

Holy Family News

Gaudete Sunday

The rose candle is lit on our Advent Wreath and the Latin title for today's celebration tells us "Rejoice!" St Paul, in our second Reading, encourages us: "Be happy at all times ... God has called you and he will not fail you." We take stock, half way through our Advent wait, and remind ourselves of the joy that is to come with the birth of our Saviour - a birth we can experience in so many different ways, fulfilling all our deepest longings.

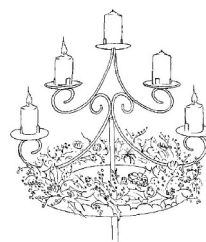
In days past, when Advent was seen as a penitential season (much the same as Lent), this day of mid-term rejoicing might have held a stronger significance. And yet, in today's world, there is a particular poignancy to the fact that our "Gaudete" is quite different from the "rejoicing" that is going on around us. The *world* rejoices that we are in the festive season. This is Christmas, the time for parties and merriment, the time to talk of a season of good will - and to lament that *real* good will is so hard to find. Christians, on the other hand, rejoice today in the certainty that Christ *will* come. We rejoice as we wait for a real season of good will in the future. Throughout Advent, we have recognised our own shortcomings and the shortcomings of our world, and our greatest source of joy today is the promise that Christ will bring into this world of emptiness and failure a "Word" which makes all things whole again. Christ will be himself that Word, and he will not fail us. We can join in the parties and share the fun with anyone - but such things do not say to us that Christmas is here already. They are simply faint and imper-



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**ADVENT
SERVICE
ON
TUESDAY**

fect pointers to a reality we continue to await. True, on December 25th we will celebrate a great Birthday, and give thanks that Jesus once came into our world. But God's promises were not exhausted by that coming. We are his Easter people, more concerned with *why* Jesus came, how he taught us to live, how he proved himself true on Calvary, and how he rose, promising to be with us always, to the end of time.

John the Baptist, in the desert, pointed the way for Jesus, and the people were changed by the expectation John evoked in them. Let us pray that in our own small way we too can be John the Baptists, inspiring others to trust in a God who will not let them down. The parties will fade. The arguments and discord will resume. But God's promises will live on forever.



Today we light the third candle on our Advent Wreath

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMME 2011/12

Remaining date for 2011 are as follows:

(Please let Fr Martin or Denise know if you expect to have any problems getting here)

Saturday 24th December
Parish Celebration of Christmas
7.00pm
(our main family celebration)

- * *New to Holy Family parish?*
- * *Know someone who is sick or in hospital (or the hospice)?*
- * *Like a visit from the priest?*
- * *Think the parish may be able to help you, or you us, in any way?*

Please speak to Fr Martin, after Mass or at any convenient time.

