

Reflection for the Third Sunday of Advent.

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Rejoice!

The third Sunday of Advent is also known as Gaudete Sunday which is a unique and joyful moment in the liturgical calendar. The word Gaudete comes from the Latin word for rejoice. This Sunday is marked by a sense of anticipation and celebration as the advent season progresses.

We are called to rejoice amidst the waiting and anticipation of the Lord's coming. Normally the liturgical colour is rose or pink symbolising the lightening of the penitential mood with the approaching joy of Christmas. It is a reminder that even in the solemn preparation of the birth of Christ, there is a genuine cause for joy.

This Sunday invites us to reflect not only on the historical event of Jesus' birth, but also on the ongoing presence of hope and redemption in our lives. It encourages us to find joy in the anticipation of the fulfilment of God's promises. This is an opportunity to take a pause, acknowledge the blessings in our lives, and express gratitude for the hope that the Christmas season brings.

In our world which is filled with challenges and uncertainties, Gaudete Sunday serves as a beacon of light inviting us to focus on the positive aspects of life and to cultivate a spirit of gratitude and joy. It is a reminder that even in the waiting there is reason to rejoice for the Light of the world which is drawing near.

In the Thessalonians reading, Paul's exhortation to the believers to rejoice always, pray continually and give thanks in all circumstances aligns with the spirit of anticipation and joy in the Gospel reading. John the Baptist embodies this joy as he fulfils his role in preparing the way for the Messiah.

John announces that the Saviour, the people were looking for, was already among them, but they had not recognised him. In Advent, we often pray that we will be able to recognise Jesus' presence in our midst and that we will continue to be watchful as we anticipate that great day.

Advent is a season of joy because our salvation is already at hand.

However, how can we find joy with the world as it is today? With all the pain, suffering, deprivation, starvation around us? How can we be joyful today?

The call to rejoice does not dismiss the difficulties we encounter, but rather encourages us to find joy despite those difficulties. Our hope transcends our difficulties. Having this perspective can bring a deeper sense of peace and joy.

Cultivating an attitude of gratitude in all circumstances and situations can shift our focus from what is lacking in our lives to what is present and positive. These principles can contribute to a more joyful and compassionate world, finding meaning and purpose amid the challenges of the contemporary landscape. Joy, in this context, becomes not just a fleeting emotion, but a resilient and transformative state of being.

Paul calls us to rejoice – show great joy and delight, always. This is the will of God in Christ Jesus for us. During this Gaudete Sunday, let us take a pause to rejoice. An audit of our lives will show that there is more to show gratitude for and so let us rejoice as it is God's will for us.

Amen.