

Advent Week 3 – Joy

Prepare a Sacred Space themed on Joy around the Advent Wreath.

L: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and Of the Holy Spirit. All: Amen

L: The Lord be with you R. And with your spirit.

Student 1: During Advent we spend time reflecting on the gifts God offer us throughout our lives. We pray and think about Peace, Hope, Love and this week we remember the Gift of Joy. We all have experienced the gift of Joy, through friendship, families, and the kindness of strangers. However, we also receive joy when we offer our skills and time in doing something for other people in need. Today we listen to Mary's story of offering her life in the service of God. It was through Mary saying Yes to God that she understood the meaning of 'Joy' in her life.

A reading from the Gospel of St Luke.

Student 2 In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you."

Student 3 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

Student 4 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called[a] the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Reflection

Pope Francis' on the Joy of Mary (December 8th 2016)

Pope Francis explains Mary's 'yes' as complete and unconditional, without any reservations. Pope Francis continued – "Sometimes, though, we are experts on the half-yes: We are good at pretending not to understand what God wants, and what our conscience prompts us to do. We are also smart, and never give a true no to God, and say: 'I am not able', 'not today, but tomorrow', 'Tomorrow I will be better, tomorrow I will pray, tomorrow I will do good.' Thus we close the door to the good."

"Whereas every full yes to God gives rise to a new story: Saying yes to God is truly 'original,' not sin, which makes you old inside," – the Pope said – "Every yes to God creates stories of a joyful life for us and for others."

Pope Francis concluded by saying that in this time of Advent, "God desires to see us and awaits our 'yes'."

Litany of Mary (from *The Fire of Peace: A Prayer Book* Compiled and edited by Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB Pax Christi USA)

After each of the following the response is, "Be our guide":

Mary, disciple of peace...

Model of strength...

Model of gentleness...

Model of trust...

Model of courage...

Model of patience...

Model of risk...

Model of openness...

Model of perseverance...

The response to the following is "Pray for us":

Mother of Jesus...

Mother of the homeless...

Mother of the dying...

Mother of Kindness...

Mother of Joy...

We unite our voices and pray: Our Father ... Hail Mary

Closing Reflection: Saint Mother Teresa

Joy is prayer; joy is strength; joy is love; joy is a net of love by which you can catch the heart of each person.

Amen

L: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and Of the Holy Spirit. All: Amen

L: Go in the Joy of God. Thanks Be to God