

Homily Summary – 3rd Sunday of Advent (2025)

Overview: On this Gaudete (Rose) Sunday, the Church invites us to rejoice. Even as Advent remains a time of preparation, we are given real reasons for joy: lives being changed, hearts returning to God, and the deep truth that God loves us and enters into our brokenness. We reflect on the joy of knowing God's mercy, the humility of the first Christmas, and the hope that Jesus brings into every imperfect situation of our lives.

Main Points

- **Rose Sunday: Reasons for Joy**
 - We rejoice because God is at work: people returning to the Church, a growing parish, and even the conversion of hearts such as from atheism to faith.
 - Joy is not based on everything being perfect, but on God's presence among us.
 - **God's Mercy and Reconciliation**
 - Reconciliation is a powerful source of joy. God is always ready to forgive, welcome, and heal us.
 - Confession prepares our hearts to receive Christ more fully at Christmas.
 - **Bambinelli Sunday**
 - The blessing of Baby Jesus figurines reminds us that Christmas is about welcoming Christ into our homes and hearts.
 - It invites families to place Jesus at the center of their lives.
 - **The First Christmas Was Not "Perfect"**
 - Mary and Joseph experienced uncertainty, rejection, and poverty.
 - Yet God chose those very circumstances to enter the world, showing that His grace works powerfully in weakness.
 - **Jesus Is the Greatest Gift**
 - Christ brings peace and joy even when life feels messy or unfinished.
 - God is willing to enter every situation of our lives with His saving love.
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Sacred Scripture:

- **Luke 2:7** – "She gave birth to her firstborn Son ... and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn."
 - **Luke 1:35** – "The child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God."
 - **Philippians 4:4** – "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice."
 - **Psalm 34:18** – "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted."
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Reflection Questions

1. What are my reasons for joy this Advent, even if life is not perfect?
 2. Where might God be inviting me to experience His mercy through Reconciliation?
 3. Do I believe that Jesus truly wants to enter into the messiness of my life?
 4. How can I make room for Christ in my heart and home this Christmas?
 5. Is Jesus truly the greatest gift I am preparing to receive?
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Closing Thought:

Just as Mary and Joseph found joy and peace through the presence of Jesus, so too can we. No matter how imperfect our lives may feel, Christ comes to dwell with us - and that is the deepest reason for joy.

Rhyme summary: Rose shows our joy for hearts are coming closer to God, the Church is alive and growing strong. God offers us His mercy through Reconciliation, loving us all day long. We bless the Child on Bambinelli Sunday, raising our voices clear, for God who loves us, holds us close, and is already so near. Though roads were rough and doors shut tight in Bethlehem's cold night, true riches shone where Love was born in the glow of poverty's soft light. Mary hoped with trust, her longing strong and true, as Christ, the greatest gift of all, came forth to make all things new.

Some Scriptural reasons to come to Mass each weekend

Exodus 20:8 - "Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy."

Acts 2:42 - "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

Hebrews 10:24-25 - "And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Luke 22:19 - "Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'"

John 6:53-54 - "So Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day.'"

Matthew 18:20 - "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

Psalms 122:1 - "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'"

Colossians 3:16 - "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God."

Additional resources to learn more about God and the Catholic faith

- Check out the resource list available on www.frmerkley.com
- Catholic Answers: <https://www.catholic.com/>
- Word on Fire: <https://www.wordonfire.org/>
- Formed: <https://formed.org/>
- The Coming Home Network: <https://chnetwork.org/>
- Catholic Exchange: <https://catholicexchange.com/>
- Dynamic Catholic: <https://dynamiccatholic.com/>
- The Augustine Institute: <https://augustineinstitute.org/>
- Ascension Press: <https://ascensionpress.com/>
- EWTN: <https://www.ewtn.com/>
- The Catholic Company: <https://www.catholiccompany.com/>
- Busted Halo: <https://bustedhalo.com/>
- CatholicCulture.org: <https://www.catholicculture.org/>
- The Thomistic Institute: <https://thomisticinstitute.org/>
- Ignatius Press: <https://www.ignatius.com/>
- Catholic Education Resource Center (CERC): <https://www.catholiceducation.org/>