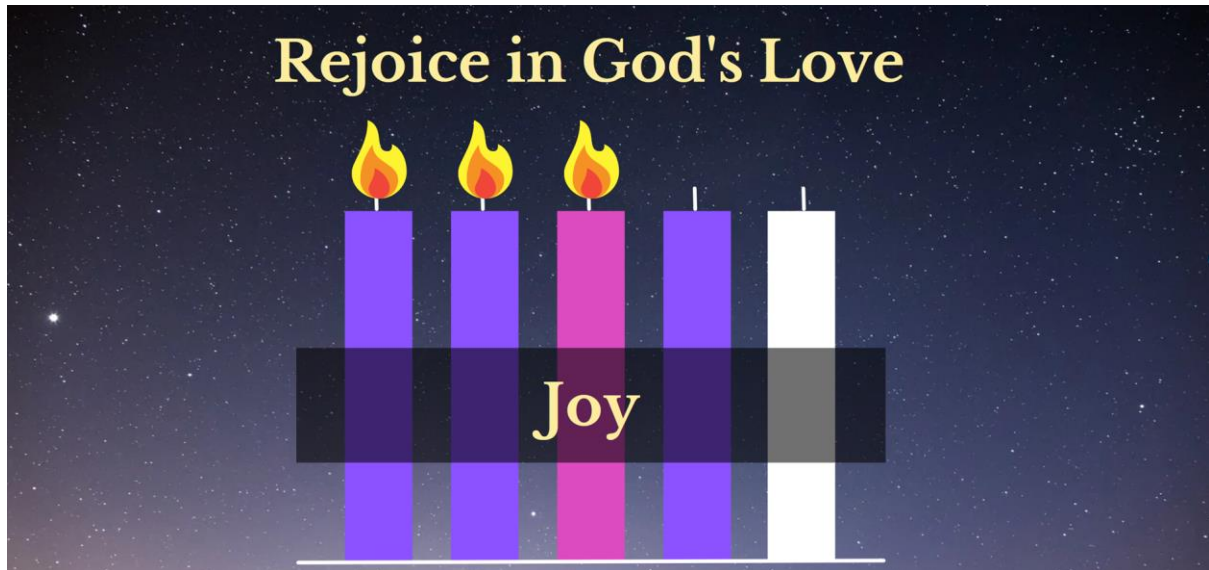


REJOICE IN GOD'S LOVE
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT – 12 DECEMBER 2021



CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Two days ago, the annual Brisbane First Nations Ecumenical Christmas Service was celebrated at Inala.

Thanks to Kevin, Marlon and the team for hosting this special time.

During the homily we reflected on the meaning of Christmas.

It was an occasion to sing together to God
and to praise and to thank God.

It is God who lives us life and our purpose.

It is God who is so patient over billions of earth years in creating the earth.

It is God who is so patient in the creative evolving of humanity.

It is God who inspires us to be humble.

It is God who humbly enables Jesus to be conceived
and to be born in a specific moment of time.

It is God, who in deep love with us, invites us to love.

It is God who enables us, like the shepherds at Christmas,
to *rejoice* and sing glory to God.

During the service, we paused and shared with those around us,
about how God teaches us personally to be humble.

The simple Christmas Crib in our church invites us into humility.

WHAT MUST WE DO

Living out our faith, we are called to be ethical.

The Gospel today illustrates the response of John of Baptist
to the question '*What must we do?*'

Let us listen to the conversation.

GOSPEL OF LUKE 3:10-18

'What then should we do?'

He reminded them to share what they had.

*'Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none;
and whoever has food must do likewise.'*

The conversations deepened to include an ethical focus on one's job.

Tax-collectors came forward to be baptized and asked:

'Teacher, what should we do?'

John responded:

'Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.'

Soldiers asked:

'And we, what should we do?'

John replied:

*'Do not extort money from anyone
by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.'*

Let us pause and reflect on our personal ethics
in our current or former working lives.

[pause]

BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH 3:14-18

In today's First Reading from the Old Testament, it says

"Rejoice and exult with all your heart"

Twice it reminds the people:

"The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;"

"The Lord, your God, is in your midst"

And God does not merely observe us.

*"he will rejoice over you with gladness,
he will renew you in his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival."*

Let us pause for a moment to imagine God
joyfully and lovingly **rejoicing** over us.

[pause]

You are invited to bring this experience
to your prayer each day, between now and Christmas.

JADE

Two weeks ago at 9.30am Mass,
we **rejoiced** with Jade as she was Baptised, Confirmed
and received her First Eucharist.

In her future teaching vocation, Jade will have photos
of this sacred time to share with her students.

SUZIE

Today at 9.30am Mass, Suzie already baptized as a Christian, is received into the Catholic Church and is Confirmed and receives her First Eucharist.

We **rejoice** with Suzie before God today.

There will be photos from today for Suzie to share with her secondary students over the years ahead.

SISTER SARITA

Last night at 6pm Mass,

our community blessed Sister Sarita , a Holy Spirit Sister, who is returning to work in India.

While Sister Sarita lived at Carseldine, she joined the Saturday evening community.

Later she was called to work in Townsville and Palm Island.

After the community prayed for her and blessed her, parish members from Kerala were invited to the sanctuary, to pray with her in Malayalam.

We **rejoiced** before God with Sister Sarita, as she responds to the next part of her missionary journey.

ANOINTING

Last Tuesday at Mass, we included the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick.

63 people received the Sacrament on Tuesday, and others at home after the past two weeks.

The Sacrament of Anointing is also available immediately at the end of each of this weekend's Masses.

We **rejoice** in God's healing power in our lives.

Let us conclude with the words of St Paul.

ST. PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7

In the Second Reading, St Paul said:

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.

Do not worry about anything,

but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving

let your requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,

will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Again we hear that the Lord is near. And we **rejoice**.

Not only God **rejoicing** over us,

but we are invited to **rejoice**,

with our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Whatever is happening in our lives, let us take time to **rejoice**.

And to acknowledge others in our lives.

Once we place *all before God, humbly,*
we can be find it *easier to rejoice*
and respond to God rejoicing over us.
Let us *rejoice* with God this Advent.
Amen

Father Gerry

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/121221.cfm>