

3rd Sunday of Advent Homily 2018

A Joyful Message Proclaimed!

Today, the Third Sunday of Advent and Gaudete or Rejoicing Sunday, is a joyful resting place on our Advent journey toward the coming of Christ birth. This season can be filled with busy-ness, so we need to stop, rest, and rejoice!

Christian joy is born out of a divine encounter with God's unconditional love, mercy, liberation or freedom, compelling us to seek and share the Good News.

Sing the refrain of #333!

Pope Francis through his smile bears witness to true Christian joy, rooted in the Good News that God is present in our midst. The green branches of the Advent wreath display to all of us the living presence of Christ amongst us. Pope Francis reminds us by his words, gestures, and tender glance that joy is at the heart of the Christian life, and that Christians are compelled to share it. The rose or pink colored candle for the Third Sunday of Advent depicts for us the joy of rejoicing.

We are called to be missionary disciples of the Good News through our joy! The readings for us today all speak of joy in Zephaniah, Philippians the letter of Joy and John the Baptist teaching that it is in giving that we receive. Those words of St. Francis of Assisi that bring joy to all of us by our living them out.

What really is the best? Pope Francis recently said last November of 2017: "The temples of our hearts are best safeguarded through service." Jesus makes clear that what is "best" can be found in our hearts, where his Spirit dwells. There we can find freedom from anxieties, joy in gratitude, and the peace that comes from sharing, inviting, speaking truth, and discerning what we really need. When we discover Emmanuel, God-with-us, dwells in our hearts, Christ comes again, we rejoice, and our lives continue to proclaim the joyful message that our Divine Messiah our God is coming to earth.

Christmas is the time for joyful song! It is very near us now and we rejoice in it!