

Fr. Simon Sez

Cause of Our Joy!



Our celebration of the Fourth Sunday of Advent brings us to Advent's culminating point. Advent is a Season for preparing for the coming of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, into our lives. Our preparation began with the prophecies of Isaiah and was guided by John the Baptist's call for repentance. Now, we ponder the origins and nature of this Child Jesus, the One who we seek and watch for and pray to for His coming. Who is this Child Jesus? Why should He be the center of our attention and the center of our lives? How do we find Him? How do we explain the cause of our joy to those who have not found Him?

In the first reading the prophet Isaiah tells King Ahaz that God will give him this sign: "The virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel." St. Matthew tells us in the gospel reading that the name Emmanuel means "God is with us." He shows us the Child Jesus is the fulfillment of this prophecy by telling us that the Virgin Mary is the mother of Jesus. This makes Him truly human since His mother is human. However, we are also told Mary became a mother "through the power of the Holy Spirit." Thus, Jesus is also truly God since God is His Father. So, God is with us in the Person of Jesus. His divinity is united to us by being united to Jesus' humanity with us.

By considering the origins of the Child Jesus as described by St. Matthew, we believe Jesus is truly man and truly God. This reality about Jesus was later developed in the doctrine of the Incarnation. Who is this Child Jesus? He is one Person with two natures, divine nature and human nature. We call Him Son of God and Son of Man. Why should He be at the center of our attention and our lives? We know that Jesus is the true Emmanuel, God-with-us. He is our way to be with God through His Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, now and in the eternity of heaven. Joseph was told to give this Child the name Jesus. The name Jesus literally means "Yahweh saves." Jesus is the One who saves us from our sins and unites us to God through His Church.

Jesus is the Way that God had planned from before the beginning of time to personally intervene into our lives in order to be with us and to make us one with Him. This is the Good News proclaimed to us. We must let God intervene in every moment of our lives by receiving Jesus Christ and by being united with Him.

How do we find Jesus to receive Him? We find Jesus in the sacraments and through each other. We encounter Jesus through His Body, the Church. Jesus told us, what we do to others, we do to Him. Do we receive our neighbor as we would receive Jesus? When we receive our neighbor, we receive Jesus. When we receive Jesus, we receive His Holy Spirit and experience the fruit of the Holy Spirit, joy.

What is the cause of our Christmas joy? It is Jesus, because He is the Cause of our salvation, our union with God! Come, Lord Jesus!

God is With Us: Scott Hahn Reflects on the Fourth Sunday of Advent

The mystery kept secret for long ages, promised through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, is today revealed (see Romans 16:25–26).

This is the "Gospel of God" that Paul celebrates in today's Epistle—the good news that "God is with us" in Jesus Christ. The sign promised to the House of David in today's First Reading is given in today's Gospel. In the virgin found with child, God Himself has brought to Israel a savior from David's royal line (see Acts 13:22–23).

Son of David according to the flesh, Jesus is the Son of God, born of the Spirit. He will be anointed with the Spirit (see Acts 10:38), and by the power of Spirit will be raised from the dead and established at God's right hand in the heavens (see Acts 2:33–34; Ephesians 1:20–21).

He is the "King of Glory" we sing of in today's Psalm. The earth in its fullness has been given to Him. And as God swore long ago to David, His Kingdom will have no end (see Psalm 89:4–5).

In Jesus Christ we have a new creation. Like the creation of the world, it is a work of the Spirit, a blessing from the Lord (see Genesis 1:2). In Him, we are saved from our sins, are called now "the beloved of God."

All nations now are called to belong to Jesus Christ, to enter into the House of David and kingdom of God, the Church. Together, through the obedience of faith, we have been made a new race—a royal people that seeks for the face of the God of Jacob.

He has made our hearts clean; He has made us worthy to enter His holy place, to stand in His presence and serve Him.

In the Eucharist, the everlasting covenant is renewed, the Advent promise of virgin with child—God with us—continues until the end of the age (see Matthew 28:20; Ezekiel 37:24–28).

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