December 17, 2017
3rd Sunday of Advent

Is 61:1-2a, 10-11
1 Thes 5:16-24
Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

Mark Pranaitis, C.M.

Gary, Indiana made national news a few months ago by submitting a bid to be the home of Amazon’s second headquarters. While the dizzying feeling of this potential game-changer didn’t last as long as the third candle on the Advent wreath, for a short while the town was abuzz with conversation about it. Thanks to our energetic and dedicated mayor, we experienced a measure of hope, a vision of what might be.

Steel made Gary into a thriving city, and steel’s exit (among other things, like racism) left it a shadow of its former self. That shadow now is a wasteland. Yet, along every major thoroughfare leading into Gary there are colorful signs announcing, “The People of Gary Welcome You.” These glad tidings don’t make up for the emptiness and ugliness that surround us here. But every desert needs its voice crying out saying something else is possible. The Third Sunday of Advent reminds us that change is possible. This divinely inspired do-over provides us with a reason to rejoice even when the vision is not yet fulfilled. At least there is a vision. At least there is a voice crying out. At least there is hope. And there are glad tidings, not to mention someone yet to come.

Will Amazon choose Gary? I doubt it. It is so unlikely as to be laughable. But, imagine the laughter when the captives are liberated, the prisoners released, and hungry have plenty. Oh, that will be a day of real rejoicing. So light that rose-colored candle and feel yourself wrapped in a robe of salvation and let your soul rejoice.

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