

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Sun Advent B**

### **Introduction...**

It's Christmas preparation time...

Christmas hymns and songs are on our radio stations,  
Christmas trees and crèche scenes are in our public places,  
and the shopping frenzy has begun  
with advertisements promising consumers the best gifts ever.

Is there any difference between the way we Catholics prepare for Christmas  
and the way our society in general prepares?

How do you prepare for Christmas?

Shopping, Christmas tree and lights, crèche scene... anything else?

What does Christmas preparation mean to you?

### **Refrain... Rejoice, Rejoice, Emanuel...**

### **I Today's Scriptures**

The first reading from the prophet Isaiah speaks of comforting God's people.  
Isaiah made this pronouncement to the exiled Jewish people who were about  
to return to their homeland and Jerusalem.

You might think today of the many Christians in Syria and Iraq who are  
living in cramped quarters as exiles or who are returning to their homes,  
now in shambles or destroyed by IS.

## **Refrain... Rejoice, Rejoice Emmanuel**

The Gospel for today describes John the Baptist who announces the coming of God's Kingdom, which will be introduced by God's special messenger, ... *One mightier than I, says John, whose sandal strap I am unworthy to fasten.*

John is reminding God's people again that God has not abandoned them... God has not forgotten them... God saves them.

I believe this is the *true* meaning of Christmas...

Christmas reminds us of God's powerful and passionate faithfulness to us and love for us...

Christmas is not *predominantly* about us and our gifts...

Christmas is about God and God's gift to us...

God's own son, Jesus.

- ❖ Our gifts are an echo of God, the gift giver.
- ❖ Our gifts show our love for others, as God's gift shows God's love for us.
- ❖ Our Christmas gathering with loved ones mirrors our Christmas gathering around the table of the Lord at our Christmas Mass, to receive God's Christmas gift to us at Communion time.
- ❖ The Christmas evergreen tree reminds us of God's faithfulness to us which lasts forever... "evergreen".
- ❖ The Christmas lights remind us of Jesus, God's light shining brightly in our world.
- ❖ Our Christmas hymns remind us of the choir of heavenly angels singing on that first Christmas night, proclaiming the coming of Jesus.

We need these reminders...

for so often we forget about God in the midst of our busy, hectic Christmas season lives.

We forget about God and the true meaning of Christmas as we scurry to buy our gifts,

put up our Christmas lights and our Christmas trees –

of course nowadays we're supposed to call them "holiday trees" –

lest we remember the true meaning of Christmas.

Our whole society seems to be suffering from *amnesia*

when it comes to the true meaning of Christmas...

We're not even supposed to say "Merry Christmas"...

it's not politically correct to say "Happy Holidays."

Are we disciples of Jesus also suffering from Christmas Amnesia?...

### **Refrain... Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel**

### **Conclusion...**

At this Christmas time let's remember what Christmas is all about...

It's about God's love for us and God's faithfulness to us.

Christmas is about our remembering that we are not alone,

that we came from God and are going to God,

and that God sent God's own Son to show us the way home.

God doesn't abandon us.

Because of this we are a people of hope,

even in the midst of any troubles we might be going through.

We are a people who believe that we are precious in our loving God's eyes.

*From the Desk of Donald Ware, C.P.*

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We are a people who rejoice in the real meaning of Christmas

**Refrain... Rejoice, Rejoice, Emmanuel**

**Happy Holiday... Merry Christmas**