

Homily 3rd Sunday of Advent Year B – Gaudete Sunday 2020

Gaudete, Rejoice, Joy; our theme today could not be more evident. What does joy really mean. Is it being happy? Is it an uplifted spirit that wants to cry out and express itself? Is it an absence of sadness, sorrow, difficulties, and problems? Well, it is all these but it is also much more. Like peace, integrity, dignity, **joy** lies deep within our being but, too often, we lose sight of it when weighed down by cares and worries. In fact, joy exists within our sorrows and difficulties, within our brokenness and challenges but we need time and quiet to discover its presence and set it free to strengthen us. The root of that joy is, of course, Jesus Christ. The Jesus we received in Baptism and took root in our lives, never leaves us. Joy is of the essence of God, and we are made in God's image. Jesus comes to remind us of that Joy. **Joy** is stimulated in many ways, through affirmation, encouragement, valuing someone / or being valued, caring and being cared for, friendship given and received, even a hug!!! Think of the joy in a mother's face after she gives birth to her child after all the suffering and pain beforehand. This is the kind of Joy Jesus wishes us to experience at his birth. His coming parallels a new birth - new life - within us. A life to be nurtured and enjoyed!

Advent Meditation (By Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB.)

Climbing down through the stars to the stars on earth.

The divine face meshing with the human, heaven touching earth:
we call it Incarnation!

You came as a star led by a star through the stars to the stars.

We never knew we were stars until you came.

O God, we welcome you.

We lovingly share our frail human flesh and our starry planet with you.

We wrap you in our flesh.

We embrace you with joy as you reach out your hands and your heart to become one of us.

It was Mary who first wrapped you in our human flesh.

Her womb, the first altar consecrated from all eternity to be your first earthly home.

How holy is this earth!

Your glory streamed through our lives like stars, the day you leaned down from heaven.

You came to help us see our glory.

Following the star we lean into your glory,

and in your light, we see the light.

We never knew we were stars until you came!

A primary school boy says to his teacher "Miss, my mother says freedom is the most beautiful thing in the world. What does freedom mean?"

Teacher: "*Why don't you come and tell the class what you think freedom is.*"

The teacher hands him a dictionary, finding the entry he reads:

"Freedom means doing whatever you want whenever you feel like it with total disregard for others no matter the consequences it has for the people around you or the destruction it causes. Freedom is the broken record answer you give to end every reasonable argument where someone tries to get you to do something you don't feel like doing."

The teacher is shocked, the class looks stunned and confused and the little boy bows his head in disappointment, tears filling his eyes. About to console the boy, the teacher notices the cover of the dictionary and beams a bright smile. "*Don't worry class!*" she rejoices, "**This is an American dictionary!!**"