

Gaudete Sunday

Shout for joy, O daughter Zion! Sing joyfully, O Israel! Be glad and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! Zephaniah 3:14



Gaudete Sunday is the third Sunday of Advent. The date usually falls between December 11 to 17 each year. In Latin, *gaudete* means “rejoice.” This Sunday is filled with a particular joy: Christmas draws near!

Accordingly, the readings for this Sunday exhort us to be joyful and rejoice, shout for joy, be glad and exult with all your heart, cry out with joy and gladness, give thanks, sing praise, shout with exultation, rejoice in the Lord always ... again, rejoice! The pure excitement expressed in Scriptures this Sunday is the joy of all the ages bursting and singing forth, knowing the Good News that is about to be bestowed upon us all. It can hardly be contained. In fact, it can't be.

On Gaudete Sunday, having passed the midpoint of Advent, the Church lightens the mood a little, and the priest may wear rose vestments. Similarly, the third candle of the Advent wreath, first lit on Gaudete Sunday, is traditionally rose-colored. The change in color provides us with encouragement to continue our spiritual preparation — especially prayer and fasting— for Christmas. You will recall Lent has a similar moment, called *Laetare* Sunday on that occasion.

At Mass in Casa Santa Marta on the 30th of May 2014, Pope Francis reflected on Christian joy, which he said we cannot buy because it is a gift from God. The Pope likened this joy given by God to the joy of a mother embracing her baby after childbirth, because it is a joy “purified” by the suffering of labor. The joy of the Christians, he said is a “joy in hope”. Let us pray for the grace to be joyful people full of hope. May God bless and keep you safe.