Homily by Rev. Robert Schramm, OSFS
Third Sunday in Advent, 2016

Imagine that for some unknown reason
you've been thrown inside a huge rocket ship,
are inescapably strapped into a seat in that rocket,
it is beginning to take off
and you have no idea where that spaceship is headed.

Imagine how that would feel for a moment.
Here are some feelings that come to my mind:
  helpless, terrified, out of control, confused, disoriented, overwhelmed

Lots of reason to believe the world we live in is that spaceship.
Let's name just a few:

• Mass migrations the world over force us to rub shoulders with folks
different than we are. White folks will be a minority of this country's
population within 30 years.

• Computers and technology are shaping our thinking and our lives
  in ways and at a speed we are barely able to keep track of.
  My brother-in-law had robotic surgery. Surgeon was never closer than 10
  feet away.

• Our Church has moved from being chiefly administered by European clerics
to a Church pastored and even administered by highly qualified lay people,
both men and women.

• We may be on a crash course with an environmental catastrophe in which
  millions of lives will be in jeopardy.

In light of all this I think there is a great temptation
to ask the same question of Jesus
those people sent by John asked:
"Are you the one who is to come, or are we to look for another?"
Are you the Messiah we need or should we look somewhere else?

This isn't at all what we were expecting a Messiah to look like, act like, be like. Jesus is too much like what I see when I stand in front of a mirror.

So could that possibly mean I'm supposed to be helping the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, the dumb speak, the outcasts be welcomed, the dead raised and the poor hear good news?

Even when it seems like the whole world is falling apart.

Many of us here have had the privilege of teaching young people. We've seen eyes and ears opened, people find a voice to speak their truth, people freed up not only to walk, but to dance with life.

Isn't it true that all of our daily personal encounters are either at least little bit healing or a little bit poisonous?

There is an immense challenge in remaining faithful for the long haul, trusting that God is working things out, even by using people whose failings I see and whose foibles can disturb me — including my own failings and foibles.

Sometimes we experience our own lives as being barren as a wilderness and as parched as a desert. During those trying times it may be hard for us to be glad and rejoice when we are struggling, scared, confused, disoriented.

That's why it's important to return here again and again. This is where we come to have hope re-instilled. To remember that we are never alone.

We are strapped into our place on this spaceship called Earth. No escaping.

Traditionally this is called “Gaudete Sunday” – Latin for “rejoice.”
We dearly need Gaudete Sunday . . . and Laetare Sunday in Lent . . . every Sunday.

In the midst of this very perilous journey Jesus promised **us** a partner, the Holy Spirit.

He prays for our unity.