

Let us forsake sin and greet with joy it reads in the collect.
Now that sounds easy .. but as we all know .. joy is not always so easy to find, especially when we, as it reads in Baruch, wear the garment of sorrow and affliction.

Its hard to feel joyful when we are afflicted/troubled by all sorts of things.
How can we break through to the Christmas spirit when we feel sad and lonely?

Joy is not something we can pursue or switch on like the light switch. Joy is something that ensues after we worked our way through from a state of sin into a state of Grace.

Sin is a state/place where we are when we do not allow God to help us ... it's a place where we often are stuck .. and its almost like not being able to take off the garments of sorrow and affliction as hard as we may try.

The way out of this state of being is the art of practicing Love. What Love means is what God shows us in Jesus Christ. The moment we turn toward this Love we move almost unnoticed from a state of sin into a state of Grace and this state of Grace is where Love abounds.(Tillich)

To forsake sin is nothing else than allowing God to help us. The birth of Jesus is God's action towards us, a promise to help us and a promise to save us. That is the action God took towards us, expressing his Love towards us in the birth of Jesus to show us: How Love is done.. what it means to Love .. what Love is capable of ... and what power Love has.
- Christ/Love wants to be born in us.

All this comes from God to us in the birth of Jesus and his resurrection as Christ. This is transformation .. the same transformation that brings us out of sorrow and affliction into Love and Joy.

Joy follows in the wake of Love, it springs forth wherever Love takes place.

So how do we take those garments of sorrow and affliction off?
We simply ask God for help and let God take it from there. Yes it is that simple and soo difficult at the same time.

Have you ever noticed what happens when we feel bad ...really bad ..

We usually hide and make sure we don't tell anyone about our deepest problems and issues. We curl up and show the world our back. Or we get angry and show others in this way our back .. and so on .. and it often seems that the more we are in the pit the more we hide the less we show others where we are.. and especially not to God .. because that would be embarrassing .. or shameful .. so we do not dare to ask
And then it all gets worse.

And that are the garments of sorrow and affliction Baruch speaks about.
Take them off he says! Take them off!

There is nothing we can not bring to God, nothing is too good or too bad.
Nothing is too small or too large, too beautiful or ugly.
Nothing is too shameful or embarrassing!

Jesus showed us how to do that and that is to ask God for help!
- And even that asking for help God does for us in the birth of Jesus Christ. -

Asking God for help is entering a state of Grace where Love abounds!

Asking God for help allows that, 'through the tender compassion of God the dawn from on high shall break upon us' (Luke) ... to guide us into the way of peace.

And in that peace, in that Love of God .. Joy takes place; enough joy for all of us to see the salvation of God which is the birth of Christ in us!

Amen!