

BULLETIN COLUMN

December 13, 2020

Third Sunday of Advent

Hooray!

Hooray for what?

We are “up” when we exclaim “Hooray.”

This third Sunday of Advent is Hooray Sunday... known in liturgical circles by its Latin name “Gaudete” Sunday: **Rejoice** Sunday.

In 2020 it may be more difficult than usual to give a *high five* to life with a big hooray. We aren’t feeling too full of rejoicing. Covid 19 is wearing us out. A long and divisive election season has kept many of us feeling distressed. Life in general this year has thrown us off.

But the liturgy this Sunday calls us to *rejoice*. St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians, “Rejoice always.” In the entrance antiphon from Philipians we read, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice.”

True rejoicing is not a “ra-ra” kind of thing. True rejoicing is a deep-down joy that comes from knowing and living the truth about life and about ourselves. The truth about ourselves is clearly spelled out in today’s gospel: John 1:6-8; 19-28. John the Baptist had acquired a reputation as a man of God, baptizing and preaching about the Messiah. People in authority began to wonder if John might himself be the Messiah. John had a clear understanding of who he was and what his role was. He stated emphatically that he was not the Christ. That was not John’s role. He was to point out the Messiah. John found deep joy in being his true self: who he was called to be, not who others might think him to be.

Another aspect of true joy is knowing and living the truth about life. The Prophet Isaiah spells that out for us in the first reading (Is 61:1-2a, 10-11). “The lord God is upon me...and he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and release to the prisoners....” Jesus found in this recipe for life his own agenda – which he proclaimed at the beginning of his public ministry (Luke 4:18). This is our agenda, too. The truth about life is that we must bring God’s love, mercy and concern to all that we meet.

This Advent we will experience Hooray Days as we live the truth about life and about who we are. Jesus, John the Baptist and Isaiah point the way for deep-down joy in life for us.