

Rejoice in the Lord ALWAYS

by Fr. Mark Pavlik
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On this third Sunday of Advent, the Church celebrates Gaudete Sunday. It is a day of rejoicing, as the Church acknowledges that we are yet another week closer to celebrating the birth of our savior. A change is made as this week we light the pink candle, instead of purple, as we have for the past two weeks. Every week, there is more light emanating from the Advent wreath reminding us that the Lord is ever more near. We hear in the second reading from St. Paul's letter to the Philippians:

*Brothers and Sisters:
Rejoice in the Lord always.
I say it again: Rejoice!*

*Your kindness should be known to all.
The lord is near.
Have no anxiety at all, but in everything,
by prayer and petitions, with thanksgiving,
make your requests known to God.*

*Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding,
will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
(Phil 4:4-7)*

What a perfect prayer reminding us of all that can come to us from the Lord! We are called to bring ourselves entirely to the Lord and make all of our needs known to Him. This is exactly the reason for our rejoicing – we are preparing to celebrate the birth of Christ, who came to free us from all anxiety.

There is nothing that we should have to bear alone. Jesus wants our trust to be entirely in Him. He wants us to rely on Him for everything we need and to praise Him in thanks-giving for everything we receive.

In the midst of this time of preparation for Christmas, the Church reminds us to rejoice in what we are to celebrate at Christmas. This day of jubilation symbolizes the joy and gladness that come from the promised redemption that should never be absent from the heart of Christ's disciples.

So my friends, REJOICE!