

WORD FROM THE PASTOR

GAUDETE SUNDAY - THE JOY OF ADVENT - 12/15/24



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today we celebrate the Sunday of “Gaudete”, the “Sunday of joy”. If this Sunday is so designated, it is because the word of God proposed for our meditation today invites us to rejoice. From the beginning of the first reading, we hear: **“Cry out joyfully, Daughter of Zion! Burst into cheers, Israel! Rejoice with all your heart and be glad!”** (So. 3:14). In the second reading, St. Paul instructs us: “Rejoice!”

Nevertheless, one thing must be clearly understood: the joy to which we are called is the very joy of the Lord. Saint Paul tells us plainly: **“Always rejoice in the Lord!”** (Phil. 4, 4). For, indeed, the joy that should be ours is to be found in that child of God who has chosen to be born among us. This is the joy of God Himself. It is the Lord Himself who exults in us and for us.

The Sunday of Joy that the Church inserts at this time of Advent, which prepares us for the Nativity, delivers, in advance, the mystery that we will celebrate with the child of Bethlehem. **Christmas, it’s God Himself who chooses to take man’s side and fight in our favor against the forces of evil.**

Which is why today’s readings are filled with calls to get off the crack. “Thou shalt not bear evil anymore,” the first reading tells us (So. 3:15). Or again, “No skulls, Zion! Do not let your hands drop down” (So. 3:16). And, in the second reading, St. Paul exhorts us: **“The Lord is at hand: be not anxious about anything!”** (Phil. 4, 5). The joy that should dwell in us flows therefore from the confidence we have in the Lord who is among us. Like a child who knows his Father is the conqueror of evil, nothing can compare to the joy of deliverance that the Lord brings us.

Notice that the joy, the confidence to which today’s readings invite us is not synonymous with inaction. The joy brought about by the coming of the Son of God among us is a commitment. **To live from the joy of the Lord is to become a motive for joy for the Lord Himself.**

For the Lord to renew us by His love, we must, each, position ourselves before the call to conversion to which we engage the season of Advent. When a birth is announced in our families, we are ready to welcome the new baby. On this third Sunday of Advent, which takes place midway through the celebration of the Nativity, each of us is invited to ask himself what he must do concretely to make his heart a worthy departure for the Child of Bethlehem. **Let us become that instrument of joy to our brothers and sisters, our family and friends that they may experience the joy of the heavenly bliss.**

Very Rev. Fr. Lucien Eugene Pierre Ph.D., Pastor, VF
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