

Advent Faith Conversations:

The Third Week of Advent

Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God. . . he comes to save you.
-- From this Sunday's First Reading: Isaiah 35: 1-6a, 10



Adult reflection for this week

The readings and prayers of “Guadete Sunday” call us to rejoice as we near the celebration of Jesus’ birth. Does rejoicing mean “making oneself happy”? Is that possible? Sustainable? Happiness is a fleeting feeling that comes in response to some stimulant – a good cup of coffee, a pleasant interaction, a new toy. Joy is an enduring state of soul that comes from God and needs tending. To rejoice this Advent: remember *past* blessings and entrust the *future* to God with sure hope, so as to live the *present* (happy or sad, easy or difficult, light or dark) with peace. Don’t settle for happiness . . . seek *joy!*

Family daily conversation and prayer starters

Darken the room and light the two purple candles and the one rose, saying, “Jesus, you are the Light of the World.” Everyone responds, “Let your light shine in our darkness.” Take note of how the light is getting stronger with each candle. After each day’s conversation, pray the prayer together on the second page (print so everyone has a mini-sheet) and sing “O Come, O Come Emmanuel.”

Sunday, December 11

What makes you happy? Stuff, success, affirmations, cookies, a little peace & quiet. . . Are you happy all the time? What makes you joyful? Is it different from happiness? (deeper, tied to love, can go back to it. . .)

Monday, December 12

Happiness happens; it comes and goes. Joy endures, runs deeper, is a grace from God. It comes from knowing ourselves, and knowing/trusting God. Think of a time you had joy but not happiness. Vice versa? After the prayer, add: *Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us.*

Tuesday, December 13

Sunday’s readings describe God’s marvelous works. What good things has God done in your life? In this day? Consider how reflection can foster gratitude. . . and joy. After the prayer, add: *St. Lucy, pray for us.*

Wednesday, December 14

How does recalling God’s hand in the past affect how you think about the future? Hope is being certain of the tenderness of God and confident that all in God’s care will be well in the end. How is hope linked to joy? After the prayer, add: *St. John of the Cross, pray for us.*

Thursday, December 15

Our past is full of both clear and hidden grace. We hope in God’s loving help for the future. And so let’s live our present with *peace*, which Pope Francis calls “joy lived to perfection.” Are you joyful? (with a sense of peace, hopeful perspective, security amidst struggles) What prevents your joy?

Friday, December 16

Sunday’s Gospel tells of John the Baptist, model of humility. Humility is living confidently the truth that we’re not God, but we are good (though flawed), loved, and have purpose. How is humility linked to joy? *The “Las Posadas” novena begins tonight.*

Saturday, December 17

We can’t always feel happy, but joy is always available to

us. . . and sustainable. *Rejoicing* draws from a deep well, accessing something deeper than success, pleasure or comfort. What /who feeds joy in you?

From now until the birth of our Savior, the Church’s nightly prayers contain brief verses begging Jesus—by symbolic names—to come. After each day’s prayer, pray the “O Antiphon” for that day.

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FRONT. Print and cut one out for each family member.

Week 3 Prayer

With Mary, we glorify you God for the great things you have done for us. Take care of our future. Help us to live *right now* filled with your peace and joy. Amen.

Sing together:

O come, Thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heavenly home
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight.

Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel

O come, O Bright and Morning Star
And bring us comfort from afar!
Dispel the shadows of the night
And turn our darkness into light. (Refrain)

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BACK of prayer cards. After prayer on the 17th, the leader prays the first part of the antiphon, all respond with the words in bold.

O Antiphons

Dec. 17: O Wisdom of our God Most High,
guiding creation with power and love:
come to teach us the path of knowledge!

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