Advent Reflection

Each week of Advent, one of our pastoral staff will kindly share a reflection. Our Third Sunday of Advent reflection comes from our Coordinator of Religious Education/Evangelization, Emily Ember

Gaudete! Rejoice!

"God is the joy of my soul" (Is 61:10), proclaims Isaiah, and St. Paul exhorts, "Rejoice always!" (1 Thes 5:16).

By the Lord's command, Isaiah walked around naked and barefoot for three years (Is 20:3). St. Paul was imprisoned, beaten, and stoned (2 Cor 11:24-28). Yet they both rejoice. How?

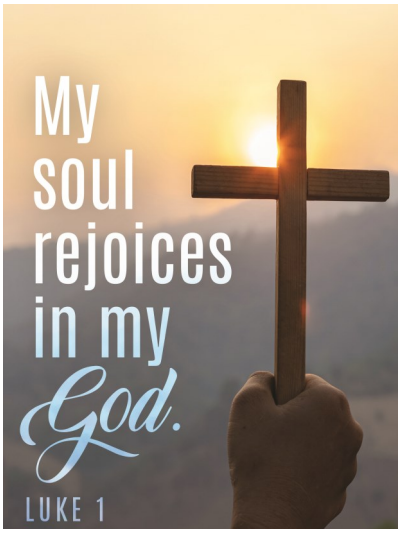
Their fullness of joy comes from knowing God intimately and comprehending His love for them.

We too can begin to know God's love for us by first knowing who we truly are and who God is, in a word, through humility. Just like Isaiah and St. Paul, we can experience joy in our trials and sufferings if we have a clear image of both God as a loving Father and our identity in Christ.

At Baptism, you became a co-heir with Christ and a partaker of His Divine Nature. As a beloved child, God the Father delights in you. God desires to give you eternal life, and He invites you to begin that life now. He calls you to begin living Heaven here on Earth!

This is why we rejoice! For God gave up His only begotten Son for us while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8). And He did it out of love for YOU. He specifically created YOU because He knew in His infinite wisdom that the world would be a better place with you than without you.

God invites us to share in His divine life, and He calls us to share in His divine labor. Just as Zechariah proclaimed that John the Baptist would be a prophet of the most high, you too have been anointed by the Holy Spirit that you may go out and bring glad tidings to the poor, those who lack material goods, yes, but especially those who live in spiritual poverty, who don't yet know the love of God.



John the Baptist came to prepare the way of the Lord, baptizing with water to help prepare his followers to receive the Messiah when He arrived. You too are called to prepare the way for the Lord that you might receive Him and give Him entrance into your heart this Advent. Every encounter with God transforms you, but you must prepare yourself to be disposed to transform. Receiving the Eucharist one time has the power to make us the greatest of saints, but so often we close ourselves off from God and His grace because we do not believe in God's love for us or we feel unworthy to receive it.

But God is love! And the love God has for you surpasses knowledge (Eph 3:19). His love is a gift that cannot be earned nor can it ever be lost.

Rejoice this Sunday in the gracious gift of love that has been bestowed upon you. And pray to the Lord that your trust and faith might be deepened that you may spread this joy out into the world.