**READINGS:** Zeph. 3:14-18/ Resp. Ps [Is. 12: 2-6]/ Phil. 4: 4-7/ Lk. 3:10-18
**THEME:** REJOICE
3rd Sunday of Advent

By Very Rev. Fr. John Louis ([http://frlouis.com](http://frlouis.com/))

A theme which runs through the readings is ‘**Rejoice!’**

* The first reading says: ‘Shout for joy …**Rejoice**, exult with all your heart’!
* The responsorial psalm says: ‘Sing and **shout for joy,** for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel’!
* The second reading says: ‘**Rejoice, rejoice** in the Lord always; and again I say **rejoice**’!
* And in the gospel reading, when the people were **excited** that in John the Baptist they were experiencing the work of a great prophet, he announced to them the **greater news. It was as if he said to them**: ‘*you haven’t seen anything yet*, for far greater is the One who comes after me.’

So much greater is the One who comes after John such that he declares: ‘I am not worthy to even *serve as the servant* who unties the straps of his sandals.’  In other words, John says that in the long convoy of the visiting President, he [John] is one of the insignificant ***dispatch riders***.  For:

* John baptizes with water, but Jesus the Saviour baptizes with the Holy Spirit;
* John did not heal the sick, but Jesus heals every sickness – he is our Divine Physician;
* John did not cast out demons; but Jesus does;
* John did not multiply loaves, but Jesus does – he is indeed the Bread of our eternal life;
* John did not raise the dead, but Jesus does – he is indeed our life and resurrection;
* Yes, John died for the truth, but his death did not save the world; however, the death and resurrection of Jesus save the world;
* Yes, John was a great prophet but he is the least in the Kingdom of Heaven, while Jesus is the Prophet of all prophets, the Lord of lords, the King of kings, the King of Heaven and earth, God from God, true God from true God, begotten not made!

Beloved, indeed far greater than our imagination and words can capture is the salvation God is offering us in his eternal Son, born in time in Bethlehem!

Jesus has come to change our mourning into dancing [first reading]; he has turned our death into new life; and our hell into heaven!

So beloved, in whatever mood we find ourselves today, let’s rejoice.  Whatever we may be experiencing in life, let us rejoice in the good news of our salvation!

Therefore, [Sing with me:] ***REJOICE, REJOICE, O ISRAEL,***
***TO THEE SHALL EMMANUEL****.*
O COME, O COME EMMANUEL
AND RANSOM CAPTIVE ISRAEL,
THAT MOURNS IN LOWLY EXILE HERE,
UNTIL THE SON OF GOD APPEARS,
***REJOICE, REJOICE*** ….

Amen!