

Sermon for the 4th Sunday in Advent 12/24/06

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. AMEN

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One of the more recent Christmas songs that we hear on the radio is “Where are you Christmas?”

Oh, I feel you Christmas I know I've found you You never fade away,
oh The joy of Christmas stays here inside us fills each and every heart with love where is the LOVE?

In the book of Zephaniah we learn what God will do for us through Love; The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.

The 2 greatest Commandments speak directly about Love.

Love comes in many different types, shapes and forms.

A certain businessman became very successful, and indulging his taste in art, gradually and skillfully began to acquire some of the world's great art—a painting by Picasso, then a small one by the Dutch artist Van Gogh. Eventually, he acquired one by Monet and his collection grew in value with every acquisition.

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Like more than 50,000 other parents, the dad eventually got the knock on the door as a smartly dressed but sweaty-palmed officer came to explain how valiant had been the conduct of the son, and how brave he had been and how doctors did what they could, and how proud he must be of him. But the loss left a big empty hole in his heart and life. Lonely and depressed, the dad faced the prospect of being alone on Christmas. As an unknown writer put it: "On Christmas morning, a knock on the door awakened the depressed old man." As he opened the door, he was greeted by a soldier with a large package in his hands." The soldier introduced himself, and then with a faltering voice explained that he was a friend of the man's son. "I was the one he was rescuing when he died," he blurted out.

The soldier was invited in, and a dad, eager to learn of the last hours of his son's life, listened with grief-punctured interest as the man told what happened. Finally, he said, "I am an artist in real life, and I want you to have this. It's a painting I did of your son as I remember him." Overcome with emotion, the dad gratefully accepted the gift, assuring him that it would have a prominent place over the mantel of the

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O be joyful unto the Lord, all ye lands: serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with a song.

Virgin Mary was visited by the Angel Gabriel saying; “Hail, thou that art favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. For thou hast found favour with God and thou shalt conceive in the womb, and bring forth a Son, and He shall be called JESUS.”

Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: and she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

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It is that same child in today's Gospel that cried out saying "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord. He who is coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unlock."

And St. Paul said - And again I say Rejoice.

When we hear the word rejoice we should begin to swell in the Love of God. Let us not get caught up in the secularism of Christmas. Let us make this last week of Advent to be filled with scenes from scripture reflecting on the Son of God and His Love He gave to us. Let us Rejoice and give that gift to others! Let us remember that we not only celebrate the birth of the child Jesus but we also await the great joy of His coming again when we can rejoice upon His return.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. AMEN