**Reliance on God**

Today, the third Sunday in Advent is a time to rejoice because the coming of our Savior is near. In a few more days, we will welcome Him into our mist as a Baby who would lead us home to His Father. It is a time of the awaited expectation of the coming of our Lord when we notice more funfair around us in the Malls, stores, on Radio and Television.

It is a time we need to be careful not to be caught up in the secular festivity of the secular world. It is a time to remember for whom we are remembering His coming. It a time prophets and kings had longed to see but did not see it. We are blessed to be in that era of knowing about His coming and to read and hear about what He did in our midst.

Prophet Isaiah in our first reading starts us off by painting a picture of things coming to life in unexpected places. We are told the desert and dried up lands would bloom and rejoice and come alive with abundant flowers and be as fruitful as Lebanon because they will see the glory of the Messiah. We the Gentiles, are the desert and the dried up lands that would rejoice and be fruitful at the coming of our Savior.

Then Isaiah gave us an insight into what the Messiah would do at His coming. He said the Messiah would restore health to the people. The visually impaired would see clearly, the lame and those with withered hands would have their legs and hands healed. The deaf would have perfect hearing. He prophesied that there would be rejoicing and wonderment everywhere at the end of time, when sorrow and morning would be no more for those who are destined for salvation in heaven.

Our second reading from the letter of St. James cautions us to wait patiently with unwavering trust in the promises of God. He enjoins us to wait patiently for our reward as a farmer would wait patiently for the yield of his crop. He told us to be tolerant of others even if they get on our nerves. Even if they ridicule and mock us because of our faith in God. Our tolerance must be like those of the prophets who endured persecution and even death for the sake of the kingdom.

Yes, my brothers and sisters, we will be tested. It is those who would listen, believe, and those who live the gospel that would enter the kingdom of God. So whatever hardship we might go through right now, would be nothing compared to the joy we would have in heaven. It would be similar to a woman who endured labor pain and forgets the pain when she holds her baby in her arms for the first time.

In our gospel reading, we find John the Baptist pointing to Jesus as the Messiah in a roundabout way. He sent his disciples who did not want to leave him to ask Jesus if He is the one to come. He sent them to Jesus so they would know who to follow after he would leave this world. It is like his disciples asked him a similar question Peter would ask Jesus after many of Jesus’ followers left Him and Jesus asked His disciples if they would leave Him too. Peter asked Jesus, to whom shall we go?

Yes, John the Baptist answered his disciples’ similar question Peter asked Jesus by pointing to Jesus as the Messiah whom they should follow. That was why he told them to go and ask if Jesus is the Messiah. They were able to see and hear Jesus preaching with authority and performing miracles by His own power. They were able to see the difference between the Master and the messenger.

In response, Jesus pointed out to John’s messengers, the fulfillment of the prophecies of Isaiah in our first reading and also those in our Responsorial Psalm. He told them to go and tell John what they saw and heard. I am sure John reminded his disciples what the Messiah would do as laid down in Isaiah and in Psalm 146. He then told them to follow Jesus.

Jesus also pointed to the high esteem John the Baptist has in heaven. Though John who was in the world, he was not of the world. He lived a simple life. He told them of how John was greater than anyone born of a woman. However, Jesus also pointed out that the list in heaven is greater than John.

This is a way Jesus pointed out to us what heaven would be like. He tells us of what those who would make it into the kingdom of His Father would be like. Jesus is telling us the importance of making it to heaven because the least in heaven would be greater than anyone on earth.

They would be greater than even, kings, queens, presidents, and popes. Jesus is asking us to follow Him. He is asking us to keep His commandments and that our reward would be far beyond our understanding in this world.

As we come to receive Him in the Eucharist, let us ask ourselves how well do we obey His commandments?