

**Gaudete Sunday**

**Rejoice!**

**I asked myself on Friday**

**What do you say on Gaudete Sunday after what happened  
in Connecticut?**

**How does one speak of rejoicing in the face of crazy?**

**How do you speak of rejoicing when these things happen?  
When human wisdom cannot make sense of a tragedy like this?**

**There is the key**

**When human reason fails**

**Divine wisdom picks up**

**Why did this happen?**

**These things seem to happen more and more**

**Whether it is a large event like this**

**Or the Batman movie shooting**

**Or a smaller scale**

**Like the 2 young girls in Iowa found 2 weeks ago**

**Or whether it is something none of us ever know**

**Because it is not reported**

**Or because it happened to someone in a third world nation**

**And the media does not deem it newsworthy**

**Or whether it happens to millions each year**

**But our society has declared them non-humans  
They are a zygote or a blot of tissue or a fetus  
Anything but a person  
A child of God, created at conception with a human soul  
And we don't talk about abortion because it doesn't concern  
'me'  
So why did this happen  
If there is an all-powerful God  
Why does he allow this?  
If He can see everything for all time  
Why create someone that would do something like this?  
Wouldn't it be better if he never existed?  
These questions and countless more  
Asked by faithful Christian believers  
Asked by religious non-Christians  
And atheists and agnostics as well  
Because evil affects every one of us  
It has from the beginning  
Even in paradise  
The serpent was allowed to slither along  
Tempting Adam and Eve  
Until our first parents fell  
God did not create a bunch of slaves**

**He created sons and daughters**

**He gives us the choice to say no**

**So our yes will be a response of love**

**For Him and for our fellow brothers and sisters in this world**

**No matter where they live**

**No matter how small they may be**

**No matter how frail they may become**

**So we see evil offers us a choice to respond in love**

**It is part of the Mystery of life**

**In Sacred Scripture we often see God intervening in human  
affairs**

**We see him sending droughts and famine**

**We see Him affecting armies and battles**

**Why in one instance and not in another?**

**The Book of Job can shed light on this**

**This is a treatise on evil in the world**

**And for much of it, Job is left alone**

**God seems withdrawn**

**Even its conclusion is somewhat lacking**

**For evil is a problem that goes beyond our understanding**

**We are incapable of seeing the depths of evil**

**It goes beyond human understanding**

**It goes beyond any human resolve to fix it as well  
No law or ordinance will prevent these things from happening**

**There are no simple answers**

**There really is nothing that can be said in response to a  
particular instance**

**Because anything we say leaves questions**

***God wanted another angel in heaven***

***Or they're in a better place now***

**Or other things we say**

**These things mean well**

**But they leave more questions than answers**

**So how do we respond?**

**St. Paul can help us**

**He tells us to rejoice! Rejoice in the Lord**

**Rejoice and joy?**

**Yes, because he is not speaking about our human emotions  
in current events**

**Paul writes this letter from jail**

**He is a condemned man**

**Awaiting capital punishment himself**

**For nothing more than being a disciple of Christ**

**For speaking out about the truth**

**And it will cost him his life**

**He is writing to a group of people being persecuted**

**He is not telling them to rejoice in the happiness of life**

**But that true happiness**

**True joy can come even in the midst of terrible suffering**

**True joy comes from our faith in Jesus Christ**

**That our God will come as a savior**

**Standing in His grace eliminates all anxiety**

**We are not called to rely on our strengths and resourcefulness**

**We are called to rely on our relationship with God**

**On His strength and peace in our hearts**

**This strength and peace goes beyond all human understanding**

**It transcends anything that we can comprehend**

**This peace kind of acts as a sentinel over human actions**

**Over things in the world**

**It comes from God**

**And this is why we rejoice**

**So what are we to do?**

**The same thing John told those that asked him**

**Look at our particular state in life and our occupation**

**Married or single or religious**

**Whether we are a professional or a day laborer**

**A housewife or a student**

**An employer or employee**

**Look at your particular situation**

**Act with justice**

**And repent**

**Be generous with time and possessions**

**Support those that are suffering and in anguish**

**Pray for them and for ourselves**

**Develop that relationship with Christ**

**Make room in our hearts for him**

**And rejoice that we do not have a God that came to explain**

**Christ did not come to prove himself to us**

**He came to offer himself to us**

**To give us the chance to respond with an act of faith**

**To believe**

**He came to walk with us**

**He himself took on the most severe of all human suffering**

**He offers us himself as the remedy to sin**

**When these things happen, there is no simple answer**

**There is only the Mystery**

**The Mystery of God becoming man**

**Submitting to human injustice and suffering himself**

**The Mystery of the invitation to join in this suffering ourselves**

**Not for the pain**

**But for the Mystery of being united to God**

**Following the Way, the Truth and the Life**

**And despite anything the world or sin can throw in our path**

**Rejoice! Rejoice always in the Lord!**