



FROM THE DESK OF FR. MIKE

As we celebrate the 3rd Sunday of our hope filled Advent journey we light the rose colored candle on the Advent wreath. The rose candle is meant to remind us of the joy that the world experienced at the birth of Jesus, as well as the joy that the faithful have reached the midpoint of Advent. The joy of the Lord is celebrated in many ways in our lives. A powerful means of celebrating joy is knowing we are loved and forgiven of our sins. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is one of two healing Sacraments in the Catholic Church, the other being the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. You are invited to know joy in the forgiveness of your sins in returning to the Sacrament of Reconciliation if it has been weeks, months, or even longer since you received absolution of your sins.

In addition to the weekly opportunity to celebrate reconciliation on Saturday mornings following the 7:30am Mass, you can reach out to Fr. Radley or myself and we would be happy to celebrate the sacrament with you at a time that works in your schedule. There are times when someone will approach either of us as we are getting ready to celebrate Mass. There is not always ample time in the moments prior to Mass to celebrate the sacrament. Plan ahead and we will surely make time to pray with you in this sacrament.

At Mass, we together express our sorrow for sins with one another in the Penitential Rite. Prior to coming forth to receive Jesus in the Eucharist we express together that; “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.” Making a faith filled act of contrition is a great part of everyone’s prayer life, especially when in the near occasion of sin. A version of the Act of Contrition is found on the lower right corner of the back cover of the seasonal Missalette. If you do not know the prayer by heart, take time this Advent to include it in your regular prayers offered to God.

The faithful are encouraged to celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation at a minimum of once per year. When in grave sin, the sacrament is to be sought out more regularly. Is God calling your name to return to reconciliation?

The sign on a church may have caught your eye if you were driving near St. Mary’s Road and Route 176 approaching Libertyville. The church sign asked the question; “How does a weary world rejoice?” Perhaps as part of your Advent prayer, you will be “spirit led” and come up with multiple answers of your own.

Joy is very deeply relational and rooted in the fact that we belong to God. Look into the faces of people you meet in your daily travels, sharing a smile and a hello with those who may appear weary. Pray for an awareness of the “Holy Spirit of joy” to gently guide you in the daily burdens you wrestle with in your humanity. Might we open our Bible, finding a passage, a phrase, a word that brings joy in God’s Word. Our calendars may be over-booked, we may be running from one place to another, we may worry about the things we want to finish, or start in our Christmas preparations. May the hope Jesus brings guide us this Advent, especially in our weariness, as we prayerfully journey in hope.

May you rejoice in a prayerful, reflective, and meditative praying of Pope Francis’ Prayer for the Joy of the Gospel:

*Star of the new evangelization,
help us to bear radiant witness to communion,
service, ardent and generous faith,
justice and love of the poor,
that the joy of the Gospel
may reach to the ends of the earth,
illuminating even the fringes of our world.*

*Mother of the living Gospel,
wellspring of happiness for God's little ones,
pray for us. Amen. Alleluia!*

May God bless us with hearts filled with joy these Advent days,

Fr. Mike Nacur