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Homily Reflections – Luke 3:10-18 (Third Sunday of Advent)

Introduction: What Should We Do?

This Sunday is called “Gaudete Sunday” -its name taken from the Latin “gaudete” (rejoice), a key word from the second reading from Philippians. Paul exhorts the Early Church community to “rejoice in the Lord always” and to “have no anxiety” about anything as they await Christ’s return. Perhaps Paul’s expectation was that Christ’s coming was so imminent – so joyful –that it simply overpowered all other concerns and sufferings.

What does this joy, this hopeful expectation, mean for us practically today, in the midst of life’s uncertainties and difficulties?

On this third Sunday of Advent, the Gospel of Luke continues last week’s focus on John the Baptist and his role in preparing the way for Christ. When the crowd begins to wonder if he might be the Christ, John makes it clear that his ministry is to prepare for the Messiah. John knows his place and role in God’s plan. In fact, through his teachings, John suggests that each person has a role – a specific purpose –to play in God’s salvation. It is the great mystery that our Almighty God permits and even asks for our human cooperation. Why us? Why me?

What is your role? Your specific purpose? Name it.

That this particular Gospel passage opens with a “periodic sentence” is a strong indicator that this section is a major literary unit.(If you remember from English 101, a periodic sentence is a sentence that has been deliberately structured to place the main point at the end.) Accordingly, Luke wants to highlight the question: “What should we do?” (3 x)

Specifically, the crowd asks John the Baptist for specifics. And John responds by naming concrete actions: they should share their food with the hungry and their “two cloaks” with the person who has none; tax collectors should be just; and soldiers should act fairly. The concern for justice is a huge hallmark of Luke’s Gospel.

How can you practice justice in your life? Examples?

I would invite you to take time to read and ponder the words from the *Gospel of Luke 3:10-18*.

What word or words caught your attention?
What in this passage comforted/challenged you?

Further Questions and Reflections:

John the Baptist lived a life of passionate commitment. His passion for justice and honesty spoke to the hearts of the crowds, tax collectors, and soldiers. His own austerity had the ring of authenticity. *At this point of Advent, I ask myself today: What must I do to follow Jesus with a wholehearted commitment?*

What is my reaction to John's words? Does it lead me to want to live a life of justice and integrity?

Like John, Jesus invites our cooperation in his mission. How can I cooperate in this mission now?

"Now the people were filled with expectation." For what do I hope?

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