

Homily: 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent: Cycle C: 2021: Zep 3:14-18; Is 12: 2-3, 4. 5-6; Phil 4: 4-7; Lk 3: 10-18

***“Supernatural Joy”***

1. **Are we a people of joy and anticipation?** Or are we depressed, gloomy and anxious most of the time? Are we a chronic complainer in which nothing is ever good enough for us, be it in our job, our family, our Parish, etc.? **In contrast, a spirit of joy is one of the most powerful means of witness** to others of the truth of the Catholic Faith. And it can permeate any temperament, even mostly melancholic souls - though realistically this is a bigger struggle for melancholic temperaments as well as people who suffer from clinical anxiety and depression – but even in those struggling souls there can be interior joy that comes from union with the Blessed Trinity in grace. ***But why should we be joyful and filled with hope***, when in reality the moral and spiritual state of the world objectively is not the best and/or our own personal family and our own life may have a lot of struggles and suffering of different sorts? **Because Jesus is with us in the midst of all this! And embracing the Cross leads to holiness and salvation.** We are a people of hope because the Lord Jesus has indeed defeated satan, sin and death. As we await the final objective manifestation of His victory at the end of time, yes, even now we can share in that victory in our interior life: in our heart and soul. **How?** By allowing the Holy Spirit to deepen the virtue of hope in our life. ***Hope is the infused theological virtue by which we have the confident interior assurance, of the Holy Spirit, that the promises of God will be fulfilled in due time.***
2. **We need to frequently remind ourselves that the Lord’s way is the better way to live rather than the selfish ways of the world; the sooner we learn that spiritual lesson the better.** The Cross of Jesus and embracing our daily cross in union with Him will lead to the glorious life of the Resurrection - if we persevere and fight the good fight against the devil, our fallen human nature and the world on a daily basis. As we go through **the battle** of this earthly life which **can wear us down** at times on the human level, the Lord will fill us with an increasing interior sense of joy, hope, peace and anticipation of the definitive manifestation of His victory over evil, as we **patiently persevere** in the life of virtue and overcome our weaknesses and vices of

various sorts. We will be then living more and more the new life of the Holy Spirit which we received in our **Baptism**. Over time this will be seen more and more manifestly in our life, and so then we will be more **joyful and hope-filled witnesses, full of interior peace and serenity – which attracts others to the Lord and the Catholic Faith – which is our divine mission on earth - from our Baptism onward.**

3. **How do we grow into this spirit of joy and hope in a deeper way in Advent and throughout the year?** By daily prayer and reflection - entering into the “holy silence” with God. Taking time to reflect upon the mysteries and goodness of God and living in a spirit of gratitude for His kindness and mercy to us on a daily basis. Accepting more and more His personal love for each of us in the depths of our being - this leads to a more firm inner conviction to live our Catholic Faith better with ever more generosity. Humbly asking for the gift of patience with ourselves and others in order to realize that we don’t become saints overnight, but only with God’s help we can make definitive progress in the life of holiness - so we rely more on Him than on our own strength and try to give others the benefit of the doubt and pray frequently for them, and help others through works of charity and kindness. Trying to always remember to dedicate our day to God each morning and uniting the daily duties of our vocation to Him as an act of love, and of penance when we don’t feel like doing them, to grow in the likeness of Christ. Frequent, heartfelt, and thoughtful reception of the Sacrament of Confession – also is essential for spiritual growth: to receive the graces of that beautiful healing sacrament of God’s mercy. Do we want to experience the peace of God that surpasses all understanding or to experience it in a deeper way? To be a people of hope and joy more and more? Then we must be reconciled to God and neighbor as St. John the Baptist points out today in the Gospel. We must root sin out of our lives. Finally to quote St. Paul from the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading today, “*Brothers and Sisters: Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. ... Refrain from what is evil. And may the God of peace make you perfectly holy and ready for the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The One who calls you is faithful and He will also accomplish it*”. **Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us.** And God bless you with the gift of Joy.