

DECEMBER 6, 2020
Third Sunday of Advent
John 1: 6-8, 19-28

“REJOICE AND BE GLAD!”

“A number of years ago, young college student was working as an intern at his college’s Museum of Natural History. One day while working at the cash register in the gift shop, he saw an elderly couple come in with a little girl in a wheelchair. As he looked closer at this girl, he saw that she was kind of rested on her chair. The student realized that she had no arms or legs, just a head, neck, and torso. She was wearing a little white dress with red polka dots. As the couple wheeled her up to the checkout counter, he turned his head toward the girl and gave her a wink. Meanwhile, he took the money from her grandparents and looked back at the girl, who was giving him the cutest and the largest smile he had ever seen. All of a sudden her handicap was gone and all that the young man saw was this beautiful girl, whose smile just melted him and almost instantly gave him a completely new sense of what life is all about. She took him from the world of an unhappy college student and brought him into her world — a world of smiles, love, and warmth. With the lighting of Advent wreath’s third candle, the rose one, and the priest’s wearing the rose vestments today, we are reminded that we are called to live with joy in our world of sorrows and pain.”¹

Today we are celebrating the 3rd Sunday of Advent with the theme of Joy. We heard in the Entrance Antiphon from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians: “Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say, Rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near.”² This is the reason why we called this 3rd Sunday of Advent as ‘Gaudete Sunday’ or Joyful Sunday because of the proximity of Christmas, the very joyful celebration of Jesus’ birth.

¹ www.stories4homilies.co

² Philippians 4: 4-5 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

"And why should we be rejoicing? Because we are soon to remember that the Son of God, Jesus the Christ, came to live among us as a human being and be one of us. "And the Word [who has the nature of God] became a human being and lived [literally 'pitched his tent'] among us" (John 1:14). And further, we rejoice because He the Lord brings such good news. The First Reading quotes, from the prophet Isaiah, a text which Jesus, in Luke's gospel, will apply to himself: "The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me for the Lord has anointed me." In so speaking, Jesus clearly identifies himself with the anointed king who is the Messiah and Saviour of God's people. And why has he come? Why has he been sent? 'He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken; to proclaim liberty to captives, freedom to those in prison; to proclaim a year of grace from the Lord.'"³

My brothers and sisters, as Christians, we must always be happy because He is among us, He is with us all the time. Amidst difficulties in life, to be joyful is our strength because we know that everything will pass but not the joy that comes from Him. We can only experience joy with Him and nothing else.

In our gospel, we heard that Jesus is the Light and John the Baptist as the witness of this Light: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light."⁴ This is the assertion of the linked and relationship between Jesus as the light and John as a witness to the light. And we are all called to do the same: to be witnesses of the light by and through our everyday lives. So, we may ask ourselves, am I a witness of Jesus for others, a good example for them and an instrument bringing others to Christ? This is also a reminder for all of us of our baptismal promises: to proclaim Christ in our lives everyday as followers of Him.

³ livingspace.sacredspace.ie

⁴ John 1: 6-8 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

"There is an old story of a father who, on a dark, stormy night in the midst of the thunder's crash and the lightning's flash, awakened and thought of his small son alone in his bedroom upstairs who might be scared of it all. So, he rushed upstairs with his flashlight to check on the boy to see if he was all right. He was flashing the light around the room when the boy awakened, and said, with a startled cry, "Who's there? Who's in my room?" The father's first thought was to flash his light in the face of the boy, but then he thought, "No. If I do that, I will frighten him all the more." So, he turned the light on his own face. And the little boy said, "Oh, it's you, Dad." The father said, "Yes, it's Dad. I'm just up here checking on things. Everything's OK, so go on back to sleep." And the little boy did. That is what the Incarnation is all about: God's shining the light in His own face so that you and I might know that everything really is okay."⁵

My brothers and sisters, we are all being reminded that we need to testify to the Light, we are witnesses to Jesus for others. As we prepare for the Birth of Jesus, we are called to be the means to bring Our Lord Jesus Christ into other people's lives. Always wear our Christian smile and joyful attitude so that other people may recognize in us Jesus Himself and they will say: "I see Christ in you."

Let this be our prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, make me a sign, symbol and herald of the Good News of love, truth and blessing for others. May I be witness of Your Light through my words and deeds so that others may see You in me. May I always rejoice and be joyful everyday amidst problems and trials in life. Amen."

⁵ www.stories4homilies.co