

# FROM THE PASTOR'S PRINTER

## REJOICING IN THE LORD

The first paragraph of the second reading from Paul to the Thessalonians (5: 16-22) is seven sentences long and contains eight commands. (It's sort of like listening to my sister.) One of the commands has resulted in the third Sunday of Advent being sometimes called *Gaudete Sunday*, that is, *Rejoice Sunday*. It is the first command that Paul gives the Thessalonians, as he is closing his letter to them and summing up the Christian life.

The command to "Rejoice always" may sound a little Pollyannaish to us. There are enough troubles in the world and often in our personal lives that the *always* seems to be pushing happiness a bit too far. I would readily agree with this except for the fact that the person giving the command lived a life filled with enough troubles – stoning, whipping, imprisonment, being run out of town, sickness, and two shipwrecks – that if he is commanding this little community of fledgling faith to rejoice always, there must be something to it. And the something is this: because God became man in Jesus Christ, and because Christ has conquered

all things by his death on the cross, and resurrection, no matter what we experience – good or bad – works for our salvation. When Christ conquered sin and death, it did not mean he eradicated it. Rather evil lost its ability to have the last laugh. What Paul saw that allowed him, even in his hardship, to rejoice always was that even the hardships work for his good and the good of the salvation of the world. His suffering united him to the suffering of his Savior, and he knew that if he 'endured [in this world] with the Lord, he would reign [in the next world] with the Lord.' (II Tm 2:12) How would our lives be different if, instead of settling for disappointment, frustration, anger, and resentment when things do not go our way, we stop and look at the situation and ask how this experience might be a source of grace for us; how we might give witness to the words of St. Paul in Romans 8: 28 that "all things work together for good for those who love God"? *Rejoice always* is not a command of a wishful thinker; it is the way to face the ultimate realities of life.

## CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

**Saturday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>**

2:45 - 3:45 PM Reconciliation

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Saturday December 23<sup>rd</sup>

4 PM Mass

Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>

7:30, 9, & 11 AM Mass

**NOTE: NO 1 OR 7 PM MASS**

**CHRISTMAS**

**Christmas Eve Masses –**

December 24<sup>th</sup>

3 PM – 3:15 PM (gym) – 5:30 PM

**CHRISTMAS DAY MASSES**

Midnight

8 AM – 10 AM – NOON

**NOTE: NO EVENING MASS ON CHRISTMAS DAY**

**Catholics are expected to fulfill both their Sunday obligation and their Christmas obligation of giving thanks to the Lord for our redemption at separate Masses.**

**On December 31<sup>st</sup>, New Year's Eve, the 7 PM Mass has been moved to 4 PM.**

**Because the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (January 1<sup>st</sup>) falls on a Monday, it is NOT a holy day of obligation this year. However, we will celebrate Mass at 7:30 AM & Noon on January 1<sup>st</sup>.**