

*“Exhorting them in many other ways, he preached the good news to the people.”*

## SONG

Well, certainly that song rings true today after the evil and tragic events we have experienced this past week in the mall in Oregon and two days ago in the school in Connecticut.

And on this Gaudete Sunday, when we come together to celebrate the joy of God’s coming into our presence in the person of Jesus, we can wonder

Where is the good news? Where is God’s presence in all of this suffering and grief?

As we look to the Scriptures to give us an answer, we hear in our first reading that, despite the Israelites anxieties over all the bad news around them.

Zephaniah’s message for them is to break into song. He tells them not to be discouraged because God **IS** their midst.

St. Paul tells the Philippians to have no anxiety, God is near.

And in the Gospel, John the Baptist preaches the good news that God is present in the person of Jesus, the much awaited Messiah.

Yet still, the very natural and human question in our time is “Where is God’s presence here and now?”

Well, our joy and consolation is that we know and believe that God came to us in the presence of Jesus.

He promised to be with us until the end of time, and that He will come again.

The Lord is in our midst and the Lord is near.

In many ways the holy season of Advent is a time in which we **celebrate the nearness of God**.

We wait with eager anticipation to rejoice in our God of coming near to us in a profound way --- in the person of Jesus.

Yet, we don’t rejoice simply for the fact God visited us long ago.

No, we rejoice in our God **who continues to be near**, to be in our midst, to be **closer to us than we are to ourselves** closer than we could ever imagine.

We come here and now to experience and receive His Real Presence in the Eucharist. And when we receive the Body and Blood,

**He does not become part of us, we become part of Him.**

Knowing and believing that, we become His presence in the world preaching the good news.

When we offer consolation and hope to the discouraged and depresses, we preach the good news of Jesus.

When we look for the good in our friends and acquaintances, we spread the good news.

When we seek to improve the situation of the poor and persecuted, we bring the good news of hope.

Those who strive to overcome division among family and friends, express the good news of Christ's love for all.

When we live out our faith in our daily jobs and in the circumstances in which we find ourselves, just by our examples, we proclaim the good news.

In the words of Blessed Jose Escriva, "Any honest and worthwhile work can be converted into a divine occupation. In God's service, there are no second class jobs. All of them are important."

So, looking back at the past events, at any given moment, there can be all sorts of worries, large and small, lurking in the shadows of our minds, waiting to steal our joy.

Countless "what-ifs" seize our imaginations and terrify us about things that may or may not happen.

Memories of past mistakes steal our confidence and dash our hopes for the future.

However, if we believe what we say about God being present to us and holding us in the palm of his hand.

Confidence and joy should be the hallmarks of our lives, come what may.

And gratitude for the love that fills our lives should impel us to share what we have.

and what we are without any expectation of return - not just on Christmas, but every day of our lives.

Because the world, as the singer says, does need a little Good News today and everyday.

Why not us, to be the ones to deliver it.