

## Stewardship Messages for Advent 2017

**Option 1** messages come from the International Catholic Stewardship Council

**Option 2** messages come from Dr. Jerry Martinez

**December 16/17, 2017**

**Third Sunday of Advent**

***“Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing.”*** (1 Thessalonians 5:16-17)

In today’s second reading Paul concludes his letter to the Christian community at Thessalonica by providing it with actions to take as they wait for the return of the Lord. The first action is to rejoice always and give thanks in all circumstances. This sounds easy but it is not. The two words that make this task difficult are “always” and “all”. This means giving thanks and rejoicing even when our circumstances are not always moments of joy and thanksgiving, or when we are confronted with a broken world. Prayerful stewards rejoice and give thanks in all circumstances because they are people of hope. A good reflection this week would be how the season of Advent can give you reason to hope.

**...OR...**

***“The one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie.”*** (John 1:27)

Many children have a visit from “Santa” at a family gathering just before Christmas. Typically, Santa sounds like and resembles one of the male elders of the family. Small children are either excited or frightened. As they grow older they get suspicious and start to ask questions, “Why is Pappa never here when Santa comes?” and “Why is Santa wearing Pappa’s glasses and watch?” It is a rite of passage when they finally “get it” and become responsible for keeping treasured family secret. For the Jews in Jerusalem who sent priests and Levites to ask Joh **who** and **what** he was, the implications were much more serious than the identity of Santa. If John was the Messiah, or was proclaiming the imminent arrival of the Messiah, the influence and livelihoods of the priests and Levites could be at risk. They were concerned that God **had** become incarnate. Do you understand the implications of God incarnate? That is why we are preparing to celebrate on Christmas. Are we ready for that?