

## HOMILY 3<sup>RD</sup> SUN ADVENT YRC 2018

Joy to the world the Lord has come.  
Let earth receive her King.  
Let every heart prepare him room.  
And heaven and nature sing.  
And heaven and nature sing.  
And heaven and heaven and nature sing.

I am not disoriented. I know this is the third Sunday of Advent, but we are not really waiting for the birth of Jesus. That already happened 2,000 years ago. And today is Gaudete Sunday and we are called to rejoice! We heard in the first reading the reason we can rejoice. God is in our midst and he rejoices over us! God takes delight in you, and that is a reason for joy.

We heard in the second reading that we should rejoice always and have no anxiety at all. God loves us unconditionally, he is with us always, and he is going to care for us. You may not be the happiest person on the block but you can be the most joyful. There is a difference between being happy and joyful. Happiness changes depending upon what is happening around you, but Joy comes from within knowing you are God's favorite! What causes you anxiety? What robs you of your joy? Is it worry about the future? Who is a worrier here? Are you worried that you may lose your health? That you may lose your wealth? That you may lose a loved one? That life may not turn out the way you planned? Do you worry that you may not have anything to worry about? If you worry about what may happen in the future you are robbing yourself of that joy that comes from the blessings you have today. Stop doing that! If something bad happens in the future, God will guide you through that if you are open to him in your life. You are God's favorite! The other thing that can rob you of your joy is when you compare yourself to others. Psychologists call this comparative anxiety, and they tell us that it is exacerbated by social media. What do people post about themselves? The good stuff right? My son is on the dean's list; my daughter was a fabulous job in New York making tons of money, and look at the

pictures of our fabulous vacation this year! People do not post that my son is flunking out of college, my daughter is in rehab, and we have not had the money to go on vacation in 10 years! People post the perfect parts of their life. Stop comparing yourself to others and start counting your blessings.

We hear in the Gospel how to increase our joy. We increase our joy when we treat everyone we meet with a sense of good will. That is what the Christmas spirit is all about. Loving, serving and giving to others.

As disciples of Jesus Christ we have every reason to be filled with joy, and I am going to challenge you to share your joy with everyone you come into contact with when you come to Mass on Christmas. If you come to Mass regularly, you are part of the St. Edith Parish Family and I am going to ask you to be radically welcoming to the people who are our guests. If you see someone you have not seen in a while be sure to talk to them. Tell them how good it is to see them. Tell them that there are a lot of good things going on at St. Edith and invite them to something coming up. If you come to the 4:00 Mass on Christmas Eve know that the church is going to be filled with children making children's noises and the music and the homily will be for the children. The 4:00 Mass is packed and I understand is a good time for everyone, but if you do not have children, we will have a simulcast in the hall on the big screen, consider going in the hall. Leave room in the church for our guests. Or come to the 6:30 or midnight Mass. If you come to Mass and someone is sitting in your seat, tell them that you are glad they are here and sit somewhere else. If someone's cell phone goes off or a child is behaving badly, do not embarrass our guests. Park far away. Leave the close spots for our guests. When you come to Mass move to the center of the pew leaving room for our guests and for late-comers. We have every reason to be joyful today and on Christmas. Share that joy with everyone you meet on Christmas day!