

***Brothers and sisters: Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice!
Your kindness should be known to all.***

The Lord is near.

***Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,
make your requests known to God.***

***Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding
will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.***

Philippians 4:4-7

Dear Friends,

Our anticipation has reached its height as we celebrate Gaudete Sunday. A sign of this peaked joy is shown in the liturgical color rose. To the untrained eye it looks like pink, but all priests know it is rose. We get to wear rose twice a year in anticipation of the two greatest feasts we celebrate in the Church, our Lord's resurrection at Easter and His birth at Christmas. These are glorious days and God wants to fill our hearts with joyful anticipation in these last days before His coming at Christmas.

Dressed in rose, Our Lady of Guadalupe comes to us. Her left leg is raised signifying that she is in motion. Some say she is walking (as she is the Virgin of the Visitation) with child as she returns from her visit her cousin Elizabeth. Others interpret her leg in motion as a dance. Filled with true joy, she is dancing as she makes her way home from the birth of the Forerunner, John, having heard Zechariah proclaim, "You my child shall be the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare His way, to give His people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins...to guide their feet into the way of peace." Our Lady is walking in the way of peace. She is clothed with the joy of salvation. Her outward garment reflects the inward reality of who is in her womb. Jesus is our joy. Our Lady then is the cause of our joy. She is dressed in the beautiful rose gown that says to us she is literally clothed with joy at this critical moment, the dawn of our salvation.

With hearts longing for the fulfillment of our hope, the glorious coming of Jesus our Savior, we make the last preparations to receive Him at His coming. What is it that needs preparation in your house, in your heart? Perhaps there is not much to prepare for the celebration as it is all in order, or, if you are like me, we will begin this week. God willing, I will put up my tree this week with my parents. Everything has its proper time and place. It might vary a bit according to our experience and personality, but as St. Catherine of Siena once said, "For the servant of God, every place is the right place and every time is the right time." With confidence and faith in God's plan for us, may all anxiety be driven from our hearts, as we joyfully await the coming of Jesus.

Sincerely yours in Jesus Christ,



Fr. Jack D. Shrum
Pastor