



SAINT ANTHONY CATHOLIC CHURCH

Joy in the Third Week of Advent



Dear Parishioners,

Today we celebrate Gaudete Sunday. We part from the penitential colors of violet this week and don rose to represent joyful anticipation of the Christ who is soon to come.

While our Sunday readings all reference the resounding joy with which we greet the promises of God's love, they also focus a great deal on patience and anticipation. We rarely view patience with any relationship to joy. If anything, patience often feels only like joy that's been delayed, and in the case of those waiting on God, what they endure in patience is frequently a period of suffering.

In today's Gospel, the followers of John the baptist and others have come to Christ, not merely because of His miracles, and teachings, and all the excitement that surrounds these things. More importantly, they have come because the Israelites have been awaiting the Messiah for generations. Christ is the vindication heralded in our first reading from Isaiah. He is that litany of miracles and the promises of God fulfilled. Israel is the parched desert, which comes to bloom in His presence. With Christ's coming, the nation of Israel becomes fruitful once more, passing on God's covenant to all people through Christ. This is a great joy, but a joy long awaited.

When we read the Gospel—when we pour over scripture—God is inviting us to see how it applies to our own life. How easily do our hearts become the spiritual deserts described in Isaiah? How often do we need to remember the simplicity of Psalm 146, that God saves us? We must keep our hearts firm, as James instructs us. Today's scripture reminds us that right now, in this time of Advent, we should be intentionally preparing ourselves for Christmas so that we can experience the fullness of joy in Christ's incarnation.

This takes effort and prayer on our part. Join us this week as we take Lectio Divina and apply it to the written form. If you never tried prayer journaling or writing down what you receive from scripture in Lectio Divina, then please try a new way to pray along with our parish.

In Christ, 

Fr. David Reamsnyder

This Week: WRAP Scripture Journaling

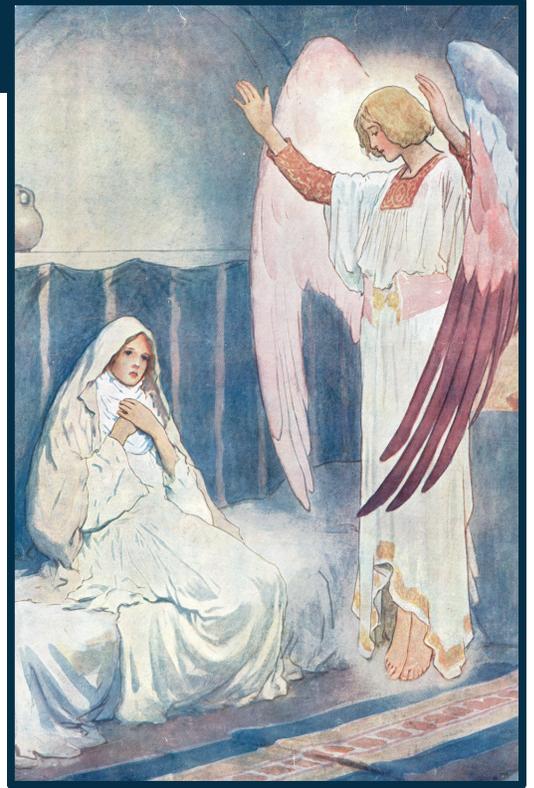
This method of prayer, which builds upon *Lectio Divina*, helps to facilitate a personal encounter and conversation with Jesus Christ through Scripture. The WRAP method—which stands for Write, Reflect, Apply, and Pray—helps us be more intentional and focused in our dialogue with God.

1. Write: Place yourself in the presence of God. Read and re-read the passage until something catches your attention. Prayerfully write out the images or verses that speak to you.

2. Reflect: Reflect on and write out the principles or truths that the passage is teaching you. Is there a word that God is giving you in prayer? Write down the thoughts, emotions, and desires stirred by Scripture. Write as if you are sending a letter to, or speaking with, Christ.

3. Apply: Consider how Jesus is calling you to apply these principles and truths from Scripture. What does Christ want you to take away? Write down your response to His message. How you can apply this to your life today?

4. Pray: Write out a simple prayer related to the verse. Offer praise and thanksgiving, or ask for God's grace. After you are done writing, sit for a minute in silence.



Advent Prayer Appeal

From December 14th to 20th, we invite all parishioners to pray over scripture daily via WRAP scripture journaling. We'll use the scripture passages below for our daily prayer.



12/14 Mt 11:2-11

12/15 Mt 21:23-27

12/16 Mt 21:28-32

12/17 Mt 1:1-17

12/18 Mt 1:18-25

12/19 Luke 1:5-25

12/20 Luke 1:26-38