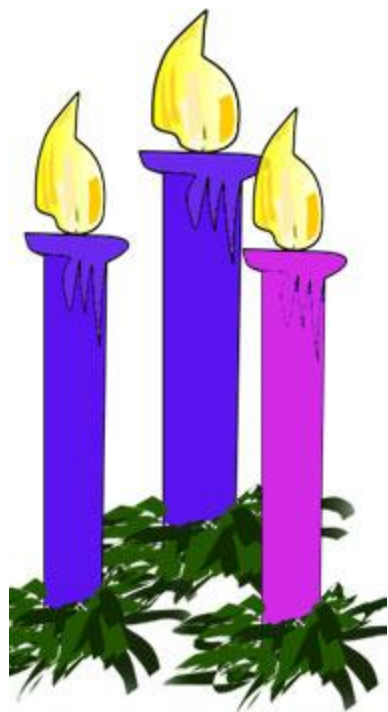


THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Letter to the Philippians (4:4-7), strongly urges believers to **“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice”**. This command emphasizes finding constant, deep-seated joy in a relationship with Jesus. It’s a call to live with courage, trust God in difficult times, and replace anxiety with prayer, leading to God’s peace guarding their hearts and minds

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT is traditionally called the **“*Gaudete Sunday*.”** As Christmas Day gets closer and closer, we are also getting excited and joyful. However, the readings today do not only emphasize the spirit of joy, but they also propose some attitudes on how should we prepare for the Lord’s coming.

“To love means loving the unlovable. To forgive means pardoning the unpardonable. Faith means believing in the unbelievable. Hope means hoping when everything seems hopeless.” Perhaps for today we can expand on this quote attributed to G. K. Chesterton by adding, “To rejoice means rejoicing in the suffering and distress of daily life.”

If the theme of the first Sunday of Advent readings was “Patience,” and the theme of the second Sunday of Advent readings was “Prepare,” clearly the theme of today’s readings, for the third Sunday of Advent, is “Rejoice!” *Gaudete*

We call the Third Sunday of Advent as *Gaudete* or Rejoice Sunday. It is because *Gaudete* is the Latin word for Rejoice. We should rejoice because Christ tells John’s disciples what they see. The disciples see the Messiah, His love, His self-giving and forgiveness. He tells them: “The blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the Good News is proclaimed to the poor and happy are those who believe.”

As you notice, the Advent wreath is surrounded by three purple candles and one rose-colored or pink candle. We light today this pink candle because it represents *Gaudete* Sunday. Its color contrasts with the three purple candles. There was a time

in the world when the color of something would tell you what was going on. Like for example: Violet or royal purple was the color for royalty; Red was for victory and so when armies of old were victorious in battle, they would return home triumphantly wearing red; Pink was a joyous color. We use this joyous color of pink today on our Advent wreath to show our joy and rejoicing that this season of waiting for our Lord is half over. We can see the light at the end of the tunnel when we will celebrate the great Feast of the Birth of our Savior.

Since pink is the color of joy, I am going to share with you a way to bring true joy into our lives. All we have to do is spell the word joy as J.O.Y. What each letter stands for and the order of the letters? ‘**J**’ stands for ‘*Jesus*’ and just as ‘**J**’ is the first letter of JOY, so Jesus should always be the first in our lives. ‘**O**’ stands for ‘*Others*’ and just as ‘**O**’ is the second letter of JOY, we should always think of others as the second in our lives. The ‘**Y**’ stands for ‘*You*’ and just as ‘**Y**’ is the last letter of JOY, we should always think of ourselves as the last. If you can still remember the motto of one of American greatest baseball player and coach, ‘I am Third.’ The explanation was, God is first, others are second and I am third. Therefore, to bring true JOY into our lives, always think of Jesus first, others second and yourself last.

Let us spend the remainder of this Advent season preparing ‘our way’ before the Lord comes this Christmas. Remembering always to keep Jesus first in our lives, others second, and ourselves last. Therefore, like John the Baptist, we to can be messengers sent by God to prepare others for the coming of the Lord by becoming holy, humble and by disciplining ourselves. **Amen**