

ADVENT THIRD SUNDAY

December 16, 2018

Advent is normally a penitential period. The color of the vestments, as in Lent, is purple. It is a time when we are invited to anticipate Christmas by our efforts of some form of repentance and renewal. This Sunday the 3rd Sunday of Advent is referred to as "Gaudete Sunday" meaning Rejoice. Our Advent wreath candle is pink not purple. Our music ministry is celebratory and rejoicing.

Our opening song the "Canticle of the Turning ", cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great, my spirit sings of the wondrous things, so from east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about to turn?"

I sometimes look for real "Joy" in things that I want. I want to travel. I want to be healthy. I wouldn't mind owning a new car. I want my children to be happy. Maybe your wants are similar. But all our wanting misses the real mark of Joy. Real Joy comes in serving others not just from our excess but from our real true inner self. Joy is seen in our Holiday spirit of giving to others in need when we may not have time or resources. In today's Gospel, John the Baptist mentions to his Jewish followers to share your cloaks and food with others and not take advantage when you have the "advantage". John also says we should find satisfaction in what we have. AND WHAT WE HAVE IS EACH OTHER! He is telling us to see the Jesus Christ in every person, every day.

I spend some time at Joseph Nursing Home. I relish the elder people who have little material things and little time left. Joy is found in a bingo game, a simple mass or prayer service and yes even listening to their stories no matter how often they are repeated. Whatever we are; young or old, strangers or friends, Republicans or Democrats, we are all God's people. Like John the Baptist, we are the ones who can introduce Jesus to others by the way we walk not just talk. And our role, like John the Baptist, is to lay the foundation to help Jesus do his work.

Jesus' coming gives us freedom to do the right thing. We follow Christ not because of duty. We follow Jesus because of joy and enthusiasm. John the Baptist is a prophet who laid the groundwork for Jesus. He can be looked upon as a real radical sometimes. However, I think John saw in Jesus a real freedom. He knew that if we worked together and walked with Jesus we might see the world "about to turn". A world that brings Joy to everyone.

Mike Armstrong