

Cycle A

3rd Sunday of Advent



build. plant. grow.
the word this week

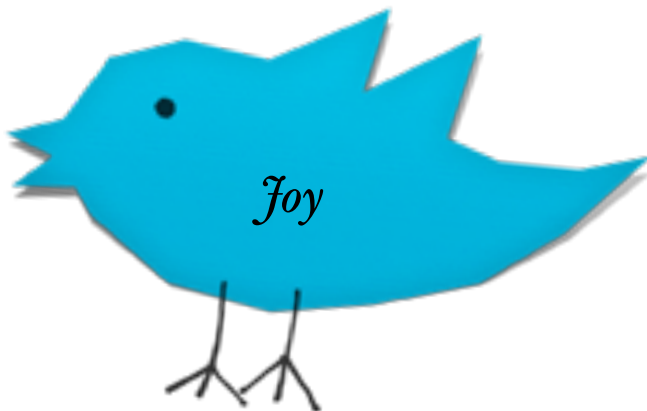
Lectionary # 7

Reading I: Isaiah 35: 1-6A, 10

Today, the Third Sunday of Advent is referred to as “Gaudete” Sunday. The word gaudete is Latin for joyful. The reading from the prophet Isaiah speaks of joy returning to the people. Isaiah speaks of the eyes being able to see clearly again, ears being able to hear, singing and dancing becoming a reality for those once mute and lame. It is indeed a time to rejoice and to be filled with joy since life has been renewed. This Third Sunday of Advent proclaims joy by moving away from the liturgical purple common to Advent Season and using the color rose for this joyful Sunday of Advent.



advent



Reading 2: James 5: 7-10

James, the leader of the Church in Jerusalem, writes to his community encouraging them to be patient as they wait for the coming of the Lord. He likens it to the excitement a farmer encounters as he awaits the joyful emergence of a tender plant from beneath the soil. Anticipating something wonderful does indeed bring joy to the one who waits, provided that the one who waits has a patient disposition.

Gospel: Matthew 11: 2-11

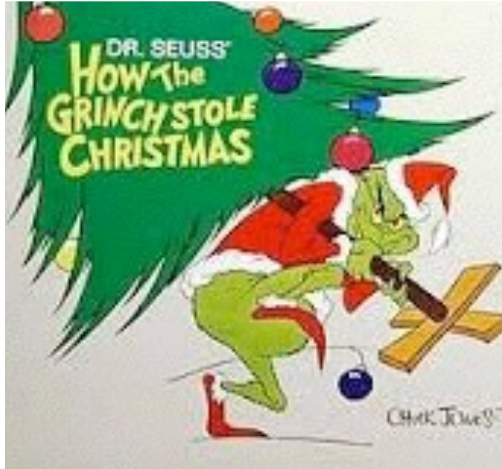
John the Baptist is imprisoned and he sends his disciples to seek out Jesus to inquire if he is indeed the one who Israel has been awaiting. Jesus responds by indicating the works he has done. *Go tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them.* This indeed is good news of great joy. John the Baptist has laid the ground work and paved the way for Jesus. Jesus is the One, and He brings joy to those who have long awaited this good news. John the Baptist plays a pivotal role in announcing the One who is the Good News.



lectionary
reading



children's
story



How the Grinch Stole Christmas

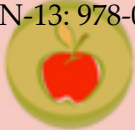
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character
education
activity

Joy is an internal gift that resides within the heart and soul of each person and it is contained within. We are called to allow it to surface so that others might find their joy within.

How the Grinch Stole Christmas

This classic story bespeaks the **joy** that comes from within rather than the happiness that is derived from things outside oneself. A town of merry Christmas-lovers, called the Whos, goes about their annual holiday preparations. Up in the caves north of their town, lives a character named the Grinch who absolutely hates Christmas. The Grinch sets about trying to destroy Christmas by removing all the things that have to do with the celebration of Christmas including decorations, gifts, meals, all of it. As the story proceeds, the Grinch is about to dump all the vestiges of Christmas when all of a sudden he hears the Whos joining in their traditional Christmas song. Even without the external material things, the Whos have an inner **joy** that cannot be stolen.

This story is a superb way of retelling the importance of a joy that comes from within so often spoken of by Jesus in the scriptures. Time and again the prophets, Jesus, and the law speak of the most important things from which joy is derived; our relationship with God and with others. The love that exists in relationships and the cultivation of those relationships are the interior dispositions that foster joy.

Activity

Step One: Provide the students with styrofoam balls and other art materials such as pink and rose colored tissue paper, decoupage glue and brushes in order to make a "Gaudete" Christmas Tree ornament for their Christmas tree at home.

Step Two: Using the internet, find images of **Joy** or letters of various fonts to spell out the word "**Joy**" that may also be decoupage onto the tissue paper covered styrofoam ball. Provide purple or pink pipe cleaners in order to make a hook for hanging on the tree. This is an ideal way to teach the children about the nature of inner joy and the importance of the liturgical seasons in the life of the Church.

Joy is a gift from God that is grounded in our interior relationship with God. Joy, then can only be derived from cultivating our interior life with God.



case study

**Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.**

What could you do today?

During this preparation time for celebrating Christmas which so often focuses on the giving and receiving of material gifts, take some time and make a list of the gifts that are non-material that are so important to you. Once you have made that list, write a “Thank You Note” to God. You may wish to do this on rose colored or pink paper to honor one of the gifts such as **joy**.

Look Feel Know Act

Look around and think of all the things that God has given us that are free, such as the air we breathe, etc. There are many things that make for a joyful life and often they are things that are either free or non-material. Take time to realize that joy is something that is derived from the life that you share internally with God and the friendships and relationships that you have with those in your life. Recognize that friendships and relationships are enhanced by the externals, such as food and drink shared at meals and parties, but if taken alone are not nearly as much fun as when shared with others. Make a personal commitment to include those things that are not material yet bring great **joy** to your life in your prayers of thanksgiving. Let others who have contributed to your joy by their friendship and love know about it by sending them a card or note. The making of the card could be a prayer in itself. Whenever we approach doing something with an attitude of prayer, the “doing” becomes a prayer.

In *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* we see that a little Who, Cindy Lou, knows that Christmas joy is not about any object but rather about a joy from within. It is this little girl that makes the Grinch's heart grow and grow and grow. We cannot give the joy from within to others but we can model being a joyful person so that others will recognize the joy within them.



**closing
tool**

Pray that you will always seek to be a person of joy, recognizing that the joy within comes from the relationship you have with God. Amen.



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