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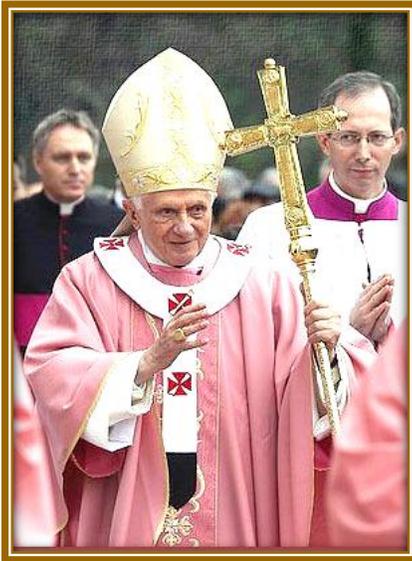
✠ A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR ✠

16 DECEMBER 2018

## AN ANGELUS MESSAGE OF POPE BENEDICT XVI

*Third Sunday of Advent, 14 December 2008*

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*



This Sunday, the Third Sunday in the Season of Advent, is called "*Gaudete Sunday*": "rejoice", because the Entrance Antiphon of Holy Mass takes up Saint Paul's words in the Letter to the Philippians where it says: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, Rejoice". And immediately after he explains the reason, because "The Lord is at hand" (Phil 4: 4-5). This is the reason for joy. But what does "the Lord is at hand" mean? In what sense must we understand this "closeness" of God? The Apostle Paul, writing to the Christians of Philippi, is evidently thinking of Christ's return and invites them to rejoice because it is certain. Yet, Saint Paul in his Letter to the Thessalonians, warns that no one can know the moment of the Lord's coming (cf. 1 Thes 5: 1-2) and puts people on guard against any kind of alarmism, as if Christ's return were imminent (cf. 2 Thes 2: 1-2). Thus the Church, illumined by the Holy Spirit, already at that time understood increasingly better that **God's "closeness" is not a question of space and time but rather of love: love brings people together!** (emphasis added). This coming Christmas will remind us of this fundamental truth of our faith and in front of the manger we shall be able to savour Christian joy contemplating in the newborn Jesus the Face of God Who made Himself close to us out of love.

### STEWARDSHIP APPEAL PRAYER

**One Small Step for a Parishioner, One Giant Leap for a Parish!**

**Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,**

**I come to You in Thanksgiving, knowing that all that I am and all that I have are gifts from You. Teach me to be generous as You have been generous with me. I offer to You this day all the facets of my life, whether at home, at work or at school – to be patient, to be merciful, to be generous and to be holy.**

**Keep me mindful that as Your disciple, I am called through the Holy Spirit, to be an instrument of dramatic missionary growth, radically faithful to participation in the Sunday Mass, deeply to the presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, and courageous in living the truths of our Faith and sharing the "Good News" with the world.**

**Make us One Family in Mission so that together, we may ignite our Church with the joy of the Gospel.**

**Amen.**