

3rd Sunday of Advent (Gaudate)- B & EF
Deacon Pat Hall

Ordinary Form

ISAIAH 61:1-2A, 10-11; 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-24; JOHN 1:6-8, 19-28

Homilies are vehicles for breaking open the Word of God. First read the Sunday readings at: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/121414.cfm>

Extraordinary Form

PHILEMON 4: 4-7; JOHN 1: 19-28

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Gaudate!

Rejoice in the Lord always: again I say, rejoice.

Gaudate!

This was our introit to our Mass today **and reiterated in our Epistle.**

[Rejoicing is recurrent throughout today's liturgy. Our collect asked of God: "enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing."

Isaiah, in our first reading proclaimed, "I rejoice heartily in the Lord, in my God is the joy of my soul." In our canticle, Mary sings, "My spirit rejoices in God my Savior." And Paul in our second reading tells us, "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing."]

That is why we call this Sunday, Gaudate Sunday.

We signify this by our liturgical colors. No, this is not pink. This is rose. Although when we tried to match our Rose shades, Fr. David told me, "Deacon...**that** is pink!"

In any case, our colors today are an injection of joy into our penitential season of preparation for the feast of our Lord's nativity.

Joy, of course, means more than mere happiness. In fact joy can be found in times of trial, suffering and grief. It carries a sense of gratitude, even in those times when it is darkest. It is our expression of hope.

It also heightens our experiences when we celebrate good times. It makes our laughter deeper and louder. Joy is all of this because it is rooted in the ancient hope of future eternal bliss and communion with our heavenly Father.

It never ceases to amaze me to witness people who are "down and out" who express great joy and hope in the Lord. Every month I share morning devotions with the clients of Kalamazoo Deacons Conference on North Westnedge. The Deacons Conference is something like a Goodwill Store. There I pray with those who have come for assistance. Some are destitute. Some are recovering from addictions. Some are recovering from convictions.

Yet, as they struggle to move forward with their lives, they testify to the great joy, gratitude and hope they have because of the loving sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This hope and faith empower them to persevere and to care for each other.

It is humbling for me who has received so much to see how they are committed to Christ.

It is, after all, Jesus Christ who is the source and object of such joy. This is the Christ, the Messiah, of whom the priests and Levites were searching when they asked John the Baptist, "Who are you?"

"Who are you?"

John denied that he was the Christ. He also was not Elijah or the Prophet who were foretold to be the figures who were to usher in the messianic age.ⁱ

When pushed again as to who he was, not who he wasn't, John quoted the passage from Isaiah, *"I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord."*

["I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, 'Make straight the way of the Lord.'"]

John identifies himself, who he is, by his relationship with the Lord.

The question, "Who are you?" is a recurrent theme throughout the Gospel of John

I ask all of you, now, who are you?"

Well, we are the Church. St. Paul said we are all parts of one body. We are apostles, prophets, teachers, performers of mighty deeds, healers, helpers, administrators, interpreters, and speakers of tongues. (1Cor 12:28)

Those are the things we do, our roles. Some do some. Others do others. Yet together we are the Church Militant on earth.

Yet, we are more than what we do. I do stuff, but who am I?

As I look at my life, who I am has become clearer and sometimes fuzzier. Who I am becomes clearer when I see myself in the life of Christ, when I am in Him and He is in me. When I see more clearly who Christ is, I see more clearly who I am.

John told the Pharisees,

"...there hath stood one in the midst of you, whom you know not."

["Among you stands one whom you do not know."]

and the Priests, the Levites and Pharisees went home confused.

For us, happily, we know the one of whom John speaks.

Who am I?

I am the child of God the Father.

I am the brother of God the Son, my savior.

We are the temple of God the Holy Spirit, who fills us and animates us for love, by love and through love.

Who are you? Find the answer in the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

And don't forget: Gaudate, rejoice!

ⁱ Francis Moloney, S.D.B., *The Gospel of John, Sacra Pagina*, p. 25

The New American Bible

Douay-Rheims Version of the New Testament