



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,
The Third Sunday in Advent is called Gaudete Sunday – “Rejoice Sunday.” We light the rose candle, and have the option of wearing rose vestments (instead of violet), and the readings call us to *rejoice in the Lord*:

**Shout for joy, O daughter Zion!
Sing joyfully, O Israel!
Be glad and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!** (1st Reading: Zephaniah 3:14)

**Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great
and Holy One of Israel.** (Psalm response: Isaiah 12:6)

Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! (2nd
reading: Philippians 4:4)

In the midst of this time of waiting (Advent) – waiting for the Messiah to come – the Church invites us to REJOICE, even while waiting, even when the coming of the Lord has not yet been fully realized. Do you rejoice while you’re waiting? Think about the last time you were waiting in the doctor’s office, at the DMV, in traffic, or in line at the store: did you spend that time rejoicing ... or griping and complaining (at least internally)? Yet the Church invites us to rejoice.

I think about Blessed Solanus Casey, a Capuchin Franciscan from the mid-west. One of his famous sayings is, “Thank God ahead of time.” This is how we can rejoice, even while waiting to see the results – because we trust God’s love for us, that he is working in our lives, and He will not abandon us. We wait for the results, but we trust with total trust that God has taken care of everything, and so can rejoice!

I’ve shared this story before, but when I was only a few years ordained, I was transferred to a new assignment in Keene. I did not want to moved, and I did not want to be moved to this parish in particular. But I went out of obedience to the Bishop. After only a year, I was asked to move again. By this time, I had grown to love the parish, the parishioners, and the priests with whom I worked. My heart broke when I found I had to move. In prayer, the Lord invited me to trust Him, and to rejoice. He showed me that, as much as I had not wanted to go to Keene, now I didn’t want to leave. He asked me, “Will you trust me enough to rejoice in this move, even though you cannot yet see the good that I will do?” As hard as the move was, I knew I had to go into it with joy... because God was doing something so good! He is trustworthy.

The Church invites us on this “Rejoice Sunday” to look to the Lord, even in our struggles, trials, and the evil that surrounds us. He invites us to REJOICE! We rejoice not in evil, of course, but in the *goodness of the Lord!* May we turn to the Lord in our waiting, in our good times and bad, and rejoice in His faithfulness, His love, and His providence.