

Mary and Bob often find themselves sharing common ground when it comes to philosophy and ministry. When approaching ministerial concerns from different angles, *He said - She said* is a venue to share differing perspectives. *WE said* reflects some mutual food for thought.

(And then again, sometimes we're exactly on the same page – just sayin' – *Bob*)

He Said – She Said – WE SAID: Rejoice!

Bob and Mary's Perspective:

Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing.

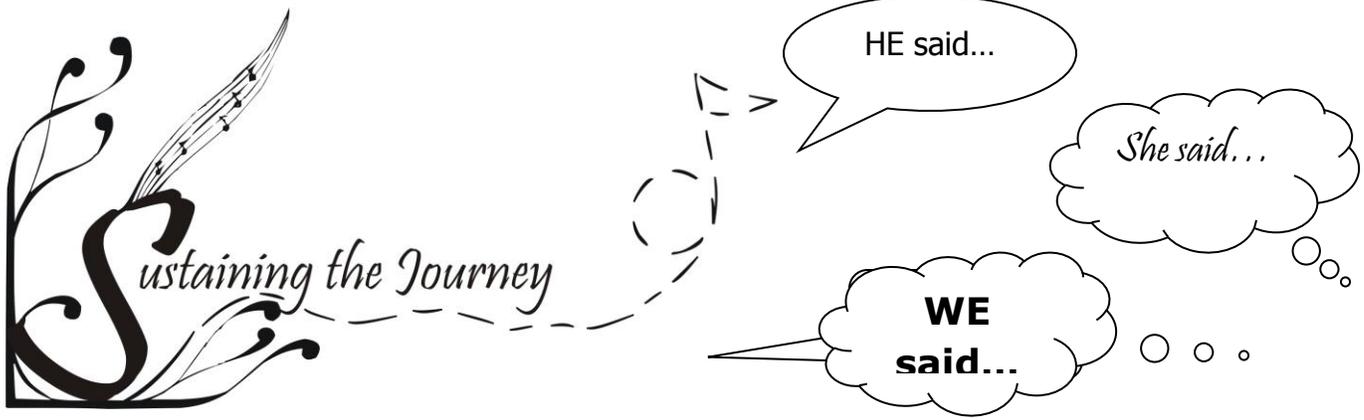
In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.

I Thessalonians 5:16-18

Those words are the beginning of the second reading on this year's Third Sunday of Advent – Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete, meaning Rejoice! It's a timely reminder for us all, especially as we close out "The Year of the Mask."

We've written many blogs filled with suggestions of how to improve our lives, how to find balance and be more intentional, and even how to function effectively as ministers. Today, as Christmas approaches, we focus on joy. While 2020 has certainly posed challenges, it has also been abundant with blessings. We encourage you to consider yours – here are a few of ours, just to get you started:

- We both were able to take short but wonderful road trips, to southern Ohio and central Illinois, amidst the glorious colors of fall foliage.
- The lockdown and subsequent return to public worship have enabled much better balance in our lives, an end to 70-hour work weeks, more quality time with family and friends, and lots of opportunities for long walks in the park.
- Beaches along Lake Erie and trails in the Metroparks around and between both of our homes are beautiful, accessible, and have been a source of many philosophical debates as we literally wore out multiple pairs of shoes.
- The pandemic encouraged us to grow in a number of ways: technologically, musically, and spiritually. We have learned how to facilitate remote learning, conquered live-streaming Mass, honed our musical skills through increased practice, and developed a better appreciation for the ritual of liturgy.



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- We have come to a deeper appreciation of liturgical texts and acclamations through recitation (i.e. the Gloria and the Sanctus) – and enjoy some of the texts that aren't often heard at Sunday Mass (i.e. the prayers during the preparation of the gifts).
 - Remote learning has facilitated “bonus time” with teenagers who would have otherwise been away from home.
 - Even the losses of loved ones have given us reason to appreciate their lives and provided some direction to our prayer and planning.
 - We have written music, worked on writing a book, and played organ/piano/keyboard/guitar/ukulele for fun, besides work!
 - We have been encouraged by the positive feedback to our blogs and our ministry, and experienced grace directly because of you, our readers, parishioners, and friends.
 - We have recognized all the more how important relationships are in our lives. This time of isolation has strengthened our resolve to stay connected.

We are so grateful for these opportunities, and for blessings unseen, unrecognized, or yet to be revealed. Know that we appreciate you, our family and friends, and continue to hold you in prayer. May we all persistently rejoice into 2021, and may the New Year be filled with much grace. Merry Christmas!