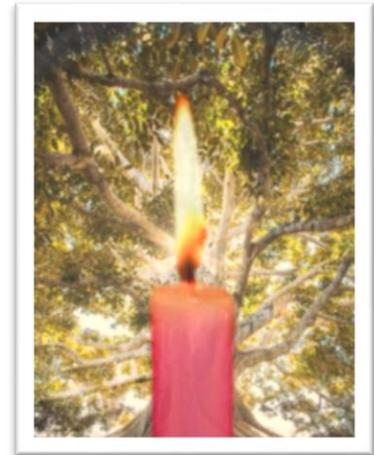




Advent 2021 Prayer-Reflection Guide 3 Care for Our Common Home

Care for our Common Home (*LS Encyclical*), invites us to celebrate Earth, the Sacred Manger, birthing the many incarnations of Emmanuel- God with us. Meister Eckhart often said, “*why talk about Jesus’ birth a thousand years ago, if he is not born again among us today?*”

As we plunge into this unknown, unfolding a new tomorrow, allowing our future to happen now, let us listen deeply to its call. Patient and with open, empty hands, let us play our part in the Great Cosmic Drama. Let us REJOICE and celebrate Gaudete Sunday lighting the only pink candle in the Advent Wreathes with meaning and freedom, giving birth to what has never happened. Let us also celebrate the birthday of Sophie with Joy this 12 of December.



Reading: Philippians 4:4-7

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Society Readings:

“In the Gospel through His words, His attitudes, His relationships with people, His way of relating to all created things, we discover His Heart wholly given to the Father and to all people.” (Constitution 1982 #19 General Chapter 2008-JPIC section)

How do I develop a critical awareness of the interconnectedness of the whole of creation with the events that mark our world?

“The wine-grower’s life was rooted in the earth and followed its seasons.”

(Madeleine Sophie Barat- A Life, Cork University Press, Ireland, 2000, P.9.)

Hymn: [*That’s the Love of God - Sandi Patty*](#)

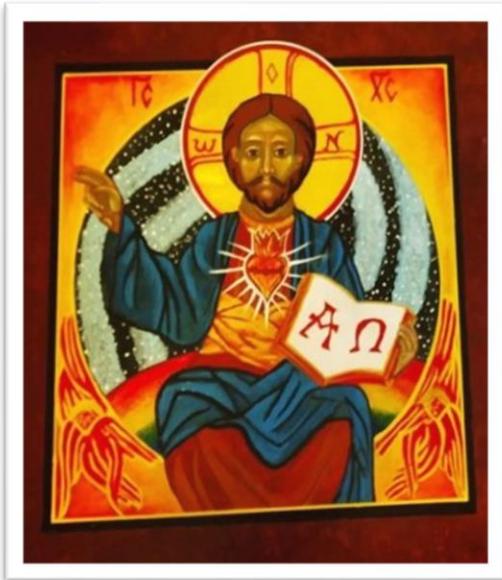
Reflection:

True joy comes with preparation and conversion, growing ourselves and our living testimony to Joy. John the Baptist emphasized preparation and the need for repentance. We need to feel the joy of preparing the way for the Lord. It is a call to be deeply felt and relished. To increase our joy, we need to be generous and share our resources (*Lk3:11*), not out of pity but out of love and kindness, especially with the poor (*See LS#49*). Such sharing doubles our joy, is contagious and triggers an entire movement of giving, especially to those in need.

As Christians, we also celebrate the Joy of making others joyful. For the Israelites, the word Messiah meant the ‘anointed one,’ the one who would bring healing, salvation, and empowerment to Israel. As a result, they looked forward to this healing, salvation, and empowerment.

There can be no conversion without returning to justice. Justice demands integrity and honesty. Justice causes joy for the giver and the recipient. Even a small act results in a big transformation. To manifest repentance, we need to challenge discouragement by feeling and trusting God's presence in our midst (*Zep.3:5-6*). We experience tremendous joy when we feel God's accompaniment and know that He is the doer. We are merely the instrument.

Christians need to be living testimonies of the Gospel by fearlessly testifying to the joy that comes from having a deep encounter with God, deflecting attention from ourselves, and inviting others to trust in what we testify.



The Cosmic Christ - Icon by Mudita rscj

Links with our world:

Gaudete Sunday is the right week to reflect and deepen our joy, by preparing for it, for it can be elusive. Joy can only be experienced in wonder and stillness. Our multi-tasked, press-button generation is in a hurry. We need to slow down. Nature teaches us to be patient, enjoy the present moment and wait for the fruits of the ground to ripen. We are invited to find goodness around us. God is in our midst saving us by working through bold and selfless COVID-19 and other warriors of Hope (See FT #54 and LS #244), Science, Research, Vaccines etc. Finally, we can believe in transformation. Another world is possible (See FT#183), for nothing is impossible for God.

What is my level of joy? How consistent is it?

How do I manifest my repentance/conversion?

Am I willing to commit to JPIC/Laudato Si/Fratelli Tutti or do something nice for someone with no expectations in return?

Myopic, extremist, resentful and aggressive nationalism are on the rise. Goodness, together with Love, Justice and Solidarity, are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day.

(See FT#11)

Repentance must be manifested in visible actions or else it will remain a mere dream, a rainbow, or a concept. Genuine repentance/conversion is bound to lead to genuine actions, resulting in genuine joy.

Dr (Sr) Mudita Menona Sodder rscj
Province of India



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