3rd Sunday of Advent (2013)

Theme:  **Truly Jesus is God-with-us**

Readings: Isaiah 35:1-6, 10/ James 5:7-10 / Matthew 11:2-11

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

Isaiah prophesied that the expected Messiah would be called ‘Emmanuel’, which means ‘God-with-us’ (Is. 7:14). And on several other occasions the prophet indicated what would be the proof of the arrival/presence of the Messiah. In today’s first readings, for instance, the prophet said the proof of the ministry of ***God-with-us*** is that: ‘the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the deaf shall hear. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing’ (Is. 35:5-6).

What are the credentials of ***God-with-us*** to prove that He would be able to do all these things? John’s Gospel gives us an answer: ‘In the beginning was the Word (***God-with-us***) and the Word was with God. … All things were created through Him (***God-with-us***) and with Him nothing was made that was made. ***In Him was life, and the life was the light*** of men [and women]. … And the ***Word became flesh and dwelt among us*** [=***God-with-us***]’ (Jn. 1:1-4, 14). Therefore beloved, He, through whom the Father-Creator created out of nothing (in the beginning) is more than capable of restoring what has gone wrong in the blind, the deaf, the lame and the dumb. He, through whom the Father-Creator created us in the unblemished ‘image and likeness’ of God (Gen. 1:26-27), is able to correct the distortions in us. He, through whom the Father-Creator put order in the chaos of the earth in the beginning (Gen. 1:2) is able to restore order so that the blind can see, the deaf can hear, the lame can walk and the dumb can speak. He who is the ***light*** of men and women (Jn. 1:4) is able to give ***sight*** to the blind. And He, in whom is ***life*** (Jn. 1:4), is capable of restoring life to all of us.

Thus, when John the Baptist asked for confirmation that Jesus was truly the Messiah, ***God-with-us***, the evidence was produced in fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah: ‘Go and tell John the things you hear and see: ***the blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up*** and the ***poor*** have the gospel preached to them’ (Mt. 11:4-5; today’s gospel reading). Yes, beloved, ***Jesus Christ is truly*** ***God-with-us***! Hence, those who are ‘poor in spirit’, i.e. humble enough to believe in Him, are receiving the good news of salvation! And the good news is that not only the physically challenged but the ***spiritually challenged*** also can receive their healing!

We who are ***spiritually blind*** can be given new sight to see the goodness of the Lord in our life and in the world as a whole!

We who are ***spiritually lame*** can have our spiritual limbs strengthened to be up and doing about God’s work – of witnessing with our life and words that Jesus is ***God-with-us***!

We who are ***spiritual lepers*** because of our sins can be cleansed by the precious blood of Jesus!

We who are sometimes ***deaf*** to the Word of God can have our ears opened to the good news of salvation!

And we who, though physically alive, are ***dead in spirit*** can be raised to ***eternal*** life!

Therefore beloved whatever be our challenge (physical or spiritual) let us cry with faith unto Christ, the ***God-with-us***, and we shall be saved! Amen!