

“Gaudette” Sunday: Cultivate the spirit of joy within you

Today is the Third Sunday of Advent also known as “Gaudete” Sunday. “Gaudete” is a Latin word which mean rejoice. The liturgy for this day bids us to rejoice because our salvation is near at hand. Today we light the pink or rose candle on our advent wreath and the priest celebrant wears rose-colored vestments to signify our joy in Christ, and the liberation and restoration he brings to our lives.

A spirit of joy runs through the first reading, the responsorial psalm and the second reading. All of them encourage us to trust in God’s unfailing love and care for our lives.

In the first reading, the prophet Zephaniah proclaimed the message of hope and comfort to the despondent people of Judah and Jerusalem. He told them to rejoice because God is in their midst to deliver them from the hands of their enemies and restore their ruined city of Jerusalem.

Zephaniah urged the people to trust in God’s unfailing mercy to pardon their iniquities and renew them in his love.

The responsorial psalm uses the words of the prophet Isaiah to stir the sense of hope and joy in our hearts. It calls us to cry out with joy and gladness and trust in God’s greatness to save us. Saint Paul echoes the theme of joy in the second reading telling us to rejoice always in the Lord and make our kindness and gentleness known to all. Saint Paul exhorts all of us to have no anxiety at all, but rather to pray constantly, and give thanks to God in all the situations and circumstances of life.

In the gospel, John the Baptist preached repentance and transformation to people along the Jordan bank. John the Baptist pointed people to Jesus Christ. His preaching and testimony touched the hearts of his listeners including the crowds, tax collectors, and soldiers. These groups of people asked him the question; “What should we do?”

John the Baptist urged the crowds to seek the good of others, to share their cloaks and food with the needy. Likewise, he challenged the tax collectors to stop cheating people and act honestly and justly. He called the soldiers to be kind in their dealings with others and to be content with whatever they have.

We all need a turning point in our lives. Sometimes we fail to relate to others in a fair and just way. We are dishonest and unkind to others. In this holy season, we are offered the opportunity to turn a new leaf and grow in God’s grace. We are encouraged to go to confession and receive God’s mercy, healing, peace, and joy.

Let us pray that as God renews us in his love and grace, we too may strive to become his true instruments bringing love, peace, and joy to all those we meet and encounter each day in our lives.

God bless,
Fr. Dr. Ben