

Missionary Commentary

Third Sunday of Advent
December 15, 2024

Sunday Readings

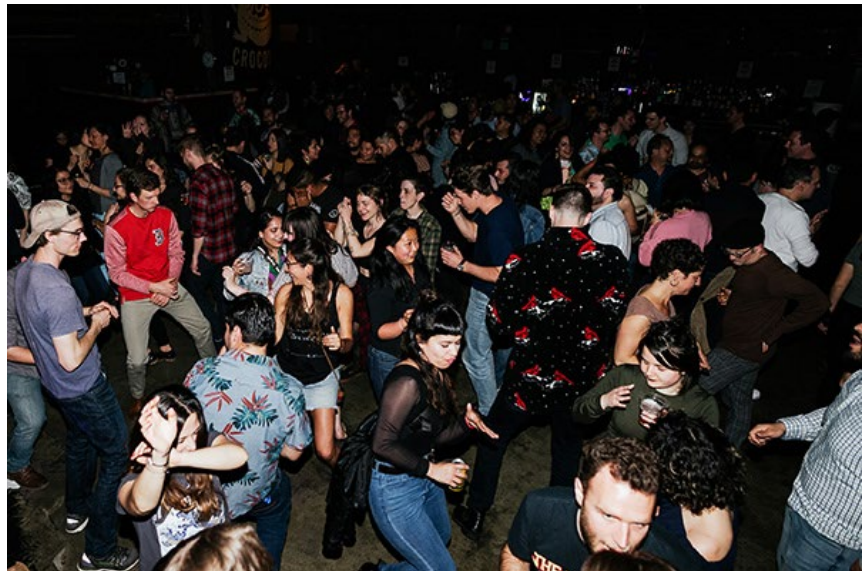
Zephaniah 3:14-18a
isaiah 12:2-6
Philippians 4:4-7
Luke 3:10-18

[USCCB Link to the Readings](#)

Learning to Lighten Up

One of the first things I learned when I went to Chile was how to dance.

People living in the working-class areas of Santiago loved their fiestas, and knew how to enjoy life. As priests who baptized their babies and wed their young couples, they would often invite us to their simple, small homes for the overcrowded reception or party afterwards, and often managed to drag us out onto the floor, or outdoors to the patio, to dance the cumbia and join in the fun!



Joyful music and fiestas are so important to people who live on the margins of Chilean society, we found. I learned to adjust to the Chilean love of vibrant celebrations, where no one was left out. Thanks to my patient teachers in Chile, I learned to welcome, at the beginning of each day, the happy challenge found described in today's readings, on this "Gaudate Sunday" — to revel in the news that God has reached out to us in love, and places before us a path that brings us into prayerful harmony with his plans, full of the peace and freedom of living in close friendship with our Creator each day!

John the Baptist was a prophet who strove to wake his people up, knowing who else was about to arrive at the party. One "mightier than he" was about to show up on the world scene, and liven up our party of our existence with the arrival of God's Reign. People repented of their sadder, isolated pasts, setting aside their many possessions, and habitual mistreatment of others.

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May we learn to dance until dawn with delight, at the side of the poor and under the starry roof of Creation, at home with God and following closely the steps of the cumbia of justice and peace.

Notes on the Sunday Readings

First Reading

Zephaniah 3:14-18a – The inspired author, soon after the devastation and exile that Judah experienced from the armies of Babylon, shared a vision of the future that would encourage a dispirited people.

Responsorial Psalm

Isaiah 12:2-6 – A psalm of thanksgiving for a time of salvation that is at hand, after the disasters that were the consequences of social injustice, denounced by the prophet earlier.

Second Reading

Philippians 4:4-7 – Paul, in chains, instructs the Christians in Philippi on prayer, and to follow his own example throughout his life: rejoicing even in the face of adversity.

Gospel

Luke 3:10-18 – Unique to this Gospel, John the Baptist's prophetic mission includes a question-and-answer session about how to prepare for the Messiah. John challenges primarily the misuse of possessions.

*Notes and commentary by Fr. Bob Mosher,
a member of the [Missionary Society of Saint Columban](#).*

*More insights from Fr. Bob
about joy, missionary life, and the work of the Columbans
on [this week's podcast episode](#)!*

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