

## Advent Traditions

### Rose

The Third Sunday of Advent is often known by the Latin name 'Gaudete'; literally, 'Rejoice'. This comes from the Latin entrance antiphon (the sentence of scripture used at the beginning of Mass, before the Sign of the Cross) appointed for that Sunday. It is a Sunday on which we step out of the penitential feel of Advent just briefly and rejoice with the prophets that God will send us a Saviour who will free us from our sins. As a sign of this, the colour of the vestments, and often the altar frontals and other hangings, changes. The colour may sometimes look pink, but the correct name for the colour is really rose. This colour reminds us that we are looking forward with joy and hope, for at the end of Advent comes the celebration of Christmas. In C. S. Lewis' book 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe', Narnia is a place where it is always winter but never Christmas. The rose vestments remind us that Advent will not last for ever and that we can look ahead with eager anticipation to the coming of Christmas (when the priest will wear the white or gold vestments of celebration). Just like Mary, in the darkness of Advent as we wonder what will happen in the future, we are called to rejoice and have hope in our hearts for God is faithful to his promises and will have mercy on his servants.

### Prayers to Remember

By your power, Sovereign Lord,  
John the Baptist was born into the world  
as forerunner of the promised Messiah:  
Help us to heed his message  
of repentance and amendment of life,  
and to follow his example  
of boldness and self-denial;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### From the Fathers

God's sign is his humility. God's sign is that he makes himself small. He becomes a child. He lets us touch him and he asks for our love. How we would prefer a different sign, an imposing, irresistible sign of God's power and greatness! But his sign summons us to faith and love and thus it gives us hope – this is what God is like. He has power, he is goodness itself. He invites us to become like him. Yes indeed, we become like God, if we allow ourselves to be shaped by this sign, if we ourselves learn humility and hence true greatness; if we renounce violence and use only the weapons of truth and love.

*Pope Benedict XVI*

13th December  
2020

The Third Sunday  
of Advent

## John the Baptist



*Now while Zechariah was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense... And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing at the right side of the altar of incense. (Luke 1.8-9,11)*

The story of St John the Baptist has deep Old Testament roots. It begins in the Temple in Jerusalem. Zechariah enters sacred space at the hour of the evening sacrifice, and the fragrant rising of the incense is a symbol of prayer. Time and place are holy, and at this moment where the worship of God's people on earth is joined with the worship of heaven a new step is taken in the preparations God is making for Jesus. Zechariah receives the message of the new covenant God is making. The son that he and Elizabeth his wife will have is to usher in a new era for the people of God. Time and eternity meet in Zechariah's dutiful offering of worship in a powerful new way.

The awesomeness of this particular offering of worship by Zechariah holds true for us. Each time we celebrate the Eucharist time and eternity are meeting, it is a moment of encounter with the living God who is calling and sending us. Spend a moment today reflecting on the role that sacred space and sacred time have in your life, and ask God to help you never to take them for granted.

