

Weekly Devotion – Advent 3

The Will to Dream: Joy That Notices

Scripture

“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for God has looked with favor on the lowliness of God’s servant.”

Luke 1:46–48

Joy does not always announce itself loudly. Sometimes it arrives quietly, disguised as being noticed.

Mary’s song rises not from ease or certainty, but from a holy moment of recognition. God sees her—not her potential, not her usefulness, not her future reputation—but her lowliness, her vulnerability, her real life. And from that place, joy begins to grow.

This week, joy looks less like celebration and more like dignity restored.

It looks like a senior holding a grocery box and realizing there is also a gift inside.

It looks like a woman wondering if she is allowed to buy herself slippers—warm, soft, meant only for her—and learning that yes, she is.

It looks like Mary standing in Elizabeth’s doorway, hearing her name spoken with honor, feeling the leap of joy that comes from being seen.

Mary’s joy is not denial. It is resistance.

She does not pretend the world is safe or fair. She does not minimize the risks she faces. Instead, she trusts that God’s dream is unfolding even here, even now, even through her. Her song reminds us that joy is not something we wait for after everything is fixed. Joy is something God plants within us so we can endure, imagine, and participate in what is still becoming.

Gaudete Sunday invites us to practice noticing joy the way Shug Avery describes in *The Color Purple*: paying attention to the beauty we are tempted to walk past. Joy shows up when we slow down enough to recognize it. When we honor it. When we receive it without apology.

This week, let joy be gentle. Let it be small. Let it be real.

Let joy be the reminder that God sees you, exactly as you are, and is still dreaming a future filled with mercy, justice, and hope.

A Practice for the Week

Once each day, pause and ask yourself: *Where did I notice joy today?* It might be a warm drink, a kind word, a moment of laughter, a quiet comfort, or a gift you didn't expect. Write it down or whisper a prayer of thanks. These small moments train our hearts to recognize God's dream unfolding in real time.

Closing Prayer

Holy One, help us notice the joy you place in our path. Teach us to receive it without guilt and share it without fear. May the joy that rose in Mary rise in us—steady, brave, and full of hope. Amen.