on judgement was not coming through in the teaching of Jesus.

In his reply to John's disciples, Jesus says, in so many words: Don't report to John what I'm saying. Instead, tell him what I'm doing. Jesus' actions (restoring sight to the blind, life to the dead, preaching the good news to the poor) declared that he was indeed the Messiah, the Anointed One of God, whose coming John had announced.

The message would have made sense to John the Baptist because John had come in the spirit of the prophet Isaiah to prepare a way for the Lord. The reply Jesus gave to the Baptist was Isaiah's own description of what would happen when the Messiah came: the blind would see, the lame would walk, lepers would be cleansed, the dead would be raised to life, and the good news would be proclaimed to the poor. ■

LEARN

The Christian is one who follows the example of Jesus Christ.

Today is Gaudete Sunday, meaning 'rejoice' from the first word of the entrance antiphon. We rejoice because our salvation is close at hand.

PRAY

To say we are people of faith is one thing; to show it is another. Ask the Lord for the strength to live the faith you profess every day.

DO

As you go about your Christmas shopping this week, be aware of those who are homeless or forced to beg. Extend the hand of friendship to them.

REFLECT

Hope seems in short supply at the end of this year. We're worried about the future. What kind of world are we leaving to our children? Despite all our advances in science and technology, despite how sophisticated we have become, despite the progress we have made in promoting human rights, our world seems as broken and unstable as in the past. War, inflation, racism, climate change, and political uncertainty are on the rise. The season of Advent cautions against despair. It assures us we are not alone. It urges us forward, knowing that, with God on our side, we need not be afraid. Hope will overcome.

Writer Roy Scranton has given his book about climate change a gloomy title. He's called it *We're Doomed, Now What?* But even though his analysis of the future sounds depressing, he refuses to let go of hope. He offers a good definition of hope. He links it with faith.

"For me, hope is always connected to faith because you don't hope that you'll go to work in the morning," Scranton said in an interview. "I don't hope I'll change my daughter's diaper, I just do those things. You hope for things that you don't have any control over. I do have a faith in human resilience and the human ability to adapt to difficult situations and still find ways to lead meaningful and rich lives."

Hope trusts in God's promises while working to build God's kingdom by putting the Sermon on the Mount into practice. Hope is about not looking away in the face of adversity but facing it head-on in the knowledge that God is with us.

That's what the season of Advent is all about. And that's what we need to focus on in the frantic build-up to Christmas day. What we celebrate this season is far more important than decorations, presents, and parties. This isn't a mere secular feast for us Christians, a handy excuse to eat and drink and max out our credit cards. This is the feast of hope, the feast of God-with-us, and it offers the timeless template for how we must approach all life's challenges. Even when things seem at their bleakest, hope still beckons us forward. ■

SAY

Say slowly and prayerfully the response to today's psalm: "Come, Lord, and save us."



NEWSLETTER

11 DEC 2022. THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

A PARISH OF THE MULLINGAR DEANERY

Fr. Stan Deegan Tel: 044-9374127 0872673655.

Email: parishofkillucan@gmail.com

Streaming: <https://www.churchservices.tv/raharney>

www.parishofkillucan.ie Facebook: Killucan Parish

The Community of St. Camillus 044 9374115.

ST. JOSEPH'S, RATHWIRE.

Sunday 11th, 11.30am. Chris Glennon. Jimmy Rooney. Paddy O'Connor & family. William Kane. Matthew Greville Snr & Bridget, Anna, Marie & Ethna. Clement Traynor. Christina, James & Paddy Gaynor. Anthony Snr, Pauline & Tony Cunningham. John, Mary & Tom Browne. Matt & Theresa Mullen.

Sunday 18th, 11.30am. Jim Loran. Alice & Tony Dunning.

ST. BRIGID'S, RAHARNEY.

Saturday 10th, 6pm. Joe Mooney. Daniel & Kathleen Coffey.

Sunday 11th, 10am. Arthur Swords.

Saturday 17th, 6pm. Vinny, Florrie & Brendan Sheils. Edward (Ned) McKeogh. Edward, Rose & Christy Glennon.

Weekday Masses; Raharney Tues & Thrus 9am. Rahtwire Wed & Fri 9am.

MASS OFFERTORY COLLECTION: €549
PARISH DEVELOPMENT FUND €432

Adoration
of the
Blessed Sacrament



In St. Joseph's Tuesday 1pm-9pm.
& St. Brigid's Wed. 5pm-10pm:
Special Diocesan intention of prayer
for vocations and the family.
Take one Hour with the Lord

Family Adoration hour: on Thurs 15th from 7 – 8pm in Raharney. Cup of tea afterwards in the third place.

Christmas Mass times: Dec 24th, 7pm in Rathwire and 9pm in St Camillus church. Dec 25th, 10am in Raharney & 11.30am in Rahtwire. 10.30am in St. Camillus church.

He Who Is To Come

From his cell in prison John the Baptist had heard stories about Jesus, and he sent some of his followers to find out if Jesus is the messiah. Are you 'He who is to come' or do we look for another? they asked Jesus. Jesus had to reply in such a way that John would have no doubt about the genuineness of his messianic activity, and the message he sent back to John was about the blind receiving their sight, the lame walking, the lepers being cleansed, the deaf hearing, the dead being raised, and the poor having good news brought to them.

He did not say a word about people praying more or going to the synagogue or making God the center of their lives: the age of the messiah, as expressed in this report, does not concern "religion" in the traditional sense of the word.

One knows that the messiah has come because a real change has taken place in society, a change that involves the liberation of those who have always been cut off from the "main branch" of society.

Jesus is the messiah because those who are blind, crippled, diseased, and poor have been liberated from the things which make them the victims of injustice.

We can turn the statement around to say that if the dregs of society do not experience liberation, then Jesus is not the messiah.

But Jesus is the messiah, and so the dead have come to life: those who have been unable to 'live' in a society that has written them off, are now alive with hope.

The Gospel has truly been a leaven of liberty and progress in human history, even in its temporal sphere, and always proves itself a leaven of brotherhood, of unity, and of peace. Therefore, not without cause is Christ hailed by the faithful as 'the expected of the nations, and their Savior' (*Antiphon O* for Dec. 23).

Vatican II,