Advent 3

MDP of God

Today we celebrate Gaudete Sunday—Gaudete means **Rejoice**

 We rejoice because the time of Christ’s coming is drawing nearer

Now during Advent---there are two focuses---we of course are getting ready to celebrate Jesus’ 1st coming –when He was born in humble circumstances—when He was born in a stable—when He was born in a country that was occupied by a tyrannical Empire—when He was born in a world filled with darkness *in order to bring God’s light*

----------------------------------------------------------------------------

Our 2nd focus during the season of Advent—is that Jesus will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead

And in last Sunday’s 2nd reading from St Peter---Peter said we can “hasten the day”--- by our lives—/// by our seeking to live by the Will of God---by our conforming ourselves to God’s Wisdom---*we can hasten the day when Jesus comes again and ushers in the fullness of His Kingdom*

Obviously—the Kingdom is here in the Church—*but it’s unfolding—*the fullness of the Kingdom while it’s present in heaven right now---it will come to earth with the coming of Jesus in Glory—*and St Peter says you and I can hasten the day*

-------------------------------------------------

My friends—I think it’s important to understand that in the history of salvation---every 500 years or so---something really significant happens

 2,000 years before Jesus—God called Abraham

500 years later—we hear of the call of Moses---and Moses led his people out of slavery and led them to the Promised Land

500 years after that—we have the call of King David and his being succeeded by his son Solomon—whose the original “son of David”—a title that Jesus takes------and Solomon –the original son of David--builds the Temple

500 years after that the city of Jerusalem is conquered—*the Temple is destroyed*—and the people are sent into exile

500 years after that ---*we have the climax of salvation history*—when Jesus –God in the flesh—the long awaited Savior---the King of kings and Lord of lords---- comes into the world

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

500 years after that—we have the start of Islam---a religion that denies God’s revelation----it explicitly denies the Divinity of Jesus---it explicitly condemns the idea of the Trinity---that God is a community of love

 It calls the idea of you and me being children of God—**blasphemy**

 So Islam is designed to reject the very revelation of God

500 years after that we have the great schism---*where the Eastern Church and the Western Church split*

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

500 years after that we have the Protestant reformation---where Christianity is further split

Again ---*Jesus came into the world to unite us*---**to unite us in truth**---now there are roughly 40,000 different churches--- none of whom agree with each other on what the “Truth” is—*the truth that Jesus died on the cross to reveal to us*------just ushering chaos into the Body of Christ—**and bringing so much division-**--*the very opposite of what Jesus came to do*

Now we’ve reached another one of those 500 year marks

 And things have been unfolding for roughly 100 years now

We had WWI---then the Great depression—then WWII—then the cold war—we’ve had the rise of radical Islam--there have been so many skirmishes and out right wars all over the world

And like several of the other 500 year increments---they didn’t happen out of the blue with no run up to it

For instance--obviously with Moses---God’s people went into Egypt 400 years before Moses---then they became slaves---*then God called Moses*

It would appear that God has been getting reading for something big---in the 1850’s Jesus sent His Mother to Lourdes, France

In the 1900’s—In 1917 to be precise—Jesus sent His Mother to Fatima, Portugal

And Mary gave the children of Fatima a glimpse of hell---and they were so terrified by what they saw—*they constantly did fasting for what they called “poor sinners”*---because the children loved the ones they called “poor sinners”—and wanted to try to help bring them to salvation

------------------------------------------------------------------------------

I know I often think of those children---because when I see people doing terrible things—especially people I believe are trying to lead our country in the wrong direction---I don’t usually think---“oh those poor sinners”

But that is the attitude that God wants us to have

And God doesn’t want us to hate people—He wants us to love them—to pray for them—to even do fasting for their benefit---like the children of Fatima

 Mary had told them their fasting and prayers –could save people

Similar to St Peter in the bible telling us that “we can hasten the day”—so our actions matter

And Mary said---that God would be acting in some definitive manner in about 100 years—that was in 1917

-----------------------------------------------------------------

And throughout the last century or so—there have been a lot of private revelations---to people like St Faustina—Blessed Louisa Piccarreta

 Emphasizing Divine Mercy and living in the Divine Will

Marian apparitions were rare in the 1st 10 centuries of the Church---they were still pretty rare the next nine centuries---but in the 20th century---there was an explosion of Marian apparitions---reportedly 1045 different apparitions throughout the world

Besides Fatima—one of the best known apparitions is in Medjugorje- which started in June of 1981---so it’s been going on for almost 40 years—*Mary’s main message there is the need for prayer*—for fasting—for regular confession—and frequent reception of Holy Communion

My friends—so many of these messages are telling us to do what St John the Baptist was telling people in his day—““Prepare the way of the Lord,make straight his paths.”

We’ve reached another one of those 500 year intervals---all indications are that God is about to do something big---very big

 And we can hasten the day as St Peter told us last week

It’s certainly very possible that whatever God does will include some chastisements

So what should our attitude be? If there are chastisements coming should we be dreading the day and shaking in fear?

**Absolutely not**---because we know----whatever happens---Jesus Christ has won the victory

The bible promises that God will make all things work out right in the end for those who love Him---so love Him and things will turn out well

----------------------------------------------

So we should be looking forward to whatever God has in store--- we should face the future with confidence knowing that Jesus has won the victory and that He will make all things work out right in the end for those who love Him

We should –as St Peter told us last week—*we should be trying to hasten the day-*--**by seeking to live in the Divine Will**

It would be advisable to be praying and fasting for those who have rejected God—those who ignore His truth---those who are on the path toward destruction---because as Mary told the children in Fatima---our prayers and fasting can lead to some of them being saved

So I’d encourage you to be praying for and fasting for people in your family who have wandered away from the faith

And of course –*we want to do what we can do to grow in holiness*---we need to be praying—we need to be fasting—we need to be going to confession—we need to receive Holy Communion regularly

*Because being in God’s good graces*—**we can look forward to the Day** with confidence—with joy—with hope

In fact we should be following St Paul’s advice from today’s 2nd reading when he said---“Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing.
In all circumstances give thanks,
for this is the will of God for you

My friends---I really believe something big is coming---I think sooner rather than later---*and you and I can hasten the day---*and no matter what happens---you and I can look forward with hope---because Jesus promises that He will make all things work out right in the end for those who love Him---Amen? Amen