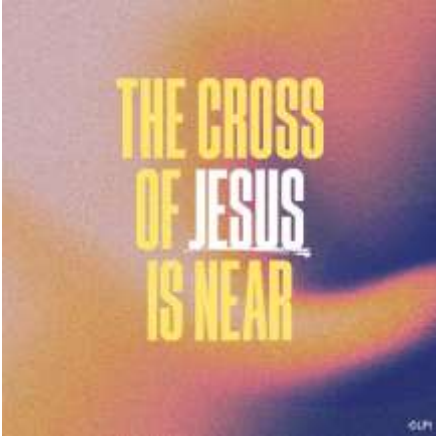


Rejoice in the Lord always



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace and peace to you in our Lord Jesus Christ. In a world filled with anxiety, uncertainty, and the many burdens carried in our hearts, the words of Saint Paul remain as timely today as ever: “Rejoice in the Lord always.” At first hearing these words may seem difficult to embrace. How can we rejoice when we face illness, family struggles, financial worries, loneliness, or the many crosses of daily life?

Saint Augustine offers us the answer: our joy is not rooted in the changing circumstances of this world, but in the unchanging love of God. The world promises happiness through success, possessions, comfort, and recognition. Yet all these things are temporary. They come and go like the seasons. The

joy that Christ offers is different. It is deeper, stronger, and lasting because it rests not on what we possess, but on the One to whom we belong. We belong to Christ.

Saint Augustine reminds us that although the Lord ascended into heaven, He remains close to His people. “The Lord is near; have no anxiety at all.” These words are not merely a pious thought; they are a promise. Christ walks beside us in our struggles, accompanies us in our sorrows, and strengthens us in our weakness.

Through the parable of the Good Samaritan, Augustine teaches that Jesus is the One who bends down to heal wounded humanity. Whenever we are burdened by sin, discouraged by the trials of life, or overwhelmed by uncertainty, Christ does not pass us by. He comes near us. He lifts us up. He pours the healing oil of His mercy upon our wounds and carries us with patient and compassionate love.

More wonderful still, He does not merely rescue us; He makes us members of His family. Through His Death and Resurrection, the Only Begotten Son of God has made us sons and daughters of the Father. This is the source of our deepest joy. We are loved, redeemed, and called to eternal life.

As your pastor, I encourage you to keep your eyes fixed on Christ. Bring your worries to Him in prayer. Seek His presence in the Eucharist. Allow His Word to strengthen your heart. Encourage one another in faith and let our parish become ever more a community where hope is renewed, burdens are shared, and the love of God is made visible.

The world often gives many reasons for discouragement. The Gospel always gives reasons for hope. Let us choose, therefore, the joy that comes from knowing that Christ is with us, Christ is for us, and Christ will never abandon us.

May the God of hope fill your hearts with joy and peace. And may the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, accompany you and your families with her maternal care and intercession.

With gratitude for your faith and with the assurance of my prayers, I remain sincerely yours in Christ,

Father Vilairé Philius
Pastor