

GAUDETE SUNDAY

JOY

HAPPY TO HAVE FOUND A TREASURE

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Advent this year breaks upon us at a time when our hearts are troubled. Scarcely recovering from the impact of the pandemic, our peace is threatened by war, violence, and conflicts in different parts of the world. In the region close to where Jesus was born there is bloodshed and gnashing of teeth.

The 3rd Sunday of Advent is Gaudete Sunday -- the Sunday of Joy. How difficult it is to find joy in a situation of so much suffering. Only faith and hope can see us through this darkness.

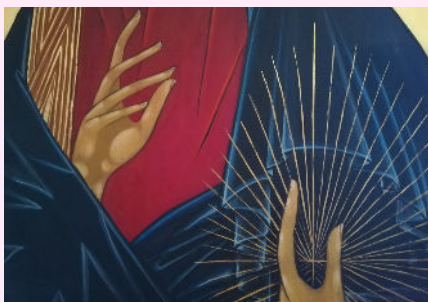
Our prayer in this 3rd week of Advent invites us:

- to cry out in trust to the God who hears our lamentations;
- to ask for the grace to recognize Emmanuel -- God-with-us;
- to experience the hope and joy that cannot be taken away from us.

I. Lamentation

Out of the depths we cry to you, O Lord; Lord, hear our voice!

Psalm 130:1



With deep trust in our God of mercy, let us cry out and present what wounds our hearts and our world. Read or view the news, touch the brokenness of our world, and be in solidarity with those who clamor for peace. Which situation in today's world touches your own vulnerability? Bring this to prayer.

II. Recognizing Emmanuel

*Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,
which means "God is with us."*

Matthew 1:23

In the midst of these troubling realities (or the personal challenges that we may be facing now), what keeps us going? How do we keep the faith? How do we nurture joy and peace within? How do we welcome Emmanuel in our hearts and in our midst? This Advent, we ask:

Who are you, Emmanuel, who is with us?
Who are you, Emmanuel, who walks with us?
Who are you, Emmanuel, who gives us joy?

III. Celebrating hope and joy

*Or what woman having ten coins and losing one would not light a lamp
and sweep the house, searching carefully until she finds it?
And when she does find it, she calls together her friends and neighbors
and says to them, "Rejoice with me because I have found the coin that I lost."*

Luke 15:8-9

Despite the darkness that may overwhelm us, light shines through and joy prevails. But we need to find it; and when we do, let us share it. Take time to name breakthroughs of joy in your own life, in your family or community, in your workplace, in your country, or in the world today.

- What are my experiences of joy; and to what or to whom do I give the power to take it away from me?
- What "treasures" in my life am I determined not to lose?

*Spiritual Itinerary (2023)
Society of the Sacred Heart*



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We end our prayer with a blessing:

The LORD bless you and keep you!
The LORD let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you!
The LORD look upon you kindly and give you peace!
Numbers 6:24-26

Click here to view the song-video in different languages:
<https://youtu.be/d48-qbcovVY?si=tyDDL7DCge12zlv->

