

ENCOURAGEMENT **ENCOURAGEMENT**

August 2023 – Issue 145

Joy...

There is a well-used hymn often sung at children's celebrations starting with the words: **'Give me Joy in my heart keep me praising, give me Joy in my heart I pray, give me Joy in my heart keep me praising, keep me praising till the end of day'**. We are now, in the northern hemisphere, in summertime, a time when there is a focus on outdoor activities and holidays. As ever there are 'end of term' school celebrations, and the usual activities of everyday life that many would classify as joyful: Celebrations that often reveal some form of happiness. There are marriage anniversaries, those of years of service, ordinations and anniversaries of the same. There are success in employment, achievements and chapters well concluded. Many of these events do bring much happiness but is that really the same as Joy..?

Like so many words 'Joy' can convey many feelings and expressions of some form of satisfaction, but is that really what Christian Joy is all about? St. Paul writing to the Galatians (6:22) says that the Spirit produces Joy... it is in fact a gift of the Holy Spirit, a fruit of His action.

Happiness often depends on something occurring that makes a change for us, an event or something achieved, something alters and makes life easier for us or more successful, feeling better etc. In other words it is 'event' centred. Now sometimes joy can result and lead from this happiness... but is it the same thing?

Many people would consider that Joy cannot coexist with sadness and events that bring sorrow. But Joy is so profoundly different to happiness. Joy, of itself, reminds us of what is essential in our relationship with God and that we can always be joyful even when things do not go as they should and we would hope they would.. But Joy centres on our relationship with God and the belief that all things will be well and that we are destined for a life that goes beyond

mere satisfaction in the things that make us happy, but centres on the profound Truth that we are children of Hope, and that we are made for another life centred on God. This kind of Joy shines forth amidst any kind of darkness and gives us the liberty of the children of God. It is based on the fact that with all our faults and failings, disappointment and pain, sorrows and losses, we are loved and created for love. It is a joy that speaks of an encounter, a meeting with the author of all life and all that is blessed among us. E. Stanley Jones put it beautifully when he said 'when I met Christ I thought that I had swallowed sunshine.' We could all do with swallowing that sunshine especially in the times that we live in.

Although writing in summer the same clearly is true in any season. When we are doing things that we

like to do it is only as small step to converting this to Joy if we remember who allowed us this blessing and where it originates. We enjoy the beauty of the earth and, especially in Spring and Summer, many things point us to the Spiritual Joy that makes us reflect on the blessings that

we were given.

Fr. David May wrote recently of how he enjoyed, as many of us do, walking along the sea shore observing the waves and the vastness of the ocean. I quote: "But these waves also carry another message there is Someone with us, as vast and vaster than any ocean and seas and great skies- Someone filled with mystery. Paradoxically there is a kind of Silence at the sea shore, despite the pounding of the waves that is deep and sustaining and greater than the waves, even of terrible storms. That silence is that of Someone who has the whole of the universe on His fingertips held in being so gently, even tenderly. Waves and wind, sky and earth sun and moon, all bless His name and sing of it in their own way. Perhaps we humans are slowest to learn that song but

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'A joyful heart is the normal result of a heart burning with love'.

St Teresa of Kolkata

we would do well on summer days to return to their school and touch again the deep Mystery of Presence that is hidden yet visible, if we have eyes to see and ears to hear. That name of course is Jesus. (From 'Restoration' Fr. David May. Madonna House, Combermere, Canada)

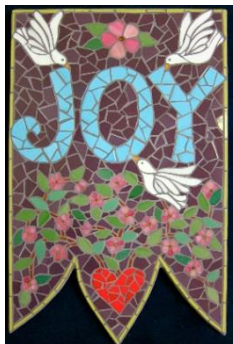
Many years ago I visited a priest who had returned from much time in a mission station. Now elderly, but also suffering from many Cancers he was full of Joy. I asked him how he dealt with all the pain...He replied smiling the broadest smile, "...well, when I walk, when I can, I spell out the name Jesus and every step fills me with Joy". He had indeed discovered the mystery of Presence.

Joy and Thanksgiving go hand in hand. Learning to praise, in other words telling Jesus how wonderful both He is and everything that He has given us in whatever form it takes, is one of the secrets of a joy filled spirit. Prayer, sincere prayer, is the very start of that inward journey leading to Joy.

Franz Joseph Haydn, the composer, said: 'When I think upon God, my heart is so full of Joy that the notes dance and leap from my pen; and since God has given me a cheerful heart, it will be pardoned me that I serve with a cheerful spirit.'

We are often dismayed when we see people who have lost everything say 'thank God' that... this or that... usually that they are still alive. That is Holy Joy.

In these sometime dark times when all seems to have been lost or denied we would do well to seek Joy.. it can become a 'good friend' and the Lord is never restricted in the amount that he can grant us.



In August we also have the great feast to the Assumption of The Blessed Virgin Mary. What joy must have filled her heart all the way through her life even with all the sorrows, and what Joy must have been hers when reunited with her Son. Her Joy, that special Joy, given to the pure in heart certainly sustained the Apostles.

Maybe as we go through the summer months, we can pray for more of that special Joy that dispels the

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darkness and fills us with light. May our steps reflect The Joy of His abiding Presence. Halina Holman

Pope Francis

'I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting Him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk; whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we come to realise that He is already there, waiting for us with open arms. Now is the time to say to Jesus: Lord, take me once more into your redeeming embrace'.

'Joy of the Gospel' 2013 Rome

A Touch Divine

A touch, one moment in time

A Touch Divine.

No healing potion or wordy flow

No special magic or unearthly glow'

One man to another goes, in silence,

Silence the deaf man already knows

Silently grace flows on the lips and ear

Sound penetrates and speech grows.

'Ears of the deaf unsealed'

All is healed

Blessed moment may we it know

May we hear the command

Go, Love and heal all. HH 2005

'The joy of the Lord is your strength'

Nehemiah 8:19

Feast Days in August

1st St. Alphonsus Liguori 2nd St. Peter Julian Eymard

4th St. John Vianney

5th Dedication of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome

6th **The Transfiguration of the Lord (Sunday)**

8th St. Dominic

9th **St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Patron of Europe**

11th St. Claire of Assisi 12th St. Jane Francis de Chantal

13th **Nineteenth Sunday in Ord. Time**

14th **St. Maximilian Kolbe**

15th **'The Assumption'. Blessed Virgin Mary Holy. D. Ob.**

20th **Twentieth Sunday in Ord. Time**

22nd **The Queenship of Mary**

23rd St. Rose of Lima

24th **St. Bartholomew, Apostle**

26th Bl. Dominic Barberi

27th **Twenty-first Sunday in Ord. Time**

28th St. Augustine of Hippo

30th **Ss. Margaret Clitheroe, Anne Line & Margt. Ward**

31st St. Aidan & the Saints of Lindisfarne