

Homily Summary – 3rd Sunday of Advent (Year C)

Theme: Joy – True joy comes from God, and we experience it by drawing closer to Him.

Gaudete Sunday Reflection: Advent is a season of anticipation, and today, we "lighten up" (Rose color) as we rejoice in the coming of Christ, the source of true joy. This ties into the upcoming Jubilee Year of Hope, a Church-wide invitation to renew our spiritual lives, seek reconciliation, and grow closer to God. Special celebrations, including holy doors and prayers, will help deepen this joy.

Personal Story: Fr. Greg shared a moving encounter from a medical appointment, where a man named Peron told him about a near-death experience that led to his conversion from Hinduism to Christianity. Peron described a place of perfect joy, inspiring him to turn his life around and center it on Christ. His story emphasizes the profound joy God offers when we seek Him.

Message of Hope: True joy is not merely an emotion but a spiritual gift that flows from a close relationship with God. Through prayer, scripture, and living by faith, we experience a foretaste of Heaven's joy. God's joy is available even amidst hardships, and He invites us to seek His comfort and peace, especially during the struggles of the season.

Practical Application: Parishioners are encouraged to honor loved ones through Christmas poinsettias, reminding us of hope and the joy found in God's promises. Everyone is invited to reflect on whether they find their joy in the Lord and open their hearts to His transformative peace.

God gives us peace, love, rest and joy: St. Augustine's quote, "Our hearts are restless until they rest in you, O God," captures the essence of today's message. God offers spiritual joy and peace to sustain us through life's challenges. Let's welcome Christ with open hearts as we await the ultimate joy of eternal life.

Rap Summary:

Gaudete Sunday says we find our Joy in the Lord,
He is coming soon, and by Him we're adored.
May we open hearts in welcome to our joy-giving friend,
Who one day wants to take us where the joy never ends.

Jesus receive *our* hearts as *our* gift to *you*.
We give you our permission to bring joy how you do.
Lord Jesus, our Hope, you showed us many great feats,
So do as you have said, and make our joy complete.

Reasons to come to Mass each weekend

Hebrews 10:24-25 - "And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Exodus 20:8 - "Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy."

Luke 22:19 - "Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'"

Acts 2:42 - "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

John 6:53-54 - "So Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day.'"

Psalms 122:1 - "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'"

Matthew 18:20 - "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

Colossians 3:16 - "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God."

Additional resources to learn more about God and the Catholic faith

- Check out the resource list available on www.frmerkley.com
- Catholic Answers: <https://www.catholic.com/>
- Word on Fire: <https://www.wordonfire.org/>
- Formed: <https://formed.org/>
- The Coming Home Network: <https://chnetwork.org/>
- Catholic Exchange: <https://catholicexchange.com/>
- Dynamic Catholic: <https://dynamiccatholic.com/>
- The Augustine Institute: <https://augustineinstitute.org/>
- Ascension Press: <https://ascensionpress.com/>
- EWTN: <https://www.ewtn.com/>
- The Catholic Company: <https://www.catholiccompany.com/>
- Busted Halo: <https://bustedhalo.com/>
- CatholicCulture.org: <https://www.catholicculture.org/>
- The Thomistic Institute: <https://thomisticinstitute.org/>
- Ignatius Press: <https://www.ignatius.com/>
- Catholic Education Resource Center (CERC): <https://www.catholiceducation.org/>