



## Reflection from Denise Simeone

I've got that joy, joy, joy, joy, deep in my heart, deep in my heart ...

I can't help but hear that old song sung on Cursillos and retreats as I read the readings for the Third Sunday of Advent.

We hear the word joy, joyful or rejoice 11 times in the readings for today and we hear related words such as gladness, sing, exult, kindness 17 times. Is the message clear enough!

We are called to celebrate with joy, singing, shouts, festivals, and proclamations because we are told that God has "removed the judgment against you and has turned away your enemies." The Holy One is in our midst for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel! We have nothing to fear, no misfortune ahead, no need for anxiety or worry. Instead, we are told we will draw water at the fountain of salvation. These readings are full of images of God's blessing and *loving-kindness* for us. Again, is the message clear enough?

Yet the prophet Isaiah (heard in today's responsorial) always calls God's people to more faithfulness. His challenge is to "acclaim God's name; among the nations make known God's deeds, and proclaim how exalted is the name of God." How do we do that?

The answer is clearly given to us in the words of another prophet, John the Baptist heard in today's Gospel. But just because the answer is clear it does not make it easy. John's listeners of crowds, tax collectors and soldiers ask the same question, "What should we do?"

John replies: Don't take things away from those who are in need. If you have two cloaks give one away to one who has none. The same with food. (Really the same with everything.) Don't cheat people. Don't take away from them what they need to live. Don't take away their livelihood or their good name or reputation. If you have what you need to live and still have more then perhaps you are holding on to what your neighbor needs. Build the reign of God in your corner of the world. Do your part to pass on the blessings of God's *loving-kindness*. Then there will be rejoicing and gladness deep in the hearts of all.

Is the message clear enough?

~ Peace,  
Denise