

## ***Third Sunday of Advent December 15, 2024***

*“Fratres: Gaudéte in Dómino semper: iterum dico, gaudéte. Dóminus prope est. (translation)  
Brethren: Rejoice in the Lord always: again I say, rejoice. The Lord is nigh.” (Saint Paul,  
Letter to the Philippians)*

In his letter to the Christian community living in Philippi, Saint Paul encourages them to Rejoice for the Lord is near. His words of joy engage our senses through this liturgy. We heard them proclaimed in our reading. We see them visibly in the rose color of the vestments and Advent candle. And why does the Church celebrate? As Saint Paul wrote, “The Lord is NEAR.”

In the first two weeks of Advent, we heard stories of those who awaited the arrival (Advent) of the Lord. We heard the Voice of one (Saint John the Baptist) coming from the desert: “Make straight the way of the Lord.” We have been silent witnesses to the news of His coming proclaimed by God’s holy angel. We celebrated as the Virgin accepted this gift to be the mother of God in a most beautiful and humble way. Through the preparation of Saint John the Baptist and the Blessed Virgin Mary, we stand ready awaiting His arrival. And now, my dear family, we turn to Saint Joseph asking his intercessory help as we too accept this miracle presented before us. We must ask him to assist us in accepting our part in God’s saving work for mankind.

As we have discussed prior, during the year dedicated to him, Saint Joseph holds a special place in the eyes of God. In all of mankind’s history, of all of our great figures, only Joseph was chosen by God to be His Son’s foster-father and first example of manhood. Joseph accepted the words spoken to him in a dream concerning Mary and her child and acted accordingly. He lived for and cared for both in the most loving of ways. Saint Joseph provides us with an example of what we have been called to do as well.

One may ask what is our part to play in this great story of salvation? Unlike Saint Joseph guided by his dreams, or the Magi who would travel by the guidance of a star to find the child, we may find ourselves longing for some Divine guidance or Divine reassurance that the path we are on currently is the right one. In this way, we are not so different from other Biblical figures who hoped they were on the right path. The path of holiness is sometimes difficult to see. It may be obscured by so many other things we face. One of the greatest of these is the slumber our spiritual lives might fall into as we wait for Him. Yes, it is tempting to question. It is tempting to seek an alternative path to happiness. It is only those who cast all of these aside and stumble onward seeking to do His Will. As He said to His Apostles as He dined with them: “Let your hearts not be troubled.” God is leading you on the path to holiness. It may not appear similar to others. This is true because it is not similar. You are not similar to others. You are unique and therefore your path is unique to you. All you must do, as those great saintly figures did, is trust. Trust that He is coming. Trust that He has come; and trust that He will come again. Live each day with this trust and you will, one day, be greatly rewarded as you stand in His presence with a heart filled with love.