

## December 17, 2017- Third Sunday of Advent- Cycle B

Praised be Jesus Christ now and forever Amen!

Today is Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete Sunday means let us rejoice! So today we want to rejoice. When we rejoice we begin in the first reading, in the first reading is in the book of the Prophet Isaiah. And Isaiah talks this wonderful reality about what happens when the Spirit of the Lord is upon us and He anoints us. So He says today in the first reading, the spirit of the Lord is upon me, He has anointed me to do what? To first, to bring glad tidings to the poor. The second to heal the broken hearted and third to set the prisoners free. Now we go forward, Isaiah says this. Jesus says this, in Luke, later on when He goes into the temple and quotes scripture. And this we all supposed to say because we've all been, the Holy Spirit upon us, if you were baptized the spirit of the living God has come upon you. And we've all been anointed right after we've baptized you; we anointed you. So what does that mean? That now you and I are called to go forth and to bring good tidings to the poor. The second to heal the broken hearted. And third to set the prisoners free. But before we go and do this Jesus does it to us first. That all of us are poor in one way or another. And He comes to us and He wants to bring glad tidings to us. He wants to bring us joy. And He gives us joy when we start praising Him and looking at the good instead of always looking at the bad.

There some people today that are constantly looking for the bad. Let's not be one of them. God isn't like that. He comes and He preaches the good news to us. What's the good news? That God love us, He sent His Son to die for us, and we will live forever. That's the glad tidings to the poor that He reaches in to us. The second thing He does He comes to heal our broken hearts. Have you ever had a broken heart? I know I have. And Jesus comes to us and He wants to heal our broken heart as only He can. To reach in and touch our heart and bring us healing. But you need to let Him. And finally, to come and set prisoners free. Do you know what God does? The whole reason He was born is, we said again and again, was to set us free from our sins. And we become a prisoner when we sin, in fact, Jesus says we become a slave. And Jesus Christ wants to set you free. So make sure this Christmas before Christmas comes you get to confession, let Him set you free.

Now that God does this to us He wants us to, now, do it for others. Isn't it interesting that when He anoints us, when the spirit comes upon us, it's all for others, it's not about ourselves. So this Christmas instead of wondering "what am I going to get for Christmas", you got to think "what can I give for Christmas?" "How can I take care of the people around? I don't care if I get anything. What can I give?" God the Father gave you Jesus and He keeps giving. So we need to be people who give. And what does He want us to do? Again He anointed us and gave us the Holy Spirit so He can first bring glad tidings to the poor. That means that we need to take care of the poor. It's not an option. But also glad tidings to the poor in our life. That means our family. You know when you go home for Christmas; will you bring joy to your home or will you bring gladness to your home? God wants us to bring joy. To look at the good. So when you go home be a person of good news, a glad tidings to the poor in your family because we all got them. We're all poor in one way or another, as I've said. So let's decide this Christmas that we're going to bring good news to them.

The second thing that we're going to bring healing to the broken hearted. Now again, in your family, if it's anything like mine, there's not a moment when someone's heart isn't broken. Let's make it this Christmas that we're going to bring healing to people and their broken hearts. Let's bring healing. How much the world needs it! Let that healing begin with us.

And finally, to set prisoners free. You know what the greatest prison is? I believe it is self-hatred. There so many people that have such great self-hatred. It might be you. And what needs to happen is to set prisoners free from that self-hatred is we love them where they are. Not where they need to be. And when we love them where they are then we can get them where they need to be.

So we sit there, you know, one of my favorite books when I was in seminary was by a Jesuit, it was *The Song of the Bird*, and you know we got into suspect and that, but there's some great stories in that book. And one of the stories is a story about a man who was neurotic. Now you know the difference between someone who is neurotic and someone who is psychotic? A neurotic builds castles in the skies and the psychotic lives in them. But, anyway, when we deal with reality of a neurotic, here is a person who is neurotic. And all of his friends told him you got to stop, you're neurotic, you're driving us crazy. And he tried to stop but he

couldn't. Even his best friend went to him and says, you know, you got to stop, you're neurotic, you're driving us crazy. And he tried but he couldn't. He almost resented his friend but he couldn't resent him. He kept trying and trying but he couldn't. Finally his best friend came up to him and says, you know, I love you as you are. Don't change. And guess what happened? He changed. Miracles of miracles. God meets us where we are. And it's His love that transforms us. When the woman was got in adultery what does He first say? He says anyone condemn you? No one sir. Neither do I condemn you. Then even after He met her where she was He then said go and sin no more. That's the secret. So when it comes to our family this Christmas, let's be people that meet people where they are. Love them where they are with all their faults, with all their problems, and our love might be that which set them free. So this Christmas before we get there, I know it's over a week away, but God wants us to rejoice and this Advent season is about preparing for this holy day. This great day. This greatest day of God's love. So let's today sit there and focus on how, that you and I can bring glad tidings to the poor and our families and the true poor. To bring healing to the broken hearted and to set people who are captives free. And if we do that, we helped to become instruments of salvation. And then the anointing that God gives us and our baptism we now do as Jesus did and the prophet Isaiah did and we make this Christmas better for everybody. You got it? Get it? You gonna live it? May each of you know His love today and forever; Amen.