

SAINT ANNE OF THE SUNSET

Religious Education Weekly Newsletter
For the Week of December 17, 2023
(Sunday)

**FROM CARMEN PERLAS
COORDINATOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

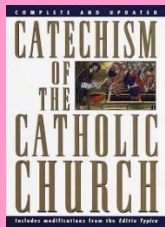


This Sunday is Gaudete Sunday. “Gaudete” is the Latin word for rejoice as the Church joyfully anticipates the closeness or the nearness of the major historical event in our salvation history, the birth of the Savior. Like in all natural events in our lives, whether it be a birthday, a graduation or wedding, any day we get closer to it, is a day of rejoicing. However, this Sunday the rejoicing is much louder and greater than anything one can imagine, for it is a supernatural event made possible only through the power of God. At Mass, you will notice the Introit taken from Philippians 4:4, “Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice.” Growing up in a small town in the Philippines, I was so naïve as to what joy really meant. For me it was spent doing simple things – being around friends and classmates and telling stories under a tree, enjoying an afternoon breeze of cool air of the Pacific. As I began to grow more deeply in my faith, I realized that joy is much more profound than what I had always thought it was. Joy is interior. The Church teaches us that to be joyful, we must possess Christ in us, in our soul and very being. To be joyful is to live in a state of grace as it is one’s holiness that one can find true happiness. Thus, Gaudete Sunday is also a reminder for all of us to rid ourselves with fear

and sadness in our lives. For where God is, true joy is. A Christian is a joyful person indeed. As we become more perfect, freer from our sinfulness, our joy deepens. Smile and laugh more often because you are made new again. As the Christmas carol of old says: **“JOY TO THE WORLD THE LORD IS COME! A blessed Gaudete Sunday to you all.**

REFLECTIONS ON THE READINGS ON GAUDETE SUNDAY

In today’s readings, I could not help but reflect on the way these readings have been carefully and deliberately selected for the message of Gaudete Sunday – from despair to hope, from evil to good, from sin to a life of grace and repentance. In all these readings, as in most fairy tales, there is a ‘happy ending.’ However, these stories are not fairy tales, because they are real as God who is the true God is the author of these stories. In the first reading Isaiah tells us on the plight and despair of the City of Zion, He proclaims to the afflicted and the prisoners that they would be liberated and released from their bondage. He declared a jubilee year of joy and gladness. In the second reading, Saint Paul in his epistle to the Thessalonians calls them out to **“REJOICE”** and pray without ceasing. Then he quickly defines what it meant to be joyful and that is “retain what is good and refrain from every kind of evil.” Finally, in the Gospel reading, Saint John the Baptist affirmed (witnessed) to all mankind that while he baptizes with water, the one who would be coming after him, is the Christ, the Messiah whose sandals he is unworthy to untie. John here is witnessing to the light of the world. How does this gospel apply to us? We are today’s witnesses for our Lord Jesus Christ. We are ‘crying out loud in the desert’ searching for the lost souls, hoping that they would find the light, Jesus Christ. Our religious education program here at Saint Anne’s is one of the steps by which we can help others come to Christ. Let’s all be heard in this world of confusion, hopelessness and sin. Let us speak the truth. Let’s all be loud and clear in our message of repentance and of joy!



THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

Our confirmation has been set at **Saint Mary's of the Assumption Cathedral at 10:00 a.m. on May 11, 2024** (Please mark your calendars).

From then till now, be on the look-out for more news and articles on the Sacrament of Confirmation.

I. CONFIRMATION IN THE ECONOMY OF SALVATION - 1286

In the Old Testament the prophets announced that the Spirit of the Lord would rest on the hoped-for Messiah for his saving mission. The descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus at his baptism by John was the sign that this was he who was to come, the Messiah, the Son of God. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit; his whole life and his whole mission are carried out in total communion with the Holy Spirit whom the Father gives him "without measure."

1287 This fullness of the Spirit was not to remain uniquely the Messiah's, but was to be communicated to the whole messianic people. On several occasions Christ promised this outpouring of the Spirit a promise which he fulfilled first on Easter Sunday and then more strikingly at Pentecost. Filled with the Holy Spirit the apostles began to proclaim "the mighty works of God," and Peter declared this outpouring of the Spirit to be the sign of the messianic age. Those who believed in the apostolic preaching and were baptized received the gift of the Holy Spirit in their turn.

1288 "From that time on the apostles, in fulfillment of Christ's will, imparted to the newly baptized by the laying on of hands the gift of the Spirit that completes the grace of Baptism. For this reason in the Letter to the Hebrews the doctrine concerning Baptism and the laying on of hands is listed among the first elements of Christian instruction. The imposition of hands is rightly recognized by the Catholic tradition as the origin of the sacrament of Confirmation, which in a certain way perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church."

UPCOMING EVENTS



Special Advent Confession for Religious Education Students and Family – December 17 (at the School Library) – Father Dan, our pastor with Father Pete will be hearing confessions on Sunday **December 17**.

FAMILY CAROLING DECEMBER 20 5:15 p.m. Please come and join Saint Anne's Parish community in this year's neighborhood caroling.



FAMILY NATIVITY AND CHOIR – Don't forget to also come and enjoy our annual Nativity play with our children and their family on Christmas Vigil Mass (December 24, 5:00 p.m.)

