



**Disciples**  
*Making Disciples*



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## Rejoice!

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent  
16 Dec 2018

**Zeph 3:14-18**  
**Phil 4:4-7**  
**Lk 3:10-18**

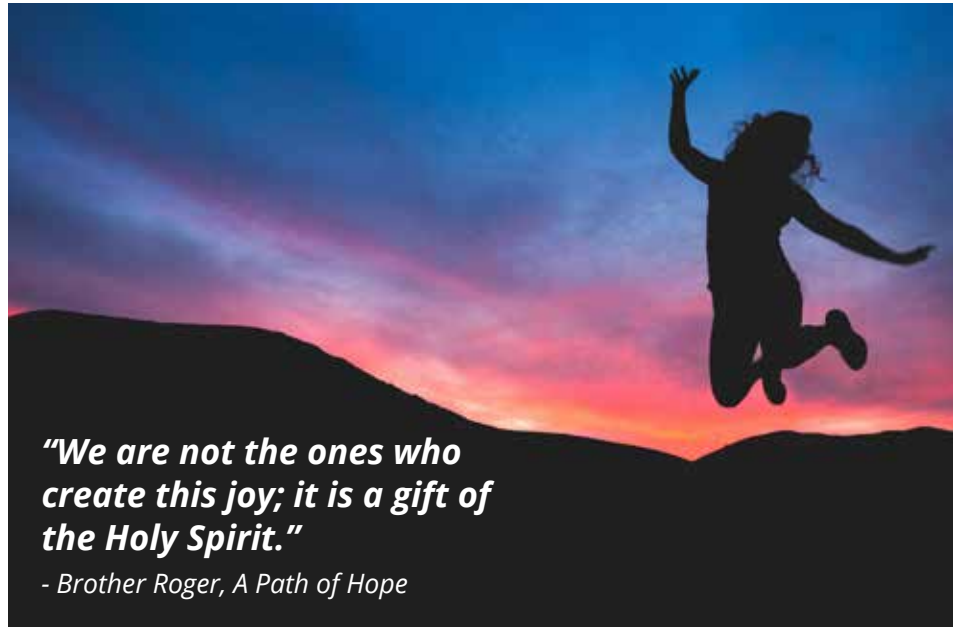
"Rejoice!" exhort our readings for this Sunday. As the Lord is near, the dark penitential violet is mixed with the white of the approaching Christmas, so the liturgical colour is lightened to rose-pink.

We rejoice because, in St Paul's words in our Second Reading, "the Lord is very near". As Henri Nouwen writes in *You are the Beloved*, "Joy does not come from positive predictions about the state of the world. It does not depend on the ups and downs of the circumstances of our lives. Joy is based on the spiritual knowledge that, while the world in which we live is shrouded in darkness, God has overcome the world."

The First Reading illustrates this: the prophet Zephaniah tells Israel to rejoice because "the Lord, the king of Israel, is in [their] midst; [they] have no more evil to fear."

*Nota bene:* We rejoice not because there is no more evil. We rejoice because there is no more evil to fear. Just as white can blend with purple, joy can persist amidst struggle and suffering.

In his *Letter from Chile 2011*, prior of the Taizé Community Brother Alois writes, "[Joy] is not only there when everything is easy. When we



are faced with a challenging task, the effort can reawaken joy. And even in times of trial, it can remain buried like embers under the ashes, without going out."

Drawing from their monastic experiences and from working with the poor and suffering of the world, the Taizé brothers thus liken joy to a desert flower that can blossom even at our lowest moments.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI echoes this in his address delivered on 30 May 2012: "[Joy] is founded on hope in God, it draws strength from incessant prayer and it enables us to face trials and suffering with serenity."

We thus distinguish joy from mere happiness or pleasure. In *Surprised by Joy*, CS Lewis wrote, "I doubt whether anyone who has tasted [Joy] would ever, if both were in his power, exchange it for all the pleasures in the world. But then Joy is never in our power and pleasure often is."

Indeed, how helpless we are to attain such joy on our own! In today's meritocratic and millennial culture, we think that life is about the pursuit of happiness. If we are not joyful, it is because we are not working hard enough. And so we work harder, get more stressed, and be more drained of joy. It is a self-defeating cycle.

But as the late Taizé Brother Roger wrote in *A Path of Hope*, "We are not the ones who create this joy; it is a gift of the Holy Spirit."

So this Advent, let us remember that we find our joy neither in achievement nor in possession. We do not find our joy in the world. We do not find joy at all. Joy finds us. For joy is a gift—a gift that is not just an emotion, not just a thing to be earned and pursued, but a Person to love and be loved by.

As our Second Reading proclaims: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice."

## Announcements

For announcements in the bulletin, send your requests to [mmm@sfxchurch.sg](mailto:mmm@sfxchurch.sg) by the MONDAY before the weekend, 2359hrs

### CANTEEN

BAT and St Jerome Library group will be running the canteen this weekend. Do drop by for some delicious food. All proceeds will go directly to the SFX Renovation Fund.

### SFX FUNDRAISING UPDATE

SFX has raised a total of cash & pledges amounting to **\$1,031,462.20** as of Nov 2018. The priests and Fundraising Committee appreciate everyone's efforts and thank all parishioners for their contributions in funds and participation in fundraising activities. We look forward to the continued support as we work towards our \$2.3 million fundraising goal.

### 2ND COLLECTION FOR GIFT

**This weekend**, there will be a second collection for the GIFT (Giving in Faith & Thankfulness) campaign to build a more vibrant, evangelistic and missionary Church. GIRO forms, cheques or cash can be sealed into GIFT envelopes and dropped into the collection bags that will go around. Spare GIFT envelopes are available in the church pews, and at the parish office. Please give generously for the vision of the archdiocese. More info is available at [gift.catholicfoundation.sg](http://gift.catholicfoundation.sg)

### PIETA MEET-UP

PIETA is a support group for bereaved parents who seek God's comfort, wisdom and hope through prayer and reflection on the WORD OF GOD. Our next monthly session is on Tue **18 Dec, 7:30pm** at Agape Village, Toa Payoh Lorong 8. Contact us via email: [pieta.singapore@gmail.com](mailto:pieta.singapore@gmail.com) or visit us at [facebook.com/PietaSingapore](https://facebook.com/PietaSingapore)



## CHRISTMAS MASS TIMINGS

### 24 Dec, Monday

**5.15pm** Carolling, **5.30pm** Mass  
**8.30pm** Pageant, **9pm** Mass  
**11.30pm** Carolling, **12mn** Mass + Supper

### 25 Dec, Tuesday

**9am, 11am, 5.30pm**

### CHRISTMAS EVE PAGEANT 2018

The pageant on Christmas eve will be held at **8.30pm** by Children's Liturgy. We welcome all children who would like to be part of the pageant. **Come dress as an angel, shepherd or animal.** Be in church and seated before 8.30pm.

### A DELIGHTFUL LITTLE CHRISTMAS PARTY

Christmas is a time of joy, rejoicing and celebration for God has given us Jesus, the most precious gift of all. So come celebrate Christmas as a family of Christ at our deLIGHTful little CHRISTmas party. Held on **Fri, 28 Dec** from **7.30pm - 9.30pm**, it will be an evening of food, bingo, carolling, performances and fellowship!

*Do note that on the day of the party, there will be some restrictions with regards to traffic movements within the compound. The carpark will be closed from **6.30pm - 9.30 pm**, so if you are planning to leave after evening mass, we recommend that you find alternative parking.*



### THE CHANCERY ARCHIVES: INTERNSHIP

The Chancery Archives, a department supporting the Archdiocese in records management and archives, is seeking self-motivated and detail-oriented interns who have academic training in historical research and/or are interested in history and heritage matters. Applicants should be students with minimum 'A' level or diploma qualifications, and should be able to commit to the internship for at least 3 months or longer. Kindly submit your resume, your available period for internship and a recent photo to [chanceryrecruitment@catholic.org.sg](mailto:chanceryrecruitment@catholic.org.sg) by **23 Dec**.

### CATHOLIC THEOLOGY NETWORK: IS THE CHRISTMAS STORY TRUE?

Some Bible critics have argued that the events surrounding the birth of Jesus are literary creations which ought not to be understood as history. Does this obscure the meaning and message of Christmas? Or are there grounds to assert the basic reliability of the text? Join us for this Advent special talk given by Mr Keenan Tan & Nick Chui on **18 Dec** from **7.30-9pm** at CANA the Catholic Centre, 55 Waterloo Street #02-01. Please reserve your seat as space is limited. Email [theology.sg@gmail.com](mailto:theology.sg@gmail.com) or sms Nick at 9784 3692.

## Third Sunday of Advent: Joy

The Third Week of **Advent** begins with the "Gaudete Sunday," which means, "Rejoice!" That is, "Rejoice in the Lord always!" This gleeful assertion started in the pre-Vatican II Latin antiphon, "Gaudete in Domino semper!"

*Advent is a time of joyful expectation and eager preparation for the Solemnity of Christmas.*

### Multiple Reasons for Joy.

There is joy in looking forward to the annual celebration of Christmas, but there is also joy in remembering the birth of Jesus on the first Christmas. There is joy in knowing that he was born to save people from their sins (Mt 1:21b). The joy also extends to anticipation of the Second Coming, either at the end of physical life or the end of the world, the time when believers will be given the crown of righteousness (2 Tm 4:8) and a place in the Father's house (Jn 14:2) to dwell with God and his angels and saints for all eternity.

### A Joyful Colour.

Rose represents joy and used as the liturgical colour for Gaudete Sunday. It offers a one-day respite to look ahead to the joyful celebration of the Nativity. The third Candle on the Advent wreath is called the "Shepherd's Candle." Its light is a symbol of the Joy that filled the world in the past at the birth of Jesus—the joy that first came upon the shepherds at night watch in the fields when the Angel of the Lord appeared to them and said,

***"Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people." - Luke 2:10***

Even if we are not yet feeling all the joy of Christmas, we can still give the gift of joy to others. The beauty of the angels was not so much in that they were joyful themselves, but that they brought joyful tidings to the world. For a Christian, this should be a time to bring as much joy as possible to as many people as possible. "The joy of the Gospel is for all people: no one can be excluded. That is what the angel proclaimed to the shepherds in Bethlehem," writes Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*.

### Ideas for Spreading Joy

**Spread joy with a smile, a hug or a warm word.** We can give that same gift of joy to every person we meet this Advent. If we make an extra effort to be kind, caring or appreciative to the overworked, overtired retail employees, the frazzled co-workers in the elevator, or the lonely person in our parish, we can help them feel joy. And surprisingly, we will feel our own joy in making someone else feel good. Best of all, it does not cost a thing!

**Take time to be grateful.** In the second reading for the third week of Advent, St. Paul gives us a formula for Christian living: "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks ..." Joy flows naturally into our lives when we take time to pray and be grateful. When we are caught up in the busy commercial aspects of Christmas, we may not feel much like rejoicing, praying or giving thanks. Yet, if we follow St. Paul's advice to give prayerful thanks to God, we will discover we have many reasons for rejoicing.

## A Prayer for Joy

### Heavenly Angels,

God assigned you to announce joy to the world.

Please show me ways that I, too, can spread the joy of our Lord to all those I meet.

Inspire me to make gestures of kindness that can help others feel God's love.

Help me set aside envy and greed, so I have more room in my heart for joy.

Let me greet each day with a heart overflowing with joy and gratitude.

**Amen.**



### End each Advent night by writing a simple thank-you prayer of gratitude to God.

This is a wonderful way to remind ourselves of all the blessings and joys we have in our lives. We realize we already have more than enough for which to thank God.

### Start an Advent tradition to go around the table at dinner and have each member name something for which they are grateful that day.

Cultivating gratitude is an important way to balance the commercialization that can be created by the endless advertising at this time of the year.

**Music and song can be sources of great joy.** Surround yourself with the beautiful music of Christmas. Plan a Christmas carolling party. Let your friends and neighbours hear you sing out the joy of Christ's birth.



Looking for more Information?  
visit [www.sfxchurch.sg](http://www.sfxchurch.sg)!

**Scatter joy in fun and anonymous ways by leaving little gifts for friends.** Include a message of Christmas joy with your gift, such as, "Wishing you the joy of Christ's birth."

### Simple Ways to Bring Joy



## Advent Wreath Workshop



This year's Advent wreath workshop saw 40 registrants participating in 2 sessions, some with children and family in tow, to learn to make their own Advent wreath. The occasion gave parents an opportunity to explain the significance of Advent and its associated traditions. Participants enjoyed the camaraderie and fellowship, commenting that they found the exercise and accompanying prayers meaningful. Many surprised themselves – that their wreaths turned out beautifully!



Pauline noted that the exercise allowed families to practise patience, get creative and work as a team. Another parishioner Sue shared that it has allowed her to start the new liturgical year with the right heart and disposition, whilst for Caren, it was a great bonding time with her daughter. It was heart-warming to see how strangers quickly became friends, sharing tools, baubles, ideas and chatting over refreshments. The sessions closed with Fr Ben blessing the lovingly-assembled wreaths, before they were proudly carted off by their happy owners.

### Mass Timings

#### WEEKEND MASSES

**Sat Sunset:**  
5.30pm (Novena at 4.45pm)  
**Sun:** 7am, 9am, 11am & 5.30pm  
*Confession 15 mins before Sunday Mass*

#### WEEKDAY MASSES

**Mon - Fri:**  
6.30am & 6.30pm  
**Sat:** 6.30am

#### MASS ON PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

8.30am *only*

#### HOLY HOUR

8.30pm, every first Thurs of the month

### Opening Hours

#### PARISH OFFICE

**Mon - Fri:**  
9am - 9pm  
**Sat:** 9am - 7pm  
**Sun:** 8am - 1pm

#### ADORATION ROOM

**Daily:** 5.30am - 11pm

#### LIBRARY

**Sun:** Reopen in Dec 2019

#### COLUMBARIUM

**Daily:** 7am - 9pm

#### CANTEEN

**Sun:** 7am - 12pm

### ANOINTING OF THE SICK



The sacrament can be administered to any Catholic awaiting serious surgery, suffers from serious illness or is weakened by old age. Anointing may be before getting admitted for the anticipated medical procedure. Contact the Parish Office to request for a priest. In emergencies, priests of the church nearest to the hospital can be contacted.

### INFANT BAPTISM



Baptism of Infants is held every 2nd Sunday of the odd month at 4pm in the main church. Preparation session for both parents and godparents is held the Sunday before at 3.30pm in the SFX room. For more information please contact [infbaptism@sfxchurch.sg](mailto:infbaptism@sfxchurch.sg).

### FUNERAL



Please check with the Parish Office for priest availability and Mass timing before confirming the timing at the crematorium. For prayers at the wake, please contact St. Pio prayer group via the Parish Office.

### MARRIAGE



Contact the Parish Office 12 months before your intended date to book the church premises and ensure that your presiding priest is able to make that date. Church unavailable from 1 Nov 2018 due to renovations.

### MASS OFFERING



Mass offering envelopes are available outside the Parish Office. Submit your envelopes at least two weeks in advance of your intended date. Please write the names clearly, and in block letters.

### VOLUNTEER & SHARE YOUR GIFTS!

If you're interested in content curation and design layout, contact [mmm@sfxchurch.sg](mailto:mmm@sfxchurch.sg)