

Revd Michael Burns  
Christ Church West Wimbledon  
Sermon : December 13th, 2020  
“Third Sunday of Advent”

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**ADVENT 3, 2020**

All too quickly, here we are in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent – and our third candle is lit. It's the one which is always rose coloured – because today is traditionally referred to as Gaudete Sunday. Throughout Advent our theme is one of prayer, penance and preparation for the feast of Christmas as well as for the second coming of Christ. Today, however, the themes of penance are suspended in order for us to remember that joy and gladness in the promised Saviour who is to be born. Gaudete is the Latin for 'Rejoice' and it refers to the opening line of the opening introit in ancient texts, which translate as "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near". It's the Advent equivalent of the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent which is called 'Refreshment Sunday and usually also celebrated as Mothering Sunday. So today is a short pause in the middle of our penance. In his 2014 Gaudete Sunday homily, Pope Francis said that this Sunday is known as the "Sunday of Joy", and that instead of fretting about "all they still haven't" done to prepare for Christmas, people should "think of all the good things life has given you and remember that the Lord is near". In a similar vein, Paul writes to the Thessalonians to instruct them in their vocation – the three things they should do: 'rejoice, pray, give thanks'. And John the Baptist is clear about the task to which he is called: to point away from himself and toward the one who is to come for Jesus Christ who is Lord.

Today we pause to remember that, despite everything that we face in our world today, many of us still have much to be thankful for, to be joyful about – not least the strong belief that we try to hold at the centre of our lives – that **Jesus Christ is Lord.**

Those four words – **Jesus Christ is Lord** – are words I hope you will remember in the coming days. It's a simple phrase that has encouraged Christians down the centuries and goes on doing so today.

I found this recently which might help us today and for the rest of the Advent season:

*When faced with difficult problems and decisions – Jesus Christ is Lord.*

*When faced with all the anxieties of our everyday lives, at work, at home –  
Jesus Christ is Lord.*

*When faced with the need to show gratitude and great thankfulness – Jesus  
Christ is Lord.*

*When faced with the need for calmness and serenity and peace – Jesus Christ  
is Lord.*

*When faced with illness or approaching death – Jesus Christ is Lord.*

*When faced with the madness of December, say to yourself – Jesus Christ is  
Lord.*