

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent is called **Gaudete Sunday**, this theme is taken from the words of the Introit - Latin introitus, our entrance antiphon prayers for the liturgical celebration of the mass today. **“Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near.” Philippians 4: 4-5.**

Our 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Readings from prophet Isaiah and Paul both echo forth the same theme of rejoicing; **“I rejoice heartily in the Lord, in my God is the joy of my soul.” (Isaiah 61: 10)** and **“Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing, in all circumstances gives thanks to God, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16).**

Did you know that the Season of Advent has its origin as a time of 40 days of penitential preparations for Christmas, like Lent? Advent Season calls forth our hearts to be cleansed by acts of penance. Thus, in Advent the Words of Scriptures are akin to the Lenten Readings and the priests and the deacons wear purple-colored vestments like Lent. But on Gaudete Sunday, having passed the midpoint of Advent, the Church calls her children to **“Rejoice”** in encouragement to continue our spiritual preparation for Christmas in joy.

For this same reason, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Candle of the Advent Wreath, lit on Gaudete Sunday is traditionally rose colored. It is the same with the vestment colors of the priests and deacons, the Altar and the sanctuary all adorned in rose color. Truly our rich tradition of Liturgical Worship fills our senses with the expectant joy of Christ ever so near, through our hearing and our seeing. (Gaudete Sunday has a counterpart in Lent; the Laetare Sunday).

This Gaudete Sunday, let us reflect on the true joy of Christmas that is ever so near to us as the primary reason for our joy, even though the pressing earthly needs of gift buying – giving, food celebrations and bright festal color decorations are awaiting to be prepared.

We must always remember as Christians that the primary goal of Christmas Season is to prepare for Jesus Christ as we commemorate his birth in Bethlehem, for not doing we risk being swept away by the strong currents of the secular world that dictate falsely what Christmas is, one without Christ.

In such then are all glitters, lights, food, parties, gifts and much more but no God. Christ is taken out of Christmas and in such event though our physical and emotional needs are seemingly fulfilled, our spiritual life, our eternal souls' thirst and hunger for the true meaning and reason for Christmas...Jesus Christ is not met, we are left empty deep within!

As we quickly approach the Solemn Feast of Christmas, just week away, and even as we rejoice that the most solemn east is well-nigh, let us awaken our lives, from spiritual slumber - death! **“Awake O, sleeper, and arise from the dead and Christ will give your light.” Ephesians 5:14.** Here St. Paul warns us all about death which is to be asleep in our spiritual life...existing but not alive, physically active but morally bankrupt.

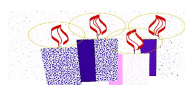
We have an expression that has become common: **“a wake-up call.”** When something happens to you, or you witness something that sets off some needed internal awareness, we may call that a **“wake-up call.”** I have heard priest friends, who suffered unexpected heart attacks or came near death experiences and spoke of the event as a **“wake-up call.”**

The major spiritual danger is many of us may just be spiritually sobered up momentarily. After a few days, weeks or even months later, the impact of that event diminished, and the old habits of life resumed. We were awakened and refocused but get over quickly and fall back into same spiritual slumber – life of spiritual death.

We have reached the midway of Advent spiritual journey! We must rejoice today, for we have spiritually traveled thus far, but with greater resolve, we must awaken our souls and set our lives during this brief sojourn on earth aright...so that heading to no other place than to the eternal embrace of the Christ Child!

May God bless each one of you on this **Rejoice – Gaudete Sunday!**

Fr. Paulo ofm cap.



o come,  
emmanuel

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# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS:** Our women and men religious offer gratitude. A sister shares, "I thank the Lord for all who give. I don't think we would make it without them." Thank you for giving to the Retirement Fund for Religious last week. Your donation makes a difference in the lives of elderly women and men religious. To learn more about how your gift helps visit [www.retiredreligious.org](http://www.retiredreligious.org)

**WORD OF LIFE:** "O St. Bakhita, assist all those who are trapped in a state of slavery; Intercede with God on their behalf so that they will be released from their chains of captivity. Those whom man enslaves, let God set free." **USCCB, "Prayer to St. Josephine Bakhita"**

## WEEKLY READINGS

**Dec 17 Sun: 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent**

Is:61:1-2a, 10-11; Lk:1:46-48; 1 Ths:5:15-24; Jn:1:6-8, 19-28

**Dec 18 Mon: Advent Weekday**

Jer:23:5-8; Ps:72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19; Mt:1:18-25

**Dec 19 Tue: Advent Weekday**

Jgs:13:2-7, 24-25a; Ps:71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17; Lk:1:5-25

**Dec 20 Wed: Advent Weekday**

Is:7:10-14; Ps:24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6; Lk:1:26-38

**Dec 21 Thur: Advent Weekday**

Sg:2:8-14; Ps:33; 2-3, 11-12, 20-21; Lk:1:39-45

**Dec 22 Fri: Advent Weekday**

1 Sm:1:24-28; 1 Sm:2: 1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd; Lk:1:46-56

**Dec 23 Sat: Advent Weekday**

Mal:3: 1-4, 23-24; Ps:25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 & 14; Lk:1:57-66

## NEXT SUNDAY READINGS:

**2 Sm:7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a 16:** With help from the prophet Nathan, King David decided to build a house for the Lord to dwell in.

**Rom:16:25-27:** According to Paul, the gospel reveals the mystery hidden for long ages but now, at God's command, is made manifest in Christ Jesus.

**Lk:1:26-38:** The angel addressed Mary, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you," When Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord." she became a model for all.

## NOTES ON STEWARDSHIP

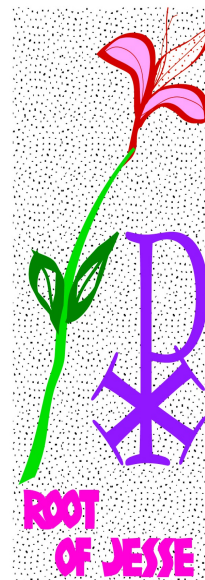
In today's reading Paul concludes his letter to the Christian community at Thessalonica by providing it with actions to take as its members wait for the return of the Lord. The first action is to rejoice always and give thanks in all circumstances. This sounds easy but it's not. The two words that make this task difficult are "always" and "all". This means giving thanks and rejoicing even when our circumstances are not always moments of joy and thanksgiving, or when we are confronted with a broken world. Prayerful stewards rejoice and give thanks in all circumstances because they are people of hope. A good reflection this week would be how the season of Advent can give you reason to hope. **(International Catholic Stewardship Council)**

## PARISH CALENDAR

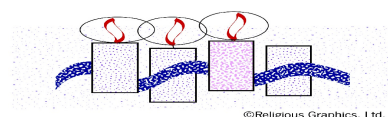
|              |                        |                             |
|--------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Sat, Dec 16  | 5:00 p.m. ....         | Mass                        |
| Sun, Dec 17  | 7:00 a.m. ....         | Mass                        |
|              | 9:00 a.m. ....         | Mass <b>(Live Stream)</b>   |
|              | 5:00 p.m. ....         | Mass                        |
| Mon, Dec 18  | 7:30 a.m. ....         | Liturgy of the Hours/Rosary |
|              | 8:00 a.m. ....         | Mass                        |
|              | 9:30-11 am ....        | Food Pantry Open            |
| Tue, Dec 19  | 7:30 a.m. ....         | Liturgy of the Hours/Rosary |
|              | 8:00 a.m. ....         | Communion Service           |
| Wed, Dec 20  | 7:30 a.m. ....         | Liturgy of the Hours/Rosary |
|              | 8:00 a.m. ....         | Communion Service           |
|              | 9:30-11 am ....        | Food Pantry Open            |
| Thur, Dec 21 | 7:30 a.m. ....         | Liturgy of the Hours/Rosary |
|              | 8:00 a.m. ....         | Communion Service           |
| Fri, Dec 22  | 7:30 a.m. ....         | Liturgy of the Hours/Rosary |
|              | 8:00 a.m. ....         | Communion Service           |
|              | <b>10:00 a.m. ....</b> | <b>Decoration of Church</b> |
| Sat, Dec 23  | 7:30 a.m. ....         | Liturgy of the Hours/Rosary |
|              | 8:00 a.m. ....         | Mass                        |
|              | 3:15-4:00 p.m. ....    | Confession                  |
|              | 5:00 p.m. ....         | Mass                        |



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# THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT



## Rejoice! Rejoice!

God of all Names,  
you are our hope and guide on the path  
to holiness.  
O Wisdom, come and lead us to the path  
of truth.  
O Lord of Lords, come and teach  
us reverence.  
O Root of Jesse, come and show us the way  
of salvation.

O Key of David, come and open for us  
heaven's door.  
O Radiant Dawn, come and point us to your  
healing light.  
O King of Nations, come and shower us with  
mercy and grace.  
O Emmanuel, come into our hearts and  
make us one with you.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Sunday, December 17, 2023

O Come, O Come



*Today's readings: Isaiah 61:1–2a, 10–11; Luke 1:46–48, 49–50, 53–54; 1 Thessalonians 5:16–24; John 1:6–8, 19–28.* Infused with a spirit of joy, the Scriptures remind us to ready ourselves with hope and gratitude.

The “O” Antiphons offer a beautiful way to heighten our attention to Christ’s coming in this last week of Advent. Based on Isaiah’s prophecies, the antiphons echo ancient titles given to the long-awaited messiah.

Daily reflection on the “O” Antiphons helps us prepare the manger of our hearts to welcome the infant. The Christ

child is Wisdom itself; he is our Lord; he descends from the Root of Jesse; he is the Radiant Dawn, the King of Nations, he is truly Emmanuel, God-with-us.

With today’s antiphon, we recall that the prophet Isaiah ascribed the quality of wisdom to the messiah, saying, “Wonderful is his counsel and great his wisdom” (Isaiah 28:29). This prophecy is fulfilled in Jesus, the incarnation of divine wisdom, transmitted through the power of his words, and poured out in his daily living with us.





## THIS WEEK AT HOME

### Monday, December 18

#### O Adonai (Lord)

The Hebrew people used the title *Adonai* as a substitute for the unutterable name of God. Today's "O" Antiphon calls us to attention and reminds us that when we invoke the name of the Lord, we should do so with the utmost reverence. Today's readings: *Jeremiah 23:5–8; Psalm 72: 1–2, 12–13, 18–19; Matthew 1:18–25.*

### Tuesday, December 19

#### O Root of Jesse

Today's prophetic invocation for Jesus hearkens to the source of his human ancestry: "A shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, / and from his roots a bud shall blossom" (Isaiah 11:1). Jesse was the father of King David and is designated as the first person in the genealogy of Jesus. From the Root of Jesse, comes a branch, Jesus, from whom we graft life. *Today's readings: Judges 13:2–7, 24–25a; Psalm 71:3–4a, 5–6ab, 16–17; Luke 1:5–25.*

### Wednesday, December 20

#### O Key of David

The genealogy of Jesus locates him in the line of King David. The prophet Isaiah foretells, "I will place the key of the House of David on his shoulder" (Isaiah 22:22). Thus, Jesus carries the power to liberate us from sin with the exquisite grace of forgiveness and to open the doors for all those asleep in the underworld. Jesus, the key to the kingdom of God, shows us the way to salvation. *Today's readings: Isaiah 7:10–14; Psalm 24:1–2, 3–4ab, 5–6; Luke 1:26–38.*

### Thursday, December 21

#### O Radiant Dawn

Today's "O" Antiphon stems from the celebrated prophecy "The people who walked in darkness / have seen a great light; / Upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom / a light has shone" (Isaiah 9:1). In praying "O Radiant Dawn," we call for Jesus, the light, to break through the darkness of our lives like the dawn transforming the night sky. Christians often plan to line their sidewalks and front entryways with lights on Christmas Eve as a testimony of their joy at the arrival of the Light of the world. *Today's readings: Songs 2:8–14 or Zephaniah 3:14–18a; Psalm 33:2–3, 11–12, 20–21; Luke 1:39–45.*

### Friday, December 22

#### O King of Nations

The Hebrew people eagerly awaited a messiah to relieve them from oppression and restore justice to the land. In her canticle in the Gospel of Luke, Mary paints a picture of their savior as one who will "scatter the proud in their conceit, cast down the mighty from their thrones, fill the hungry with good things" (Luke 1:51–53). Even though the prophet Isaiah foretold that this longed for "King of Nations" would come as a child, no one could imagine the messiah entering the world as a homeless infant. Jesus upended expectations forevermore. *Today's readings: 1 Samuel 1:24–28; 1 Samuel 2:1, 4–5, 6–7, 8abcd; Luke 1:46–56.*

### Saturday, December 23

#### O Emmanuel

As we turn the page from Advent to Christmas, we invoke our final "O" Antiphon, calling the child Jesus *Emmanuel*, which means "God-with-us." Herein meld the most unlikely truths: the infant born in a manger is truly God dwelling among us. The infant, completely dependent upon the care and protection of his parents, is indeed the Savior of the world. *Today's readings: Malachi 3:1–4, 23–24; Psalm 25:4–5ab, 8–9, 10, 14; Luke 1:57–66.*

