

Third Sunday of Advent, C cycle ~ December 13, 2009
Holy Trinity Parish, St. Mary's "church house", Hudson, NY

1st Reading: Zephaniah 3:14-18a [The Lord will rejoice over you]

Responsorial Psalm: Isaiah 12:2-6 [Cry out with joy and gladness for the Holy One is among you]

2nd Reading: Philippians 4:4-7 [Rejoice in the Lord always, God is near]

Gospel: Luke 3:10-18 [John the Baptist preached Good News]

A Reflection for a special "Youth Mass" with puppets contributing to the reflection

♪ **Rejoice** in the Lord always ! AGAIN, I say **Rejoice** ! ♪

♪ **Rejoice! Rejoice!** AGAIN, I say **Rejoice** ! ♪

Peter: Do you know how many times the word **joy or rejoice or joyful** is in the readings today?

It occurs 11 times.

How are you **rejoicing** during this season? What makes you **happy**?

Anna: The candle for today **P I N K** because today is **Gaudete Sunday**. "**Gaudete**" is a Latin word for "**rejoice**."

We brought a few **new friends** to tell us **HOW** they are **rejoicing** & **WHAT** makes them **happy**.

Harry the horse: My name is Harry. I am a soldier.

I am **happy** because I heard the good news in today's 1st reading

from the prophet Zephaniah. He says,

"the King of Israel, the Lord is in your midst; he will **rejoice** over you with gladness."

And then I heard **more** good news in the 2nd reading from the apostle Paul:

"**Rejoice** in the Lord always, your kindness should be known to all ... the Lord is near."

I am so **happy** because I have a leader who loves me. He is my Lord.

When I am following his lead,

I don't need to force anyone to give me money *or*

to do things for me *or* accuse anyone of something they did not do.

I am *even* satisfied with my pay.

I can do what John the Baptist asks me to do.

Peter: What Harry is saying reminds me of a sign in my house that I like,

Joy is *not* the absence of sorrow, it is the presence of God.

That means that I can have joy underneath the worst pain, because I know God loves me.

When I know that I can get through anything. That's one of the gifts I receive from my family,

~my parents, ~my sisters, ~my brother, ~my nephews & nieces,

- they can laugh at the most sorrowful times, because we love each other & believe we are loved.

Rudy the Rat: My name is Rudy. I am one of the tax collectors John baptized. Everyone thinks I'm a Rat. And sometimes I am. But I **rejoice** that God forgives me. John told me that. He also told me I had to stop cheating people by collecting more than they owed and keeping it for myself.

Jesus [who came after John] showed me that I was forgiven and gave me the Holy Spirit so that I could then forgive other people too, -- the same way I was forgiven

Now I not only have **joy** in my heart, but I can give it to others.

Ricky the Raccoon: I am I am so **happy** to hear about food in the gospel. I love food. In fact, I look for it whenever I can, & I always wash it before I eat it. I **rejoice** that I can share the food I collect with my own family, *and* with people who don't have enough.

I don't have to hoard food, *or* any of the other stuff I collect.

I've heard that there is enough food to feed everyone in the world, we just have to stop wasting food and figure out how to get it to the people who are hungry.

Sal the Sheep: My name is Sal.

I **rejoice** because I heard the good news that I do not need to be afraid.

Zephaniah [that Hebrew prophet] said, "*Fear not, do not be discouraged.*"

And the New Testament Apostle, Paul, wrote,

*"Have no anxiety at all-then the **peace** of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts & minds in Christ Jesus."*

I am so full of **joy** that I can give some of my wool to someone who needs a cloak or a coat. I only have one coat, *but* it grows back after I am shorn, so I can give it away when the right time comes.

I remember hearing the great Saint Basil once say, "*The second coat in your closet belongs to the poor.*"

I am **glad** to be a part of the flock that Jesus leads.....and.....I'm really **glad** that we are **all** members of the same family with Jesus as our Shepherd.

I think if everybody knew we are all one family

there would **not** be so many people cold or hungry or without a home.

Anna: In today's Readings from Zephaniah, Paul and Luke, our friends heard:

Rejoice, be **happy**, be **joyful**, be **at peace**, all words

that are included in the name of this Sunday..... ~**Gaudete Sunday**

- ♪ How are **you** going to **Gaudete** [**rejoice** in the Lord always] as you prepare for Christmas? Our friends have some questions to help you think about that:

Harry: Are you taking time to remember the reason for the season?

To remember that the Lord is near, that God is in our midst?

Rudy: Are you changing what needs to be changed,

asking for forgiveness for your sins, forgiving those who hurt you?

Ricky: Are you feeding the hungry - those who are hungry for food,

but also for love, for acceptance, for truth?

Sal: Are you sharing what you have with those who are cold or despairing or afraid?

Anna: Those are all ways we can "rejoice in the Lord"

- *and* experience the peace that goes beyond understanding.

That is how we can move *through* darkness, cold and grieving to the joy of a new birth.

That's the path *from* Advent to Christmas. That is how we can remind the whole world

that joy is **not** the absence of sorrow, it is the presence of God.

There is another song we sing at this time of year that has the word rejoice in it.

♪ O come, Thou Dayspring from on high ~ And cheer us by thy drawing nigh;

Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, ~ And death's dark shadow put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, shall come to thee O Israel ! ♪

Gaude! Gaude! Emmanuel, nascetur pro te, Israel ! ♪
