

# Third Sunday of Advent – Gaudete Sunday December 17, 2017

## Mass Intentions

Saturday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>

5 P.M. – Sweet Home – Willie, Elrose &  
Dennis Macha

Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>

7 A.M. – Sweet Home – Otto, Lydia &  
Toni Havel

9 A.M. – Koerth – Frances Hermes

## Sanctuary Candle Intention

The Sanctuary Candle will burn this week for the members of our parish family who are homebound or in nursing homes.

## This Sunday's Holy Scriptures

Is 61:1-2a, 10-11; 1 Th 5:16-24; Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

## Your Gift to God: December 10<sup>th</sup>

Sweet Home	\$1,044
Online Giving	\$20
Immaculate Conception	\$82
Special Collection ( <i>Retired Religions</i> )	\$103
Koerth	\$1,067
Building Fund	\$5
DSA	\$30
Immaculate Conception	\$52
Special Collection ( <i>Retired Religions</i> )	\$116

*May God reward your generosity!*

## Celebrate the Lord's Abundant Mercy

Each Saturday the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance/Confession) is available from 4:00 P.M. to 4:40 P.M. in the Sweet Home confessional.

# Rejoice

## Feast of Christmas Mass Schedule

Sweet Home - December 24<sup>th</sup> – 5:00 P.M.  
10:00 P.M.

Koerth - December 25<sup>th</sup> – 9:00 A.M.

## FYI: Parish Office Schedule

The Parish Office will close at 12-noon on Friday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> and re-open at 8:00 A.M. Tuesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>. **Deadline for the December 24<sup>th</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup> bulletins is noon Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>.**

## Feast of Mary, Mother of God

The Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God, January 1<sup>st</sup>, is not a holy day of obligation in the United States in 2018 since the feast falls on a Monday. There will be a Vigil Mass for the feast day as follows:

**Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup> – 5:00 P.M.**

## Christmas Flowers

Extra envelopes for the Christmas Flower donations may be found in the Church entrances. Donors and their listed memorials will be in the bulletin after Christmas. This applies to Queen of Peace and St. John the Baptist.

## Stayed Tuned for Continuous Christmas Music – 91.5 FM

Listen to continuous Christmas music beginning December 21<sup>st</sup> thru December 25<sup>th</sup> by tuning in to KHCB 91.5 FM radio.

## Baptismal Preparation Class

The next Baptismal Preparation Class will be held Saturday, January 13<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 A.M. in the St. Joseph Family Center Meeting Room.

## Diocese of Victoria 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Catholic Conference

Saturday, January 27, 2018  
Holy Family Church, Wharton

The seven principles of **Catholic Social Teaching** will be presented by 22 speakers in 32 workshops. The titles, descriptions and presenter vitae can be seen on the diocesan website.

Also see the newly revised flyer and registration form, mailed in mid-October, for titles and names of speakers. If you did not receive one, call us at (361) 573-0828 ext. 2224, 2225, or 2227.

**On line registration is now open. Go to the Diocesan website [www.victoriadiocese.org](http://www.victoriadiocese.org) to register.**

## Cemetery Inquiries

Anyone with questions regarding the Catholic Cemeteries should contact the local representatives for the Cemeteries.

### Queen of Peace:

Harvey Matusek & J. O. Hermes

### St. John the Baptist:

Gene Velek & Jerry/Joyce Kurtz

They can provide the needed information and help with locating available plots. They will also provide the needed details to complete a purchase/reservation and receive a deed for record purposes.

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring glad tidings to the poor."*

## Religious Goods

The St. Joseph Pastoral Center has various types of religious goods available for sale in the lobby. There are religious cards, crucifixes, rosaries, Bibles, prayer books (English and Spanish), Advent wreaths, religious Christmas ornaments, statues, cemetery candleholders, etc....just the beginning of the list. All are available during office hours. Stop by for those last minute stocking stuffers or Christmas gifts.



### The Emmaus Center:

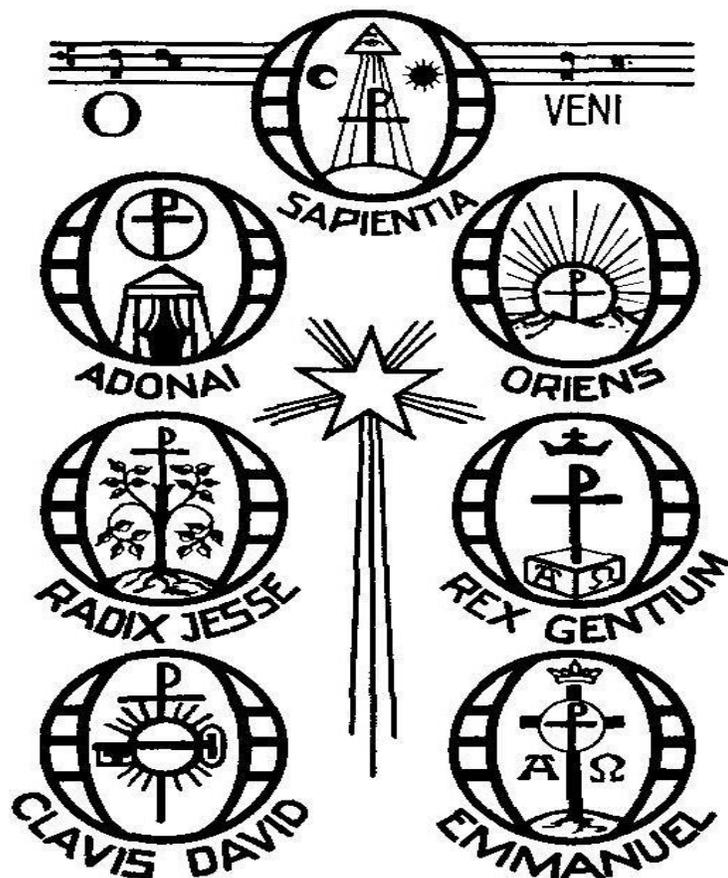
#### *Counseling in the Catholic Tradition*

Sponsored by the Diocese of Victoria

1508 E. Airline  
Victoria, Texas 77901

For an appointment, go to  
[www.emmauscounselingcenter.com](http://www.emmauscounselingcenter.com)  
or call 361-212-0830

*Extending a Listening Heart to Those in Need*



# Joyful sadness: More than a day, Christmas is a state of mind

Larry Peterson

**If you are mourning someone this year, don't feel bad if your spirituality can't quite catch up to your humanity.**

I never viewed Christmas as just a *day*. Thanksgiving is a *day*. My birthday is a *day*.

You get what I mean.

But Christmas is much more than simply a day. It is a state of mind, an uplifting, spiritually charged season that changes many people into joy-filled, happy adult-children.

Unfortunately, not everyone feels the joy. Rather, they experience a muddled, confusing sort of emotional and psychic hybrid. Joy rendered incomplete by sadness; sadness tinged with a deep, spirit-settling joy.

It's a joyful sadness.

Life moves forward; it cannot be stopped. And change happens. The people we love die, and leave a void that hangs before us in this season of carols and lessons, and we try to reabsorb the familiar readings in a way that speaks to our new state of aloneness.

Well-meaning people say, "Oh, she is in a better place, now." I have no doubt she is. But I am not. I am filled with joyful sadness. There is unbearable sadness sharing the same space as my joy. Joyful sadness: an interior and individual space and time where two opposite worlds collide in the solitude of the human heart.

If you are mourning someone this year, don't feel bad if your spirituality can't quite catch up to your humanity.

As the emotional upheaval within continues, a convoluted mix of emotions leaves behind a trail of combined smiles and tears. For some, their death wound opens and festers during the Christmas season. Their grief is renewed. Others move forward with a heavy scar tissue protecting them from renewed grief. But none forget.

Every Sunday, I visit a number of elderly shut-ins. For the most part I am the only person they get to see and talk to each week, and they truly look forward to my arrival. I may only be with them for 10 to 15 minutes but they receive their church bulletin and tell me about this physical ailment or that negligent family member. They mostly are not bitter; they just need someone to hear

them, and validate their personal suffering. Then they receive Holy Communion.

This is their weekly highlight, and my great privilege to witness.

Yet they all decorate for Christmas. One lady has a tree that is under a foot tall. On Thanksgiving Day, she puts lights on it and some tiny decorations, places it on a piece of cotton and puts the baby Jesus under it. Mary and Joseph are there too. It is a beautiful thing, her Christmas state of mind, in all of its sadness-speckled joy.

Many of these folks are in their early 90s. They are not in nursing homes, but an assisted living facility. On Christmas Day, most of them will be picked up by a family member, to spend the day together. But there is one who will not. His name is John, and he is a retired Army officer. He is 91. He is all alone except for his beloved wife, Mary, whose cremated remains are in an urn in his bedroom. She passed away in 2011 and theirs was a beautiful love story. Their wedding picture sits on his makeshift desk where a jumble of random papers are strewn about.

Next to Mary's picture is a small Christmas tree.

John is almost totally deaf and it is hard to talk to him, but he "talks" to Mary every day and she "talks" to him. Anticipating the inevitable, he has made arrangements with the local funeral director for when he passes: He and Mary will be picked up together and taken to the local VA Hospital, where there is a cemetery. The two of them will be laid to rest together.

He reaches over and gently grabs hold of the picture frame. While looking at it he tells me, "This would have been our 65th Christmas." He shakes his head, and a powerful sigh comes from somewhere deep within him. A tear runs down his face. Another runs down my face. I miss my wife, too.

Maybe we might just say a little prayer for all those who will be experiencing this joyful sadness during this Christmas season. At some point, we will all experience it: the light of Christmas, taken deeply, to pierce our lonesome shadows.

## Prayer For Renewed Strength

O Lord, my God,

Please give me the grace to maintain my hope in you through all of life's changes and to taste and see your goodness.

I praise you for the gifts you have showered on me for so many years.

Help me find joy in a renewed strength of spirit.

Please bless me with good health, and inspire me to be a good example to others.

For you are Lord, forever and ever. Amen.