

## ALWAYS REJOICE IN THE LORD...

*We have arrived at the third Sunday of Advent, also known as Gaudete Sunday, named after the Latin word for joy.*

*This third Sunday reminds us that only one more Sunday; the fourth Sunday of Advent, after which we will celebrate, as a family in faith, the great joy of Christmas.*

*To help us prepare, the liturgy uses the pink color on this day, to draw our attention and ensure it does not go unnoticed.*

*The Word of God on this Sunday invites us to recognize the importance of joy in our lives. But a different kind of joy than the one the world offers. The joy that comes from the Lord it comes to illuminate the realities of human suffering: pain, illness, uncertainty, loneliness, and we can see this through the prophet Isaiah in the first reading, as well as in the Gospel of St Matthew, which presents John the Baptist in prison.*

*Suffering and illness were not part of God's plan of love; both became present in human life through the disobedience of our first parents, as the Book of Genesis recounts.*

*From this, we can understand that pain and suffering are inherent to our human life. There are moments of happiness, but also moments of worry; sooner or later, suffering will come into our lives.*

*But Jesus is our hope, the medicine and consolation in the face of these realities. Whoever has Jesus in their heart, no evil can separate them from their faith.*

*It is important to remember that while we live in this world, there is no complete happiness, only glimpses of the happiness that awaits us.*

*True and authentic happiness will reach its fullness when we are in the presence of the Lord. Therefore, it is so important that, just as we are putting up our Christmas tree and decorations at home, as well as the Nativity scene, we also prepare our hearts to experience the joy that comes from the presence of God, who is loving among us, who is close to us, and who, in his son Jesus, invites us to attain this happiness.*

*We ask the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Sweet Hope, to help us remain in this joy during this upcoming Christmas season.*