

December 14, 2014 – Third Sunday of Advent
By M. Joan Coultas, CDP



Today is known liturgically as Gaudete Sunday, and I was delighted that I received this assignment because the readings are alive with Advent joy and anticipation of the incarnational Christ once more bursting into our world at Christmas. Thus, the problem was what to choose in such a rich selection of options. The temptation was also present to contrast this *Good news-ing* with the world, which enters our lives nightly with the evening news—new racial and global animosity, theft and deception in cyberspace, weapons of mass destruction, and on and on.

Then I recalled a movie I had seen recently, *St. Vincent*. The scriptwriters focused on the curmudgeon-like Vincent, who, beneath a rough exterior, had a heart of pure gold. It just took a young preteen to identify him as part of the communion of saints, to name him “St. Vincent” as part of a school project.

And so, the readings parallel the perceptions of this young fellow in the film. Each day, we make a decision regarding our worldview. Today the readings support our viewing a world that is caught up in rejoicing. “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say rejoice.” Paul says it twice, just in case we miss the first call to rejoice. In the first reading, Isaiah reminds us why we rejoice: “The spirit of the Lord is upon us because the Lord has anointed us; we are sent to bring glad tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and to announce a year of favor and a day of vindication by our God.” Then, in the Gospel, John announces Jesus as the Savior who is to come to offer us salvation.

This Sunday’s message is clear. Take the example of the young boy whose life was fraught with many difficulties, yet who went out each day anticipating that he would find the communion of saints in his neighbor’s very cluttered backyard. He is, in one sense, a voice crying in the desert, “make straight the way of the Lord.”