

TRINITY NEWS

WEEK 51. December 15, 2019. ADVENT 3

*Y*ou'll notice that this morning, the third Sunday of Advent, we've lit the pink candle on the Advent wreath. There are several 'readings' of the candles, what they symbolize and so forth, but all of them agree that in some way, the pink candle is a sign of joy. It reminds us that for all its somber trappings, Advent is a deeply joyful season; solemn, restrained, reflective on the surface, but right underneath there's a wild Gloria in Excelsis Deo just waiting to break through.



You can hear it in our Advent hymns – Comfort, Comfort all my people, Hark the Glad Sound, Thy Kingdom Come, some of my favorites, which we are singing today, there's a hint of excitement in them, there is joy in the promise of joy they proclaim, if that makes any sense. That is the sort of joy in which Christians are called to live, a joy born of hope, of trust that in God's good time, all God's promises will be fulfilled.

It was my brief experience as a monk that brought this home to me most vividly. I'll never forget the experience of Advent there. The monastery was in an urban area, so outside its walls commercial Christmas was in full swing. Inside the monastery though, there nothing different, nothing except the music, the hymns antiphons and sequences that could barely contain the inner excitement, their joy, and the tension between the outward purple and the inner gold only grew when the O Antiphons began on the 16th. Yes, every once in a while a brother walk in with Christmas wrapping paper protruding from his shopping bag, and one couldn't help notice ornaments being assembled in the sacristy, and at one point, an unadorned tree suddenly appeared at the back of the Church. But all was very restrained, subdued until right after lunch on the 24th when the place erupted in a frenzy of decoration, and by the time Evensong rolled around, the place was transformed. Christmas Eve had come, the Gloria rang out, and twelve truly joyful days of celebration ensued.

That's been the pattern I've striven to follow ever since.