



Draw Close to God and He
Will Draw Close to You:
Rejoice!

LENTEN REFLECTION FOR THE TASTE PROGRAM – MARCH 16TH, 2023

Opening Prayer

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Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:4-7)

Draw Close to God and He will Draw Close to You

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- ▶ *Feb 23rd - Return to Me: turning to the Lord*
- ▶ *March 2nd - Be Converted: All about “conversion”.*
- ▶ *March 9th - Detest Your Sins: Seeing our sins for what they are.*
- ▶ *March 16th – Rejoice: A break from the heavy topic of sin. It’s time for joy.*
- ▶ *March 23rd – From Death to Life: A deeper look at death and life.*
- ▶ *March 30th – Embracing the Cross: That’s right we’re going to embrace our cross, not just carry it. I’m not trying to one-up Jesus, but when we see our cross for what it really is, we won’t want to ever put it down.*

A Brief Recap

- *Awareness of sins bring contrition – a heart broken to pieces lying on the ground – there arises a Godly Sorrow that causes us to turn to God. God's grace abundantly flows, and we respond to that grace.*
- *This leads to conversion. (Repentance happens in a moment, but conversion is ongoing, a sustained act of faith.)*
- *We grow more in love with God, see Him more for who He is. In humility we see ourselves more for who we are. We are being transformed; we are being converted. Jesus reveals us to ourselves!*
- *A converted heart informed by church teaching sees sin as detestable.*
- *Sin darkens the mind, distorts the will, and suffocates the heart.*
- *Sin tries to make us like Satan*

Sin Drags Us Down to Hell

Eternal Death – Exclusion from communion with God



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Tadeo Escalante

Jesus Triumphs Over Sin & Death

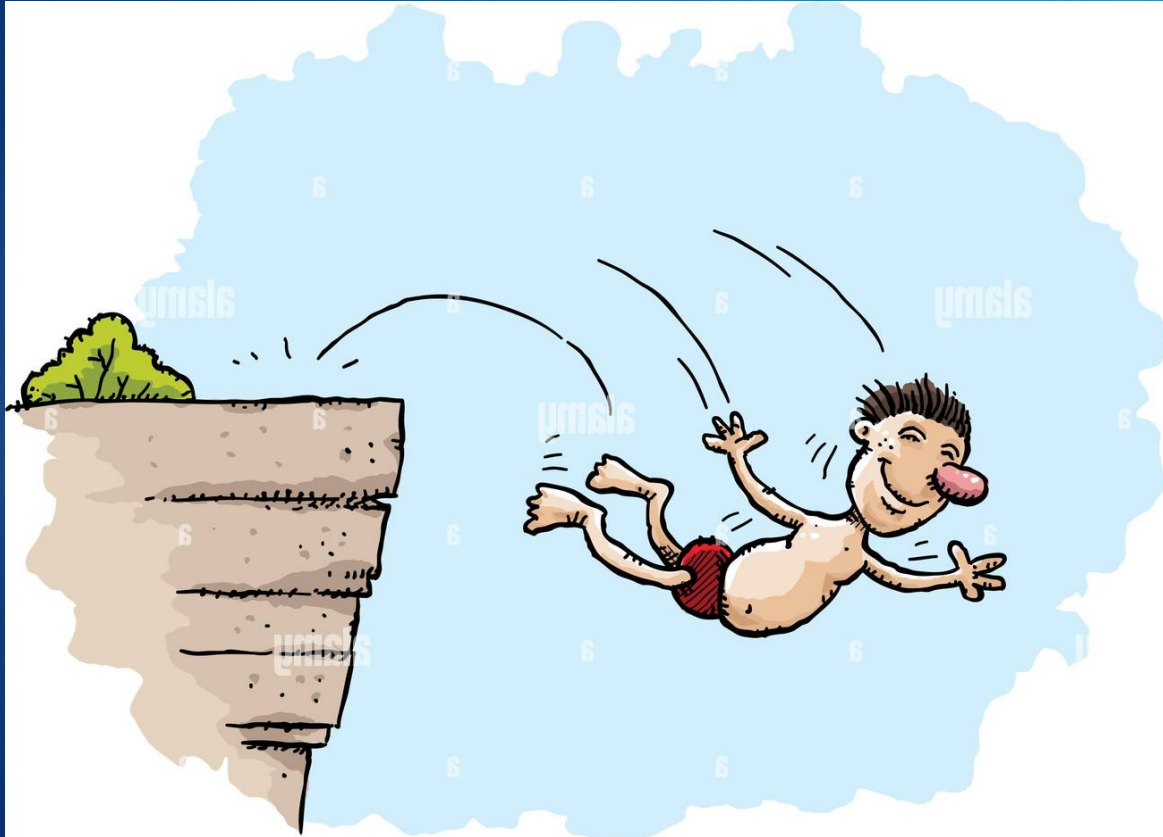
**Eternal Life – Communion
with God in Heaven**



Gustave Doré

His Salvation is Superabundant

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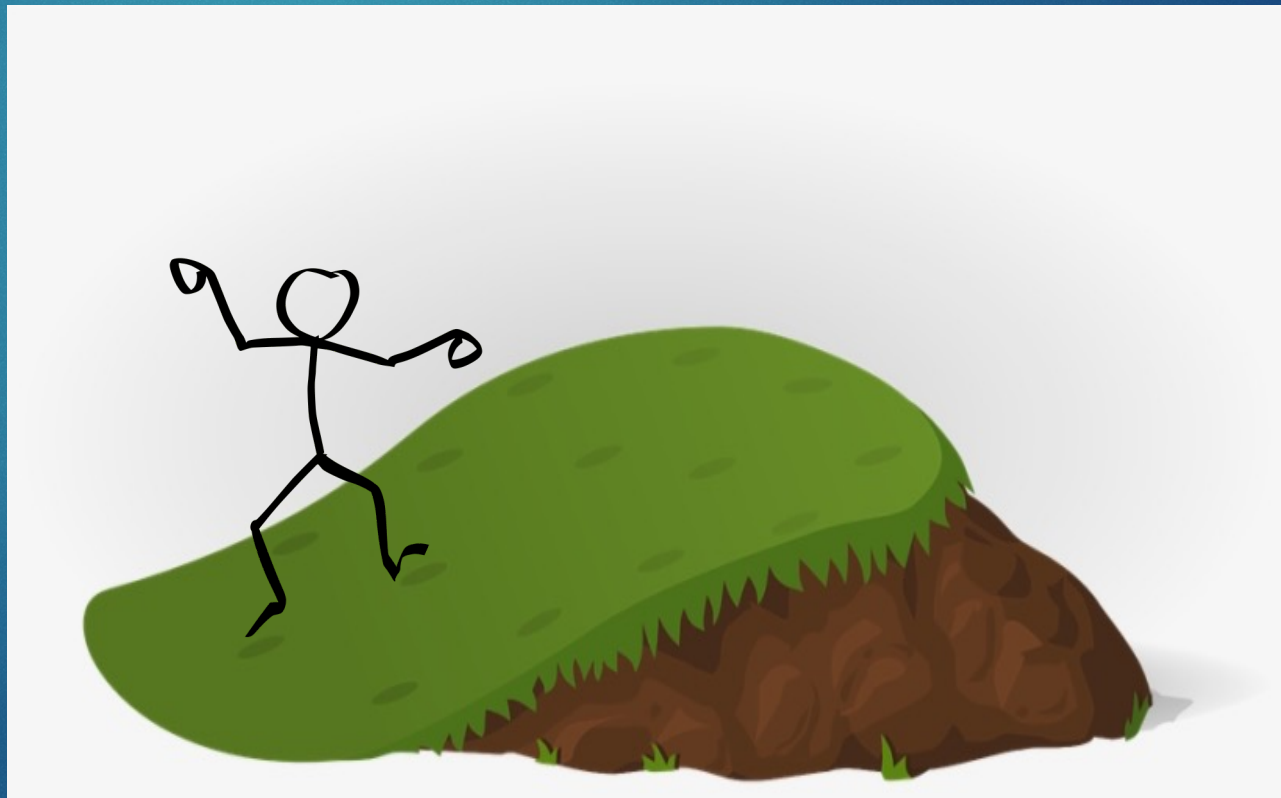


Man thinks he is doing the best thing. But in the original sin, he falls from grace.

His Salvation is Superabundant

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Human nature is
wounded by the
fall. Man has an
appetite for sin.



His Salvation is Superabundant

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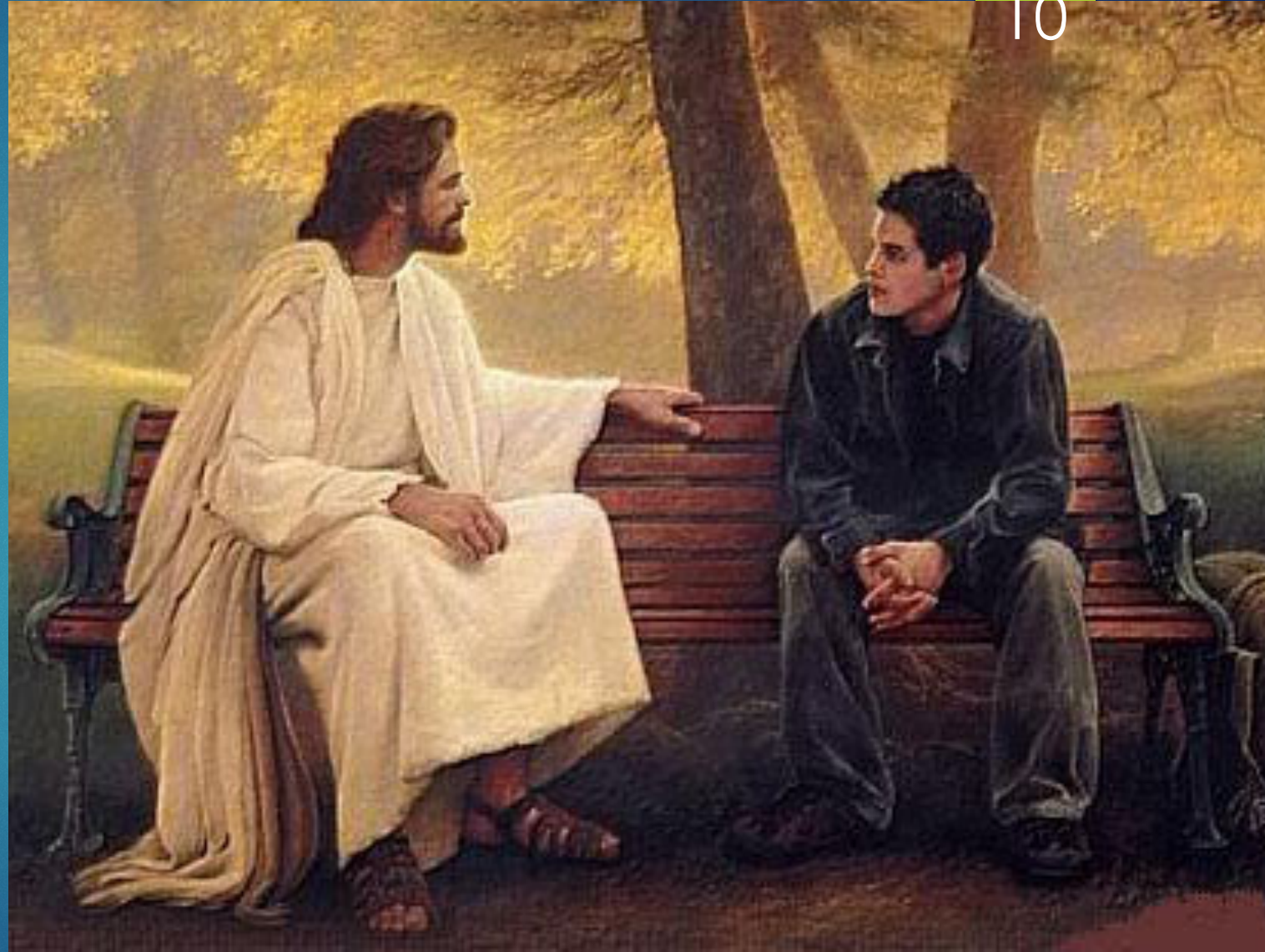
In heaven, we are given more
than what was lost in Eden.

Human nature is restored AND
humanity shares in the divine
nature



Knowing Our Ultimate End Fills Us With Joy

**Life to the fullest. Eternal life in
intimate friendship with Jesus.
Partakers of the divine nature.**



What is our response?

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- ▶ **Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice!** Your kindness should be known to all. **The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all**, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then **the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.** (Philippians 4:4-7)
- ▶ Rejoicing is a response. It is an expression of our underlying Joy.

Where Does our Joy Come From

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- ▶ Joy is a fruit of the Spirit.
 - ▶ the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. (cf. Gal 5:22f)
- ▶ [The virtue of] Hope ... affords us joy even under trial: "Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation" (cf. CCC 1820)
- ▶ The fruits [of the virtue] of charity are joy, peace, and mercy (cf. CCC 1829)

How do we express our joy with those around us?

- ▶ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. (Rom 12:15)
- ▶ Something I constantly notice is that unembarrassed joy has become rarer ... When someone rejoices, he is afraid of offending against solidarity with the many people who suffer. ... There is a moral attitude at work here. But this attitude is nonetheless wrong. The loss of joy does not make the world better. (“Salt of the Earth: the Church at the End of the Millennium”, Ratzinger)

Expressing our joy (continued)

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- ▶ we struggle to express joy because we feel guilty when we do. ... The world needs people who discover the good, who rejoice in it and thereby derive the impetus and courage to do good. Joy, then, does not break with solidarity. When it is the right kind of joy, when it is not egotistic, when it comes from the perception of the good, then it wants to communicate itself, and it gets passed on ("Salt of the Earth: the Church at the End of the Millennium", Ratzinger)
- ▶ **Your joy is not just for you!**

Don't get confused. Authentic joy is from God alone

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- ▶ There is a kind of worldly happiness that exists only apart from suffering. This kind of happiness seeks wealth, fame, power, or any form of human achievement (however beneficial it may be) (cf. CCC 1723)
- ▶ True happiness is found in God alone (cf. CCC 1723)
- ▶ "Joy is a net of love by which you can catch souls. A joyful heart is the inevitable result of a heart burning with love. Never let anything so fill you with sorrow as to make you forget the joy of Christ risen." (St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta, "The Joy in Loving: A Guide to Daily Living")
- ▶ One filled with joy preaches without preaching. (Attributed to Mother Teresa)

Summary

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- ▶ Jesus triumphs over sin and death.
- ▶ His salvation is overflowing with superabundant grace.
- ▶ Our response is to rejoice – to express our joy.
- ▶ Joy is a fruit of the Spirit
- ▶ Rightly expressing our joy, we rejoice with those who rejoice, and we weep with those who weep.
- ▶ Authentic joy is from God alone.
- ▶ **Your joy is not just for you!**

Questions?