

Think Pink!



**Theme:** Joy is found in sharing. The third Sunday of Advent, Yr. C

**Object:** A wrapped Christmas gift

**Scripture:** "What should we do then?" the crowd asked. John answered, "The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same." Luke 3:10-11

Look at this beautiful Christmas gift – did you see all the gifts for Head Start families in the Round Room? We are helping others at Christmas time who may otherwise not receive a present.

I heard about a little boy who checked the presents under the tree every day. As he checked to see if any new presents had been added, he grouped the presents together according to the names on the gifts. Then, after he had them arranged, he counted the gifts.

One day, he discovered that his sister had more gifts under the tree than he did. He became upset and ran into the kitchen where his mother was preparing dinner.

"Katie has more presents under the Christmas tree than I do!" the little boy cried. Then he turned and ran from the room. He went to his room, closed the door, and sat pouting. He couldn't even enjoy the Christmas season because he was so upset that someone else had more gifts under the tree than he did. What that this little boy did not understand was that the real joy of Christmas is not in how many gifts we receive, but in sharing what we have with others. It is better to give than to receive.

God sent John the Baptist to prepare people for the coming of Jesus. He told them to repent of their sins and prepare their hearts for the coming of the promised Messiah.

"What should we do?" they asked.

John answered them, "If you have two coats, give one of them to the one who has none. If you have food, share it with those who have none."

That is the same message we need to hear today as we look forward to Christmas. If we want to experience the real joy that Jesus wants for us, then we must learn to share! By sharing what God has so generously given to us, we will receive an even greater gift -- the gift of joy.

Today we light the third candle on our Advent wreath -- the candle of joy. It is the only pink candle because pink is the color of joy & happiness.

Dear Father, help us to learn that it is in giving that we receive the greater gift -- the gift of joy. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

“Pink” is the stage name of Alecia Beth Moore originally from Doylestown, now international rock star. Pink Floyd is the name of a rock band started in the 60s which has been inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. Pink is a color I enjoy wearing, since only “real men” can wear pink! Pink is also the color of joy, a shimmering, toned down offshoot of red-hot, brilliant in its own right, the official (though debatable) color of femininity – as in blue blankets for boys and pink for girls.

When Advent was considered a penitential season (like Lent), it seemed fitting to the church to have a Sunday within Advent devoted to joy (not just 4 weeks of penance) as a reminder that all things begin with God and will end with God, and there is nothing to fear because God is near. So relax in “exceeding great joy,” as the angels did (Matthew 2:10 KJV), and be reminded that for the faithful all things will work out in the end.

And so both the Old Testament reading and the New Testament epistle reading for today tell of joy, joy in the Lord. “Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem. The LORD has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies.” (Zeph. 3: 14-15) And again, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say Rejoice. . . .Don’t worry about anything . . . .” (Philippians 4:4, 6)

The church named this Sunday “Gaudete” Sunday, Rejoice Sunday, in the midst of the darkness of life. So sing, O daughter Syria, as your children flee your conflict; and rejoice, O son San Bernardino, as parents mourn and children cry for their loved ones. Sound foolish? It may have been the exact feeling experienced by the Israelites under the Assyrians or Babylonians, as Zephaniah told them to “rejoice.” “In what exactly?”, may have been a realistic response. We’re enslaved, what is to be joyful about? The coming time, says Zephaniah. “The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory. [He will care for you, our Rock, our Fortress, our strong Deliverer.]

God likes pink, I think! God likes to offer joy, to promote a better time to come, when the lame and the outcast will praise instead of being made fun of or looked down upon. Lauren Winner says, “No longer are we praying to escape judgment – now we are singing with gladness because, per Zephaniah, ‘The Lord has taken away the judgments’ against us. Now, per Isaiah, we are drawing water from the wells of salvation, trusting God and spurning fear; we are shouting and singing for joy. No longer are we quaking about the Lord’s coming. Rather, per Paul, we are rejoicing in the Lord and practicing gentleness. We do not fear – precisely because the Lord is near.” (Lauren F. Winner in “Living the Word,” The Christian Century, Dec. 9, 2015, p. 20)

There are those who, for whatever reason, are reluctant to rejoice about anything. They hold back maybe as a defense mechanism against the joy turning sour and having to hear an inner voice saying, “See, I told you not to get too happy about anything. You’ll only get hurt in the end, so be stoic, straight-laced, and not too happy, since it will only backfire on you eventually.” Hearing it described makes it sound foolish, but there are those who practice holding back their joy.

A group of missionaries was sent to an African tribe, who celebrated life through dancing. These missionaries told the people in the tribe that once they were baptized they could no longer dance. So those Africans who converted to Christianity became known as “the people who have given up dancing.” How sad. (King Duncan, [www.sermons.com](http://www.sermons.com)) Let the dancing begin for Everett & Mila, who are to be baptized today! For God adopts them as his own and promises them an eternity of companionship if they want it. Praise God! Unleash the joy! God is good and with us forever.

Rejoice in the Lord, then! And what are we to do until Jesus comes again? John the Baptist advises, “If you have 2 coats, give one away, and if you have 2 beef roasts, give one away.” In the meantime, be kind, share, care for ones who need it. And listen for their needs, not your own. Think pink! Praise God with exceeding great joy! For the King of glory comes. Open the gates before him and lift up your voices!

The Rev. Robert E. Mitman