

Advent Faith Conversations:

The Third Week of Advent

"I rejoice heartily in the LORD, in my God is the joy of my soul"
-- From this Sunday's First Reading: Isaiah 61: 1-2, 10-11



Adult reflection for this week

The readings and prayers of "Gaudete 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 13

What makes you happy? Stuff, success, affirmations, cookies, a little peace and 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. . .) *After the prayer, add: St. Lucy, pray for us.*

Monday, December 14

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: St. John of the Cross, pray for us.*

Tuesday, December 15

Sunday's 1st reading and responsorial Psalm list good things that God has done (healing, freeing, saving, having mercy, filling, helping). What good things has God done in your life? In this day? Consider how reflection can foster gratitude. . . and joy.

Wednesday, December 16

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? *The "Las Posadas" novena begins tonight.*

Thursday, December 17

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.

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 18

In Sunday's Gospel, John the Baptist admits he's not the Messiah but the bearer of glad tidings: "there is one among you"—Jesus. Humility is living the truth that we're not God, but we are good (though flawed), loved, and have purpose. How is humility linked to joy?

Saturday, December 19

In Sunday's 2nd reading, Paul says, "Rejoice always." 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?

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, Thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heavenly home
Make safe the way that leads on high
And close the path to misery. (Refrain)

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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!

Dec. 18: O Leader of the House of Israel,
giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai:
come to rescue us with your mighty power!

Dec. 19: O Root of Jesse's stem,
sign of God's love for all his people:
come to save us without delay!

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