

Every child is overshadowed by the Holy Spirit

3rd Sunday of Advent – Year B

IS 61:1-2A, 10-11 , LK 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54., 1 THES 5:16-24, JN 1:6-8,
19-28



Dcn. Frank Sila
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The third Sunday of Advent is known as Gaudete Sunday. Coming closer to the birth of Jesus is our reason for joy. Lighting the pink candle of the Advent wreath reminds us that we are getting close. All of our readings ask us to rejoice and be glad about the events that are to occur.

At full term, most mothers-to-be often feel as big as a house. Each time their child turns, organs are pummeled and stretched. I cannot imagine Mary, at near term, bouncing along on a donkey. Joseph, “We are just going to have to stop...” And yet, there is deep joy for the life they carry within. The birth finds us counting fingers and toes making sure that everyone is healthy. There is joy that the time of confinement is over but there may also be a sadness that the intimacy of life within is gone.

It has been well over 9 months since the onset of Covid-19. Many have quarantined from the world and those that they love. Oddly, as I write this, there are news reports that the first vaccines have left the Kalamazoo airport this morning. Certainly a reason for joy on Gaudete Sunday. Perhaps *our* time of confinement is drawing to a close. So many have suffered. The worst of the pandemic has hit our seniors, along with the poor and marginalized. Our hearts grieve for all those in abusive relationships who find themselves locked down with their abuser. What have we learned in all of this? What life lessons have we gained?

Our faith community is where we celebrate the joy of God with us. We share a meal and stories of our week. For many, this has not been possible. There is a note of sadness, for God is in our relationships.

To paraphrase, “God created the heavens and the earth... God created man and woman in his image and likeness... and it was Good.” Just as Mary’s child was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, every child, created in God’s image and likeness, is overshadowed by the Holy Spirit. God is not an old man with a white beard hanging out somewhere above the clouds. Jesus said, “Go to the inner room and pray.” With practice, we find there our inherent goodness. In the depth of that prayer, we find God, our joy. “Be still and know that I am God.” Psalm

For some, the isolation of Covid-19 may have had us, by necessity, look for God outside of communal worship. We may have been graced to find God in a new way. Perhaps the everyday sacraments of life, the colors of fall, a sunset or a first snow, fed us. God does not abandon us. He is with us and our loved ones throughout this ordeal. ¹³⁴ Like Mary, there is deep joy for the image and likeness that we carry. That is our reason for joy on Gaudete Sunday. God is with us, not only on Christmas morning, but in all the moments of life. All we need do is open heart and mind to His Holy Spirit, within us and the universe.

Our time of confinement is coming to end. Like Mary, we give birth to Christ in the world. May our prayer draw us close to the Lord as we eagerly anticipate when we can celebrate shoulder to shoulder in His house.

Rejoice Always. Pray without ceasing. 1 Thes 5:16

References

All scripture quotations are taken from. (1987). *The New American Bible, Revised edition*. USCCB.

Note: Due to Covid-19 this homily was not delivered in person but posted on the St. Thomas More Catholic Student Parish website.