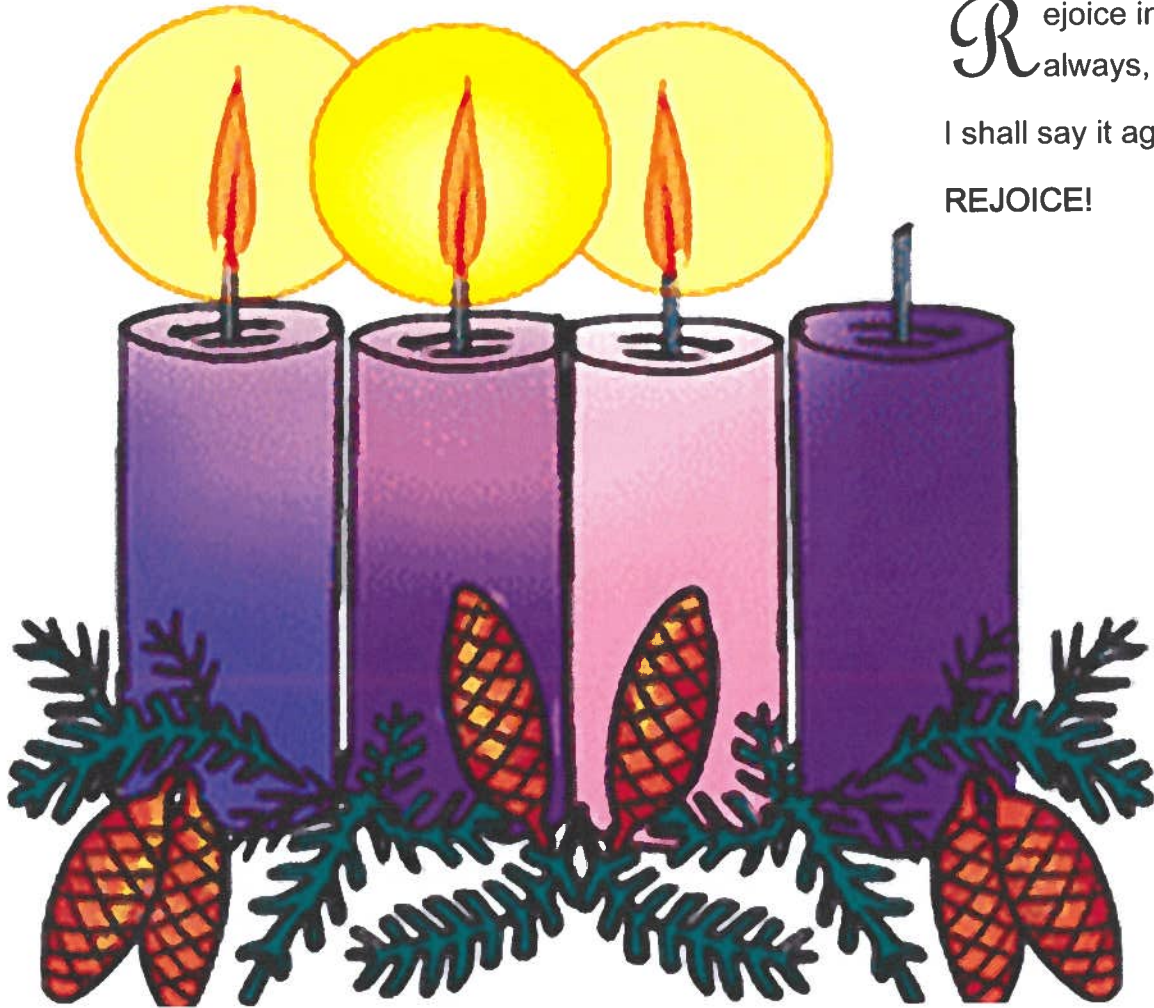


The Roman Catholic Parishes of
St. Margaret Mary, Herscher
St. James the Apostle, Irwin
Sacred Heart, Goodrich

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 14-15, 2024



*R*ejoice in the Lord
always,

I shall say it again:

REJOICE!

Rejoice

Weekend Masses:

St. Margaret Mary Sat. 5:00 pm Sun. 10:30 am
Sacred Heart Sun. 7:30 am
St. James Sun. 9:00 am

Confessions:

St. Margaret Mary Sat. 4:15 pm
Sacred Heart Sun. 7:05-7:20 am
St. James Sun. 8:35-8:50 am

Church Mailing Address: 207 E. 5th Street

Herscher, IL 60941

Phone: 815-426-2550

Quotable: "The cross is the school of love."

—Saint Maximilian Kolbe

Fourth Sunday of Advent			December 21-22, 2024	
Liturgical Schedule	St. Margaret Mary Saturday, Dec. 21 5:00 pm	Sacred Heart Sunday, Dec. 22 7:30 am	St. James Sunday, Dec. 22 9:00 am	St. Margaret Mary Sunday, Dec. 22 10:30 am
Celebrant	Fr. Ron Deacon Ron	Fr. Ron Deacon Ron	Fr. Allam Deacon Ron	Fr. Allam Deacon Ron
Ushers	Todd Datweiler Dan Hoffman Gery Wright Roger Jensen	Kyle Ferris Daryl Ferris	Dallas Ferris Dave Ladehoff Jerry Ogrentz Mary Offerman	Brent Fulton Darren Lovell Erik Wheeler Sean Riordan
Lector	Dave Emling	Darlene Cipcich	Kelly Buente	Steve Jacob
Eucharistic Minister				
Servers				Caroline Fulton
Greeters			Greeter—C. Forsythe R. Leader—Rita Thiesen	Stacey Powers

Mass Intentions for the Week

Monday, Dec. 16 (SMM)

8:00 am + Anna Hildebrand & George Schmidt
(Mariann Lane)

Tuesday, Dec. 17 (SH)

8:00 am +Danielle Timm (Jerry/Terri Weakley)

Wednesday, Dec. 18 (SJ)

8:00 am Intention of Rita Thiesen (Pam Cuchiara)

Friday, Dec. 20 (SMM)

8:00 am +Mary Lou Fosnaugh (The Family)

Saturday, Dec. 21 (SMM)

5:00 pm For All the Parish Family

Sunday, Dec. 22

7:30 am (SH) +Zeb Pfeiffer (Dale/Marilynn Pfeiffer)
+Ray Slewinski & Jerry Mescher (Dorothy Mescher)

9:00am (SJ) +Howard Nelson (Steve/Dena Coy)
+Paul Muhlstadt (Cathy/Richard Dumas)

10:30 am SMM +Jim Webber (SMM CCW)

A Look Ahead

Sunday, Dec. 15—Youth Mass at SMM

Sunday, Dec. 15—St. James Christmas Pageant, Breakfast, and Raffles

Tuesday, Dec. 17—Advent Confessions SJ 7:00 -7:45

Friday, Dec. 20—Christmas Parade Downtown Herscher

Pastor— Fr. Ron Neitzke- 815-426-2550
Deacon – Ron Gagnon— rjgckg@aol.com
Home—815-933-4077

Parish Email – smm_sja_sh@yahoo.com
TriParish web page – www.triparishcatholics.org
Like us on Facebook triparishcatholic communities
Tri Parish Church office –Barb Riker 426-2550
Julie Bisailon 426-2550

Bulletin – Debbie Jensen - 426-2550
debjen04@gmail.com

Religious Education –

St. MM – Jill Fulton jfulton.stmm@gmail.com
Sacred Heart – Rhonda Berns – 426-5015
St. James—Tanhya Osenga tosenga81@gmail.com
Parish Nurse – Jackie Eberle – 815-421-4048

Prayer Line–

SMM -Janice 815-426-2574 Jdstreefarms@aol.com
St. James— Mary Offerman—602-670-8888 (call or text)
Sacred Heart-Marilyn Pfeiffer 815-955-8246 (call or text)
Terri Weakley— 815-514-8171

Question of the week

How can I spread the joy in my family, my neighborhood, my world?

Collections Weekend of Dec. 8, 2024

St. Margaret Mary—\$2,546

St. James—\$2,672

Sacred Heart—\$1,201

Thank you for your generosity!

Gospel Shorts— Motivated to Change

If you have children, you know the frustration and stress caused by trying to change your teenage son’s behavior. One set of parents had been attempting to change their son’s habit of wearing dirty jeans day after day, throwing them on the floor at night, and putting them back on the next morning. They yelled, they threatened, they hid the jeans ... the son would go dig them out of the laundry and wear them again. He was dressing like the two other boys he hung around with.

Then, he met Sally, who was “the love of his life.” She was well dressed, neat, meticulous about her appearance. Within two days, the boy began demanding that he have clean jeans to wear every day. What the parents could not do with years of threats, the love for a young lady accomplished overnight.

Our response to the changes required to follow Christ are somewhat like the story of this boy. In the Gospel for this Sunday, John the Baptist preached change to escape the coming judgement of the Son of God, who would bring not only mercy but judgement. And many were motivated to change their behavior asking “What shall we do?”

But how different was the motivation to change of the woman who washed the Lord’s feet out of gratitude for his love and forgiveness for her while she was yet a sinner. FEAR OR LOVE? Two motivations for change. Consider them both.

Third Sunday of Advent

The theme for the Third Sunday of Advent is “Rejoice”. The shepherds heard and saw and then shared the news of Christ, the Savior and Lord. As still today, we do too.

When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds.



Join us at the St. James Christmas Pageant/Breakfast and Basket Raffle today!

Children’s Christmas Program

Advent Confessions

The sacrament of reconciliation will be held on Tuesday, evening, December 17th from 7:00 to 7:45 at St. James. There will be two priests there to hear confessions.

Parish News:

St. Margaret Mary—

- ◆ SMM Christmas decorating — Please join us in decorating Wed. Dec 18, 5:00 outside decorating, and 6:00 inside decorating.

St. James—

- ◆ We are collecting winter wear accessories (mittens, hats, etc) in the hallway of St. James for the Salvation Army. Thanks to all who participate!
- ◆ *The St. James CCW Christmas breakfast is Sunday, December 8th after mass at the Herscher Restaurant. Please sign up in the foyer if you’d like to attend.*

Sacred Heart—

- ◆ Fall Cash Bash net proceeds number is in: \$11,844.41. Thanks again to all for your support
- ◆ *Sacred Heart Church is planning another free breakfast following the 7:30 AM Mass Sunday Dec. 29th. All are invited to join in fellowship and welcome in a new year.*

All Parishes—

- ◆ Today is the last day to sign up for Joy in January for all three parishes.
- ◆ The next Adult Religious Ed Class will be announced.
- ◆ Tri-Parish Office Hours— Our office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 9am—12 pm.
- ◆ There will be no Knights of Columbus meeting on December 23, 2024. The next meeting will be January 27, 2025 .

2024 CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

CHRISTMAS EVE

3:00 PM AT ST. MARGARET MARY	FR. RON
5:00 PM AT ST. JAMES	FR. RON
9:00 PM AT SACRED HEART	FR. ALLAM

CHRISTMAS DAY

7:30 AM AT SACRED HEART	FR. RON
9:00 AM AT ST. JAMES	FR. ALLAM
10:30 AM AT ST. MARGARET MARY	FR. ALLAM



Obscure saint of the week: St. Maximinus of Mercy (Dec. 15) was the nephew of Saint Eusebius of Orleans. He was the co-founder and first abbot of the Abbey of Micy, France on land donated by King Clovis. Legend says that at one point he prayed a dragon into submission, and then spent his later years as hermit in the dragon's former cave.



Obscure saint of the week. St. Virginia Centurione Bracelli (Dec. 12)

was the daughter of Giorgio Centurione, an imposing and controlling individual who became the Doge of Genoa, and Lelia Spinola. Raised in a pious family, she felt drawn to religious life as a child. However, due to family position she agreed to an arranged marriage to Gasparo Grimaldi Bracelli on December 10, 1602. He was a drinker, a gambler, and though the couple had two daughters, Lelia and Isabella, he was little of a father or husband. Virginia was widowed on June 13, 1607 after five years of marriage, aged 20, and with two small children.

Virginia moved in with her in-laws, cared for her children, and dedicated her free time to prayer and charity. When her daughters were grown and married, Virginia devoted herself entirely to caring for the sick, aged, and abandoned children. In late 1624 and early 1625 war in the region led to many orphans, some whom Virginia took in and cared for, and she worked with refugees in the town. When her mother-in-law died in August 1625, Virginia poured herself into the work, turning her house into a refuge and founding the *Cento Signore della Misericordia Protettrici dei Poveri di Gesù Cristo*

Her house was overrun with the needy during a plague and famine in 1629 – 1630. To house them all Virginia rented the vacant convent of Monte Calvario and moved her charges there in 1631. Due to crowding, extra housing was built in 1634, Virginia was soon caring for 300 patients, and in 1635 she received official government recognition for her hospital. Virginia worked closely with the young women in her houses, teaching them religion and ways to earn a living.

The expenses of Monte Calvario were excessive, so Virginia bought two villas and started construction of a church dedicated to *Our Lady of Refuge*. It became the mother church of the *Institution*, whose Rule was written between 1644 and 1650 and which was divided into two congregations: *Suore di Nostra Signora del Rifugio di Monte Calvario* (*Sisters of Our Lady of Refuge in Mount Calvary*) and *Figlie di Nostra Signora al Monte Calvario* (*Daughters of Our Lady on Mount Calvary*). When the group of Protectors, the superiors and governors of the *Institute* was selected in 1641, Virginia retired from administration, working as the humblest sister, doing chores on the grounds and begging for alms for the *Institute*.

Sadly, though the *Institute* was a success, healing the sick, educating children, training adults, and helping the dissolute return to productive lives, assistance, personal and financial, began to decline. Without the chance to work with Virginia, many of the middle and upper class did not participate, fearing the poor and rough residents. Though her health was failing, Virginia returned to active administrative duties. She worked for general spiritual development throughout the region, working for the choice of the Blessed Virgin Mary as patron of the republic of Genoa in 1637, for the institution of the *Forty Hours' Devotion* in 1642, and the revival of home missions in 1643. She acted as peacemaker between noble houses and aided in the reconciliation of Church and Republic authorities in 1647, ending a dispute caused by the government abandoning support of the *Institute*. Virginia continued working up to the end of her days, and in later years received the gifts of visions and interior locutions.

The Sunday gospel in everyday English

The crowd asked John the Baptist, "Then what are we supposed to do?"

"If you have two coats, give one away," he said. "Do the same with your food."

Tax men also came to be baptized and said, "Teacher, what should we do?"

He told them, "No more extortion—collect only what is required by law."

Soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?"

He told them, "No shakedowns, no blackmail—and be content with your rations."

The interest of the people by now was building. They were all beginning to wonder, "Could this John be the Messiah?"

But John intervened: "I'm baptizing you here in the river. The main character in this drama, to whom I'm a mere stagehand, will ignite the Kingdom life, a fire, the Holy Spirit within you, changing you from the inside out. He's going to clean house—make a clean sweep of your lives. He'll place everything true in its proper place before God; everything false he'll put out with the trash to be burned."

There was a lot more of this—words that gave strength to the people, words that put heart in them. *The Message (from Luke 3)!*

Catholic Snacks, Get Fed

The amazing "Ice Chapel" of the South Pole



In the most inhospitable place on earth, Christ can still be found.

In Antarctica, deep in the global south, where the winter temperatures plummet to 100 degrees below zero, there is a small cave composed of ice.

In that cave is the world's southernmost chapel, a Catholic chapel located at the Argentinian Belgrano II Base.

Not only is this chapel uniquely located below ground, it is carved directly out of the ice.

Originally built in the 1950s, the first Belgrano Base was abandoned due to unstable and dangerous ice (large portions of Antarctica are formed from this ever-shifting ice, making safe locations for bases difficult to come by).

When a hectare of stable land was discovered, Belgrano Base II was opened, with a system of underground tunnels dug in the ice nearby. A Catholic chapel was carved from the ice inside, accessible only through the tunnels.

No matter how remote a land is, no matter the physical and emotional needs of the people, one thing can be certain: people have an innate desire to worship God. This has led to the existence of chapels and churches in some rather unlikely locations, such as the remote lands of the South Pole. As the Psalmist says:

If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
even there thy hand shall lead me,
and thy right hand shall hold me.

—Psalm 139:9-10

Although most of us don't need to journey below ground in below-freezing conditions to pray in a chapel made from ice, we all face some cold days here and there!

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LOOKING FOR A FUN, NEW WAY TO BE MORE ACTIVE?



Bingo + Exercise = Bingocize®

BINGOCIZE® is a 20-week health promotion program that combines the game of bingo with fall prevention exercise. Play bingo with us and meet new people while learning about techniques to reduce falls.

**Dates: Monday afternoons,
January 6th through June 9th, 2025**

Time: 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

(No class on 1/20, 2/17, or 5/26)

**Location: St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church, 207 E. 5th
St., Herscher IL, 60941**

**TO REGISTER,
CALL NATALIA
(815) 933-7791 EXT 9954**



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Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet is a faith-based organization providing service to people in need and calling others of good will to do the same.

REJOICE
Daughter Jerusalem
Be glad with all your heart

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Sponsor a Needy Individual or Family for Christmas

Catholic Charities is offering you the opportunity to help their clients at Christmas this year. The Gift of Christmas is an annual program that fulfills wish lists for individuals and families served by Catholic Charities. Read stories about clients and choose who you would like to help this Christmas. Or, if

you prefer, you can direct your donation to an individual or family who hasn't been chosen yet. Donating is simple: vis-

it catholiccharitiesjoliet.org and click on "donate." Or, call 815-724-1140 to make your donation over the phone. To send a check, please note "Gift of Christmas" in the memo and



send checks to:

Catholic Charities
16555 Weber Road
Crest Hill, IL 60403

Questions Catholics Ask

Why don't all Christians celebrate Christmas on the same day?



Choosing a precise date for the birth of Christ was less important for the Early Church than preparing to receive this manifestation with minds and hearts fully awake.

We regard time linearly because we experience it this way: Each day marching in a progression toward the future. We view the past similarly, only fixed as if set in amber. It's natural to imagine the birth of Jesus as we do our own birthdays: stamped on the calendar on December 25th and celebrated on its anniversary annually.

Except in the East, where Christ's coming is observed on January 6th. How can this be?

Consider that the ancients told time in terms of the great sky clocks, sun and moon. Seasons and occasions were established according to the heavenly orbs, not to mention patterns of rainfall. Calendars were shaped by familiar cycles so crops might be planted and harvested successfully.

Another significant factor in dating was the succession of rulers. So Matthew tells us about a new star in the heavens signaling a new king's arrival, but also that this occurred during the present reign of King Herod. Luke also acknowledges who held the reins of power during this event: Roman Caesar Tiberias, Palestinian

procurator Pontius Pilate, and high priests Annas and Caiaphas. Details we might prefer—day of the week, date of the month, or month itself—weren't recorded. A study of celestial anomalies of this period hasn't produced an exact calendar date for the newborn king.

As the early church spread out across many cultures, news traveled slowly. Inevitably the church experienced natural divisions and differing customs. Churches of the East and West were both improvising. The winter solstice, the longest night of darkness around December 21, was already a significant observance. It seemed fitting to celebrate the arrival of the Light of the World as days grew longer beyond the solstice. Jerusalem tradition had chosen January 6 for the celebration of this Theophany, Greek for "Divine Manifestation," and this custom was embraced throughout the Eastern churches. Many of these churches observed a sequence of "epiphanies" leading up to the great one: annunciations to Zechariah and Mary, Mary and Elizabeth's visitation, John's birth, the annunciation to Joseph, and finally the birth of Jesus.

Meanwhile, Western Christians called this same divine manifestation by the name Epiphany, observing it in late December. In time, Eastern and Western traditions mingled to create a unified liturgical chain between Nativity and Epiphany. Choosing a precise date for a historically unknown event was less important than preparing to receive this manifestation with minds and hearts fully awake.

Scripture: Exodus 23:14-17; Leviticus 23:1-44; Deuteronomy 26:1-3; 1 Maccabees 4:56-59; Ecclesiastes 1:4-7, 9-10; 3:1-8; Hosea 2:13; Zechariah 14:6-9; Mark 1:14-15; Matthew 2:1-2; Luke 3:1-2; John 1:1-5, 14



St. Margaret Mary students were treated to a trip to the theater to see *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* on Sunday, Dec. 8.

Reflection — Christmas in Heaven

I'm wondering what Christmas in Heaven is like as I grieve alone and pray, longing for one who has gone before to spend Christmas in Heaven today.

And so in my dreams, I wonder far from the scenes and sounds of earth 'Till I catch the strains of the heavenly choir as they sing of the Christ Child's birth.

The Angels and Saints I vision there as they join in the festal gay, and there 'mid the throng is my loved one spending Christmas in Heaven today.

There's joy in the faith that teaches, when our life's work here is done, of a place in Heaven awaiting, and the crown we worked for is won.



December 15, 2024

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Third Sunday of Advent

Zep 3:14-18a | Phil 4:4-7 | Lk 3:10-18

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

"I want to be a sanctuary lamp," Samantha, my childhood friend, once remarked. "To be the little flame that reminds everyone, 'God is here.'" In those short phrases, Samantha summarized not only her personal vocation, but also the all-important mission of St. John the Baptist. Like the candle burning before the tabernacle, St. John was not the long-awaited Messiah; his God-given task was to point others to Jesus. We hear this theme of St. John's message expressed repeatedly in today's readings: "The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst"; "Great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel!"; "one mightier than I is coming." God himself would soon be among them - indeed, he was already there. Although 2,000 years separate us from St. John the Baptist's ministry, the little flame still burns in the sanctuary to remind us that God has not only come, but he remains *in our midst*. This is cause for rejoicing: the same Jesus to whom John pointed is present among us in the Blessed Sacrament.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Becoming more attuned and attentive to Jesus in the Holy Eucharist - that is, to God in our midst - entails embracing another part of St. John the Baptist's message. In today's Gospel, St. John counsels people from all walks of life to prepare for the coming Messiah by changing their lives. Only by turning away from sin and committing themselves to God will they be able to recognize and follow Christ when he comes. If we desire deeper faith in the Eucharist, our preparation must be similar: we ask God to show us the dusty corners of our souls which we have concealed from his merciful love. Then, confident in his willingness to forgive, we approach him in the sacrament of confession. This is his ardent desire: that, having come among us, he might forgive and heal us. Such is the meaning behind the consoling words of the Prophet Zephaniah in today's first reading: "He will rejoice over you with gladness, and renew you in his love."

SING

*O Christ, whom nations sigh for
Whom priest and prophet long foretold
Come break the captive fetters
Redeem the long-lost fold*

3rd Sunday of Advent

December 15, 2024: Zep 3:14-18a | Is 12:2-6 | Phil 4:4-7 | Lk 3:10-18

The Third Sunday of Advent focuses our attention on the spirit of joyfulness, because this is an essential mark of true faith. All the readings are full of joy and the thrill of happy expectation.

In the Gospel reading, John the Baptizer preaches good news to the people, and they are filled with joyful anticipation for whatever God is about to do.

Do you know that joy is a ministry? It's an important way to share the faith. We all have a calling to do this ministry wherever there is misery and hopelessness.

Let's look at how John fulfilled this ministry of joy. We might think he was anything but joyful in his robe of scratchy camels hair and his fiery sermons about repenting from sin. But look closer. His ministry prepared people's hearts to receive Jesus.

Having faith means trusting God which means resting in hope which produces joy. When you or someone you know is lacking joy, it's because Jesus has not yet been invited fully into the situation that's been stealing the joy. It might be too early in the grieving process, which is healthy and normal, or it might be a lack of faith, which needs nurturing.

The ability to experience the joy of faith comes from turning to the love of God and receiving his comfort in the midst of hardships. It also arises from getting to know the joyful side of Jesus and the joyful purposes behind all of his teachings.

Jesus preached going the extra mile, loving our enemies, and doing good to those who cause us hardships, none of which is fun. What we need to



discover and then share with others is that holy living, although not always fun, is what unites us to the joyful love of Jesus and the joyful purposes of everything he preached.

Remember, even going to the cross produces joyful results.

The good news is: Jesus didn't just tell us how to be holy, he gave us the power to be holy: He gave us his Holy Spirit.

And when others see the Holy Spirit's activity in us, if they know that Jesus is the reason for our joy, they are evangelized by our faith!

Reflect & Discuss:

- † Think of a recent sin you've committed. How did it prevent you from experiencing joy?
- † The next time, how will you rely on the Holy Spirit to help you turn temptation into joy?
- † Name some of the special joys you experience during Advent and Christmas; how do they help you grow stronger in holiness?
- † Describe a time when you helped someone else become joyful; how did Jesus reveal himself in that?