



THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT: THE JOY OF HOPE

WORD OF THE WEEK - JOSEPH'S DREAM

This is how Jesus Christ was born. A young woman named Mary was engaged to Joseph from King David's family. But before they were married, she learned that she was going to have a baby by God's Holy Spirit. Joseph was a good man and did not want to embarrass Mary in front of everyone. So he decided to quietly call off the wedding.

While Joseph was thinking about this, an angel from the Lord came to him in a dream. The angel said, "Joseph, the baby that Mary will have is from the Holy Spirit. Go ahead and marry her. Then after her baby is born, name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." So the Lord's promise came true, just as the prophet had said, "A virgin will have a baby boy, and he will be called Immanuel," which means "God is with us."

After Joseph woke up, he and Mary were married, just as the Lord's angel had told him to do.



SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT

- How would you define 'hope'?
- Why is it important that I have hope in today's world?
- How can we show that we are people of hope in our everyday lives?

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Imagine a Christmas scene that has been arranged under the altar of a church. This is probably the most meaningful crib you have ever seen. The wood-carved figures are made in India: a poor woman, a poor man and a small child between them. The carving is simple, nearly primitive. No eyes, no ears, no mouths, just the contours of the faces. The figurines are smaller than a human hand – nearly too small to attract attention. But then a beam of light shines on the figures and projects large shadows on the walls of the sanctuary. That says it all. The light thrown on the smallness of Mary, Joseph, and the Child projects them as large hopeful shadows against the walls of our life and our world. Without the radiant beam of light shining into the darkness, there is little to be seen. We might just pass by these simple people and continue to walk in darkness. But everything changes with the light.

(Adapted from Henri Nouwen)

SOMETHING TO DO

At some point this week, grab hold of a newspaper and look out for a story which fills you with hope. Then tear it out and bring it in to share with your form!

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

On MONDAY we have the annual Christmas Concert and Christmas Markets – thank you and well done to all involved!



And...don't forget to get hold of a Christmas jumper or festive item of clothing to wear next Wednesday (the last day of term!) We are asking for a £1 donation to take part – all money goes to Manchester Children's Hospital!



GAUDETE SUNDAY



The Third Sunday of Advent is called *Gaudete Sunday*, the day when we light the pink candle on the Advent wreath (hence the 'pink candle' Sunday). Rose vestments are worn to emphasize our joy that Christmas is near. *Gaudete* means "rejoice". This day reminds us of the joy that is to come, and serves, amid this season of penance, as a kind of 'break' when we recall the hope we have because of the coming of Our Lord Jesus.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

**GOD WHO COMES CLOSE,
HELP US TO PERCEIVE YOUR PRESENCE
IN OURSELVES, IN OTHERS.
HELP US TO SPEAK OUT, AND AFFIRM IT;
HELP US TO KEEP QUIET, AND REFLECT
ON THE MYSTERY.
AND, WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT,
HELP US TO DANCE WITH JOY.
AMEN**