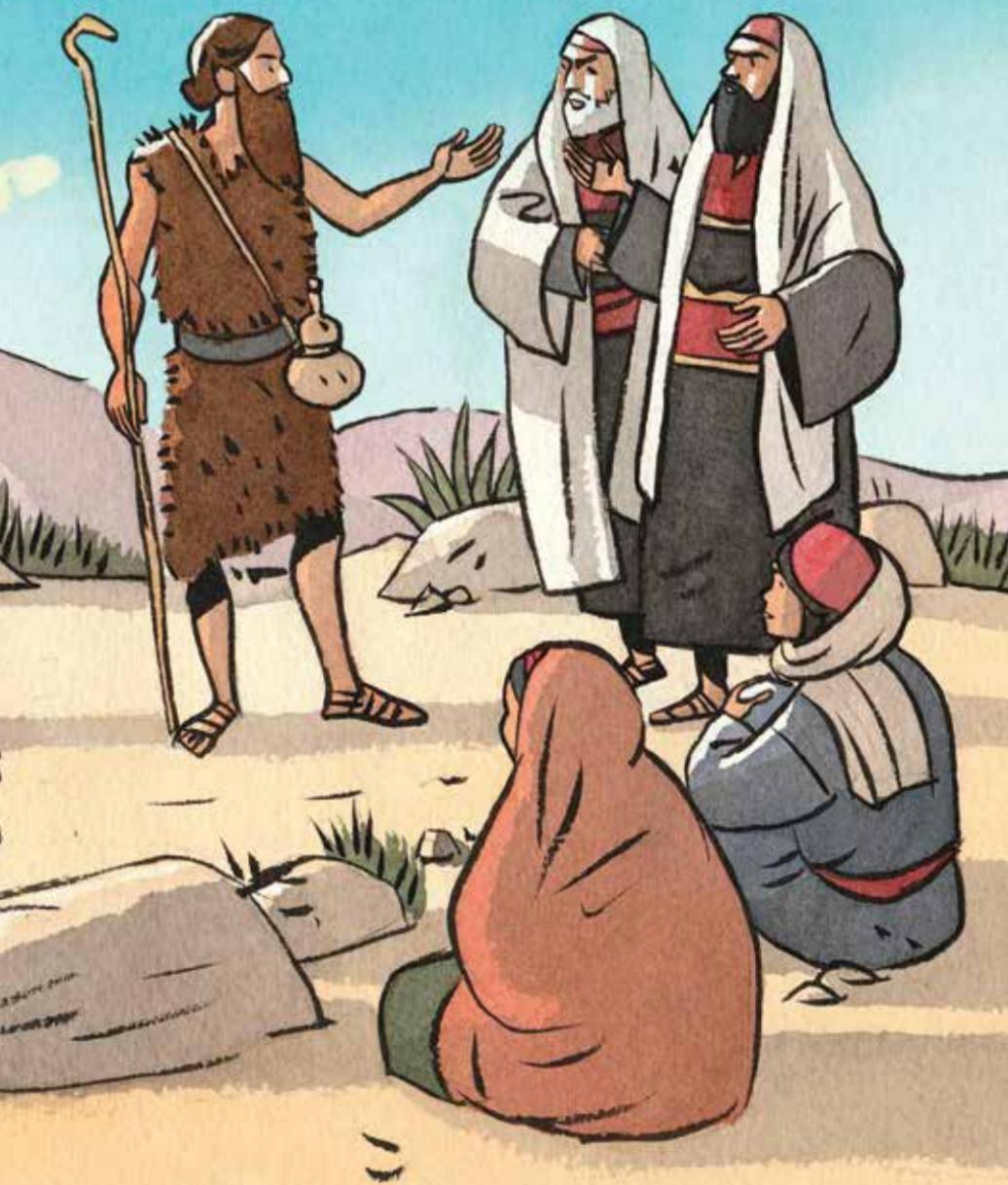


December 13

3rd Sunday of Advent



First Reading (Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11)

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
 because the LORD has **anointed** me;
 he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor,
 to heal the brokenhearted,
 to proclaim liberty to the captives
 and release to the prisoners,
 to announce a **year of favor from the LORD**
 and a day of vindication by our God.

I rejoice heartily in the LORD,
 in my God is the joy of my soul;
 for he has clothed me with a robe of salvation
 and wrapped me in a mantle of justice,
 like a bridegroom adorned with a diadem,
 like a bride bedecked with her jewels.
 As the earth brings forth its plants,
 and a garden makes its growth spring up,
 so will the Lord GOD make justice and praise
 spring up before all the nations.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm (Luke 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54)

R. My soul rejoices in my God.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;
 my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
 for he has looked upon his lowly servant.
 From this day all generations will call me blessed. **R.**

The Almighty has done great things for me,
 and holy is his Name.
 He has mercy on those who fear him
 in every generation. **R.**

He has filled the hungry with good things,
 and the rich he has sent away empty.
 He has come to the help of his servant Israel
 for he has remembered his promise of mercy. **R.**

Second Reading (1 Thessalonians 5:16-24)

Brothers and sisters: Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances **give thanks**, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good. Refrain from every kind of evil.

May the God of peace make you perfectly holy and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will also accomplish it.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel (John 1:6-8, 19-28)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

A man named **John** was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light.

And this is the testimony of John. When the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to him to ask him, "Who are you?" he admitted and did not deny it, but admitted, "I am not the **Christ**." So they asked him, "What are you then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you, so we can give an answer to those who sent us? What do you have to say for yourself?" He said:

*"I am the voice of one crying out in the desert,
'make straight the way of the Lord,'"*

as Isaiah the prophet said." Some Pharisees were also sent. They asked him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ or Elijah or the Prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water; but there is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie." This happened in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Key Words

To anoint means to bless with oil. In the Bible it can also mean to give someone a mission, an important job. Christians are **anointed** at baptism and confirmation: our mission is to live as Jesus taught us, bringing good news to the oppressed.

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Every 50 years, Israel celebrated a jubilee year, a special time when debts were forgiven and wrongs were pardoned. When Isaiah mentions a **year of favor from the Lord**, he means that, just as in the jubilee year, God is offering forgiveness to all those who are sorry for their wrongs and are seeking pardon.

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One way to pray is to **give thanks** to God. We do this, for example, when we say “grace” before meals—we thank God each day for all the good things God has given us. In many languages, the words for “grace” and “thanks” are the same.



Today’s gospel is taken from the **Gospel of John**, the last of the gospels to be written. The author of this gospel was one of the Twelve Apostles. Today we hear of another **John**—John the Baptist, the cousin of Jesus, who preached that everyone had to change their lives and prepare to receive the Messiah. John the Baptist did not write the gospel, but he was the greatest of all the prophets.

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Jesus, his disciples, and the people of the time spoke Aramaic. Messiah is an Aramaic word meaning “anointed.” The chosen person was anointed or blessed with holy oil and given a special mission. The Greek word for “anointed” is **Christ**.

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