

Gaudete Sunday

Advent Prayer Guide

Week 3

11 December 2022

This third Sunday of Advent we are invited to reflect on the joy we have access to because of our faith in Jesus. One of the defining characteristics of Christ-followers is their joyful demeanor. Let's not allow the struggles of this year steal from the great joy we have because of Jesus.

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Philippians 4:4-5 says,
"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near."

Over this Advent, would you pray that the *joy of the Lord* would be evident in your heart and home? May God's spirit transform the days leading up to Christmas into a time of holy anticipation; preparing our hearts, as we joyfully await the chance to celebrate the arrival of our king.

[Opening song: O Come, O Come Emmanuel](#)

Meaning and symbolism:

Advent season is an invitation to set your mind off the stresses of the year. We can take our focus off of the crazy hustle of the season and the sadness that could accompany the different ways some of us may be choosing to observe the holiday season this year. Even when things feel chaotic, we can find peace in Jesus. Advent is a chance to focus our thoughts on the gift God has given us in his son Jesus who stepped down from heaven and took the form of a man *so that we might believe*.

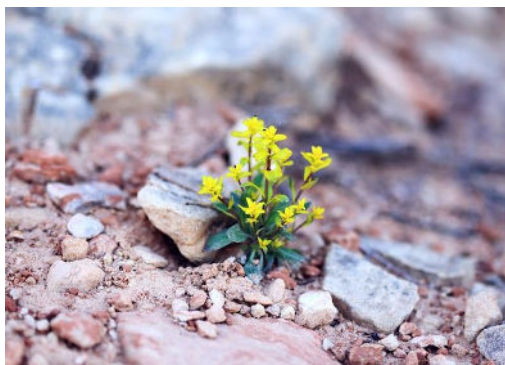
**Time of sharing: what are the signs of God's joy in my daily life?
What rejoices my heart those days?**

[Song: Patience, People by John Foley SJ](#)

From: *Artisans of Hope in Our Blessed and Broken World*

"Caring for our common home is also a call to hope. As members of the Sacred Heart family, we recognize the broken body of Christ in the broken and suffering earth. The water that flows from the pierced Heart of Jesus transforms our perception of one another, our world, ourselves, and our common home."

"In our longing for transformation we are heartened when Pope Francis says, 'may our struggles and concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope.' (*Laudato Si* #244)



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We hear in today's first reading:

"The desert and the parched land will exult: the steppe will rejoice and bloom. They will bloom with abundant flowers and rejoice with joyful song...They will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God." (Isaiah 35:1-2)

In his encyclical *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis urges us to listen to "the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor (#49)." It is always the poor who suffer most from the degradation of the earth

From Laudato Si #149

“The extreme poverty experienced in areas lacking harmony, open spaces, or potential for integration, can lead to incidents of brutality and exploitation by criminal organizations. In the unstable neighborhoods of mega-cities, the daily experience of overcrowding and social anonymity can create a sense of uprootedness which spawns antisocial behavior and violence. **Nonetheless, I wish to insist that love always proves more powerful.**”

Many people in these conditions are able to weave bonds of belonging and togetherness which convert overcrowding into an experience of community in which the walls of the ego are torn down and the barriers of selfishness overcome. This experience of communitarian salvation often generates creative ideas for the improvement of a building or a neighborhood.



We hear from today's first and second readings:

“Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God... he comes to save you.” (Isaiah 35: 1-2)

“Do not complain, brothers and sisters, about one another that you may not be judged.” (James 5:9)

“Be patient until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and late rains. You too must be patient. Make your hearts firm for the coming of the Lord is at hand.” (James 5: 7-8)

An integral ecology includes taking time to recover a serene harmony with creation, reflecting on our lifestyle and our ideals, and contemplating the Creator who lives among us and surrounds us.

Laudato Si #226

“We are speaking of an attitude of heart, one which approaches life with serene attentiveness, which is capable of being fully present to someone without thinking of what comes next, which accepts each moment as a gift from God to be lived to the full. Jesus was completely present to everyone and to everything, and in this way, he showed us the way to overcome that unhealthy anxiety which makes us superficial, aggressive, and compulsive consumers.”

Closing Prayer:

Together: **Our Father...**

As you light the third advent candle, may you be filled with a contagious **joy** that is a light to all those around you. When you meditate on Scripture this week by God's grace let your mind be filled with the *peace of God*.

What joy we have in the knowledge that we have access to an eternal hope through Jesus!

