

December 17, 2024



## MAY PEACE AND COMPASSION REIGN!

By Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

### Today's Responsorial Psalm

***Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace forever.***

*O God, with your judgment endow the king, and with your justice, the king's son;*

*He shall govern your people with justice and your afflicted ones with judgment.*

*The mountains shall yield peace for the people, and the hills justice.*

*He shall defend the afflicted among the people, save the children of the poor.*

*Justice shall flower in his days, and profound peace, till the moon be no more.*

*May he rule from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.*

*May his name be blessed forever; as long as the sun his name shall remain.*

*In him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed; all the nations shall proclaim his happiness.*

## Reflection

The psalm for today opens with a prayer and a blessing on the reign of a king. It describes a righteous and compassionate leader who defends the oppressed and shines the spotlight on the desire for peace. As this psalm unfolds, the words convey the hope for an ultimate king, and we know that this King is God.

As this third week of Advent unfolds, with the undergirding theme of joy, Psalm 72 provides a springboard for opening our hearts to experience the deep joy and peace of this Advent season. It necessitates our calming down from the often hectic pace of our movement throughout each day. Perhaps we find ourselves racing to finish Christmas shopping, sending Christmas cards to loved ones near and far; yet our deepest desire, if we slow down, is to experience the joy of the Beloved in our midst.

While Psalm 72 reminds us of the joy, compassion, and mercy of God, it also beckons us to be joy, compassion, and mercy through our very presence. If we are too busy with our lists of “things to do before Christmas,” we can miss this opportunity to gift our world by simply contributing to a sense of peace amidst the hustle and bustle that precedes Christmas.

We’re all aware of the desperate need for peace across the world and in our neighborhoods. Violence knows no borders and no nation is immune to its scarring or the harm inflicted upon the innocent. As we tend the soil of our inner terrain, preparing our hearts for the celebration of the ultimate gift to humanity, the birth of our Savior, let us pray for peace within and around us. Let us seek peace within ourselves so that we might bring a sense of peace to those struggling to find harmony and compassion in their lives.

As this third week of Advent unfolds, let us continue to focus on maintaining our sense of balance in life, where the hype of Christmas in the secular vernacular does not overshadow our life as Christians. We are approaching the celebration of the birth of Jesus, a moment in time which is a beacon for us all, the very gift of life itself. Our prayer and personal reflection each day of Advent create the fertile ground that prepares and enables us to be the joyful love of God in the here and now.

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## For Pondering

- As you reflect on your preparation to celebrate the birth of Jesus, what might you need to tweak in the coming week to ready yourself to wholeheartedly celebrate Christmas?
- When you reflect on the theme of this third week of Advent, joy, how do you cultivate this in your own heart? How do others experience your joy?

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## For Prayer

*O God,  
may we live into the gift of joy by being your joyful love.  
May our presence bring a sense of peace  
and convey your compassionate love to others.  
May those who seek peace, joy, and love in their own lives  
find their way to you.  
Amen.*

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