

Homily for Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday)

December 10th/11th, 2022

By Deacon Richard Hay

“Rejoice in our Joy and Hope!”

Our Advent journey of preparation for the coming of our Lord is more than halfway complete. Today, on this third Sunday of Advent, we observe Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete is Latin for rejoice.

To rejoice and show joy on this day of our continued preparation for the Lord and His coming at Christmas, you will notice two very distinctive signs that this Sunday is different from the other Sundays of Advent.

One is the vestments. We shift from purple, the liturgical color that signifies penance, preparation, and sacrifice to rose colored which symbolizes joy in the Church.

Second, the third candle in the Advent wreath is also rose colored to carry that light of joy and rejoicing which we are called to on this day.

The rose color is a much brighter color compared to purple of course but did you know they both contain the color red in them? A very

important liturgical color in the church because it reminds us of the Holy Spirit, the martyrs and of course Jesus's sacrifice.

Gaudete Sunday is not a disruption from our Advent journey, but it is part of it and integral because it is a day to celebrate with some joy as we are reminded that Christ's birth is very near, and it reminds us of why we make this four-week journey of Advent towards Christmas and the birth of Christ.

That reason is hope.

Hope for the coming of the Lord as an infant in the manger, Hope for the second coming of the Lord at the end of time, and our continued Hope for the graces of our faith which come from God through Jesus each and every day as we receive the sacraments of our Church.

With all that said though, we continue to be in a period of preparation because Advent is not over, and Christmas has not yet arrived.

However, the world around us already has Mary, Joseph, Baby Jesus and the three Wise Men out and on display in nativities everywhere,

so we are also called to patience as we continue to prepare and wait for Christmas.

It can be challenging to say the least. John the Baptist also found himself facing a new challenge as we hear in today's gospel.

John is no longer in the desert preparing the way of the Lord but has now been imprisoned. Despite his circumstances, John is not worried about himself but about the faith and future of those he ministered to during his own ministry.

That is why he sends his own disciples to Jesus - to ask Jesus if He was the one, the one that John preached about in the desert - the messiah - or is there another yet to come that they should wait for.

Jesus's response would have provided great comfort, and dare I say some joy, to John because rather than just answering yes or no to John's question, Jesus shares how Isaiah's prophecy, what we heard in the first reading today, about the Messiah, was being fulfilled right then and there.

Notice Jesus did not tell John's disciples in the gospel to go and tell John what he, that being Jesus, was doing. Instead, Jesus instructs them to go back and tell John what they have heard and seen...

- The blind receiving their sight...
- The lame walking...
- The lepers being cleaned...
- The deaf hearing...
- The dead being raised...
- The poor having the good news proclaimed to them...

A very powerful witness that likely eased John's concerns about who Jesus was and what he was doing in his ministry.

We too can be witnesses to what Jesus is accomplishing if we are paying attention by watching and listening with our hearts each day for when we encounter Jesus either in ourselves or in others.

There are always blessings and joy to be found from Jesus in the events of our life. Whether it be losing a job that brings us to an unexpected opportunity, reconnecting with family after long absences, the loss of a loved one, a new addition to our families, and the graces we receive through the sacraments as we grow closer to the Lord in our daily lives. Only things of God can give us this true joy and these graces.

How can we help bring joy to someone as we prepare for Christmas? Well, we do that by being of service to others.

As Pope Benedict XVI wrote in his book titled “The Joy of Giving to Others”, he said:

“Being happy with God means loving like him, helping like him, giving like him, serving like him. God abides in those who love like this and their souls rejoice.”

It’s a circle of giving to others in the ways of God and in turn our souls will rejoice because we are abiding in God’s will and fulfilling His call for us to love others. It’s a great way to share joy with our families, co-workers, friends, others we know, and even strangers.

So, as we continue our journey towards Christmas over these next two weeks, let’s each endeavor to share the reason for our joy, hope, and rejoicing with someone else who might just need to hear that message.