

**Third Sunday of Advent: Laetare Sunday
December 11, 2016**

**The Lord secures justice for the oppressed, gives food to the hungry,
gives sight to the blind and sets captives free.**

*This is what we are all meant to do. It can be a real challenge,
but you're up to it. "Laetare - Rejoice"*

The Latin word, "Laetare," which is found in the opening prayer for today's mass, means "rejoice" - which is meant to encourage us to keep faithful to the spirit of preparation at this half-way point in Advent. "Rejoice" as you continue to keep moving from darkness into light, from the Incarnation to Bethlehem, from Advent to Easter. At times, it can seem like a real challenge to do this, but you're up to it. "*Laetare - Rejoice*"

We Were Made For These Times

Last Sunday, we listened to a brief of an article, "*We Were Made For These Times*," by American poet, Clarissa Pinkola Estes. It is to the point:

"My friends, do not lose heart. We were made for these times. Ours is a time of almost daily righteous rage over the latest degradations of what matters most to civilized, visionary people. It is easy to feel discouraged in times like this, but do not keep a chair for it. Do not entertain it; do not allow it to eat from your plate. We were made for these hard times. Write this on your wall: 'When a great ship is in harbor and moored, it is safe, there can be no doubt. But that is not what great ships are built for'."

Facing hard times can be a real challenge, but you're up to it. "*Laetare - Rejoice*"

A Much Needed Injection of Hope

The article, "*We Were Made For These Times*," by Caroline Myss is to the point.

"The world is changing at light speed. We are seeing a breakdown of social and political structures and witnessing a resurgence of domination by force and the inequality of peoples. Wisdom teaches that whenever there is chaos in our lives, there is something that must be let go. We are meant to maneuver through these changes. The universal counsel is, '*learn to think in paradox.*' In other words, see that what looks like an ending is really a beginning; what looks riskiest may be the way to go. Whenever we find ourselves maneuvering through change, look for new inner resources rather than relying on the old and familiar. This is a time of great hope because where chaos abounds, grace more abounds."

Living with paradox can be a real challenge, but you're up to it. "*Laetare - Rejoice*"

"A Message to the World"

In his message in January 21, 2016 to the World Economic Forum, Pope Francis had this to say:

"World leaders are challenged to ensure that the coming 'fourth industrial revolution', the result of robotics and scientific and technological innovations, does not lead to the destruction of the human person, or to the transformation of our planet into an empty garden for the enjoyment of a chosen few. The present moment offers a precious opportunity to guide and govern the processes now under way, and to build inclusive societies based on respect for human dignity, tolerance, compassion and mercy. I urge you, take up anew your commitment to build the future of the planet, 'our common home'."

Caring for our planet can be a real challenge, but you're up to it. "*Laetare - Rejoice*"

The Cross

This meditation by Franciscan Fr. Richard Rohr sums it all up:

"The cross is a perfect metaphor for what happens in hard times, especially in the painful, tragic, and sinful things. '*Life has a cruciform pattern.*' All of life is a '*coincidence of opposites*' (St. Bonaventure), a collision of cross-purposes; we are all filled with contradictions needing to be reconciled. The price we pay for holding together these opposites is invariably some form of '*crucifixion.*' Jesus himself was hung between a good thief and a bad thief, between heaven and earth, holding all opposites together, '*reconciling all things in himself*' (Ephesians 2:14-18). So must we do the same in our country and world today."

Reconciling the cross-purposes and contradictions in our lives and world
can be a real challenge, but you're up to it. "*Laetare - Rejoice*"

There are no ready-made solutions for finding peace in our world. Let us learn to trust in times of fear, even if no one else is; let us learn to hope in times of despair, even if no one else is; let us learn to love in times of alienation, even if no one else is.

This can be a real challenge, but you're up to it

Rejoice! Happy Laetare Sunday!