

Rejoice Always!

One of the things I have always enjoyed for the years I have witnessed Advent and Christmas here in the US is driving through the streets in the night and seeing the houses decorated with bright lights and seeing the Christmas trees with all the ornaments and lights at home. Also, the lights of advent candles, unique to this season are meant to overcome the darkness of our lives so that we can have lasting joy. On this third Sunday of Advent, we light the third candle, which is rose or pink and it signifies joy.

Every third Sunday of Advent is called *Gaudate* (Latin meaning-rejoice) *Sunday*, which is rooted in the invitation St. Paul gives us in the second reading, “Rejoice always.” The question that can come to our mind will be, how can we rejoice always in the face of difficulties and challenges of life, especially with all the problems we have been facing for months because of the coronavirus Pandemic? St. Paul answers that question by calling on us to live a life of gratitude and prayer. A life of gratitude brings joy and our sprayer connects us to God, the source of joy.

Prayer of thanksgiving is an act of faith, which helps us to recognize the presence of God in our lives. A good prayer life strengthens our faith and makes us feel more the presence of God. Through prayer, we praise and thank God for his love, we ask him for forgiveness, and we present our petitions before him in faith. As we listen to the call of two great prophets, Isaiah and John the Baptist, we read this season, let us with grateful hearts continue to thank God for His blessing and prepare for the coming of the Messiah- Immanuel (God is with us) with hearts full of joy. Amen.

***“Rejoice in your hope, be patient in your trials, but never cease praying”
(Romans 12:12)***