

Isaiah 56:1-3. 6-8

John 5; 33-36

For me, the opening words of Isaiah are significant and lay down the tone of the Word as we move closer to the Nativity..

“Thus says the Lord: Have a care for justice, act with integrity, for soon my salvation will come and my integrity be manifest. (This is still the case!)

Blessed is the man who does this and the son of man who clings to it: observing the sabbath, not profaning it, and keep his hand from every evil deed.”

Who else can remember the time when Sundays were held holy? Special days when shops were closed and people followed example, tradition, obligation, or whatever the motivation, and went to church? I do not wish to be sentimental here. The reality was, though, that we were nearer to the model set out in Isaiah’s words above. This was, and still is, a model, not just open to Catholics/Christians but to all (foreigners) “These I will bring to my holy mountain. I will make them joyful in my house of prayer.” “The Lord God who speaks, who gathers the outcasts of Israel: there are others I will gather besides those already gathered.” How will this happen? How will the Lord’s salvation come and be made manifest today? As always, the Lord himself reveals the answer in and by his Word.

By observing our own sabbaths and taking time to listen to his testimony. We may fully understand the truth that: ‘The works his Father gave him to carry out, those same works of his testify that it was the Father (God) who sent him.’