

Encouragement

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Happiness... Joy of the Heart

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*"Happiness, happiness the greatest gift that I possess
I thank the Lord that I've been blessed,
With more that my share of Happiness"*

These are words of a famous comedian and singer. A friend of mine sang them on a recent pilgrimage rather sardonically when someone simply would not smile back at her and had rather a sour look. - It may seem like a strange word to choose to reflect upon in the month of November. This month is associated with praying for the Holy Souls and rather serious events such as Armistice Day, this year the 100th Anniversary and '9/11', the fall of the 'Twin Towers' in America remind us of the reality of pain, war and tragedy... But it also reminds us of the Joys that are to come for all does not end with death but starts us on a life of true happiness.

As well as the Holy Souls we also commemorate the lives of all the Saints, Canonised or not, who now have that gift in abundance in heaven. And why?- because they now have the blessing of being continually in the presence of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, of being in total peace and joy. The lives of Saints often point us to this great joy that is to come because they carry with them a happiness that the world simply cannot give.

These words are often reiterated, but do we really understand what they mean? There is hardly a Saint who has not had to carry a 'Cross' in his or her life. Many suffer great persecution and misunderstanding, many suffer serious illness... yet penetrating their lives is this abundance, of not extinguishable happiness. Why is this? Is it because they simply deny the troubles they encounter – hardly. Or is it that they have a high pain threshold and/or have strong personalities? Well, with the range of Saints this is highly unlikely. So what is their great secret? St Teresa of Avila said that 'if the trials that she encountered are how 'His Majesty' treats his friends – it is not surprising that he has so few of them'... but did she stop founding and reforming the Church

and Communities at a critical time of renewal and division – not at all.

Happiness – often translated from the word Blessings is a certain knowledge that 'all will be well, all manner of things will be well' words of St Juliana of Norwich. Indeed the Beatitudes give a flavour of the meaning when we list what could be considered anything other than happy events, being persecuted, mourning etc. but they are signs of what the Lord has prepared for those who continue to live the Beatitudes – with blessings and are happy.

In a recent pilgrimage to Medjugorje the 'priest in charge' of the English speaking Pilgrims, Fr, Leon Pereira, said something which leads us to recognise that we are destined for great riches and joy and happiness. Referring to looking for 'signs' he said that the '*signs* are not the *destination*'. He repeated this many times. He was not rejecting the 'signs' as such, but pointing to the greater events that were to come in our lives in eternity, our call, and our living with God. Signs of any kind are pointers. We should not consider them as the final part of our journey. Happiness is therefore an acceptance of our true destiny. Sometimes this can be seen in transitory things; birthdays, celebrations, weddings and acts of kindness, and we experience a pleasure of some kind. These small happiness's however, prepare us to enjoy the total transforming type of happiness that is granted to believers of even better things to come. Thus we have to be prepared to accept both sorrow and joy on our journeys, each different, each tailor made for us... This acceptance underpinned by faith can and does bring us that special internal happiness.

A beautiful story was told to us on pilgrimage... The story revolves around a young man, a teenager, who truly had that inner joy and radiated happiness... he was dying of multiple Cancers. He knew this and accepted. But something troubled him greatly. He came from a large family, with numerous brothers and sisters, uncles, aunts, and cousins. There were often factions and discords. This grieved

"Lord help me to be thankful and to remember that 'gratitude changes the pang of memory into a tranquil joy.'" D. Bonhoeffer

him deeply and one day his parents asked him, as death approached, if there was anything he still wanted to do especially before he went to meet Jesus. He replied, "Yes, there was". He wanted everyone to go to Mejugorje and especially to go to Confession and to be reconciled with God and each other... His parents said that this was never going to happen, as most had lapsed from receiving the sacraments, indeed left the Church, but that he could go. Not daunted he continued to pray and many, if only to please him, agreed, probably thinking of it as a holiday and that this would suffice. So the day came when they All got on a plane to go. As always happens the Lord was the Pilot. Deteriorating fast he continued to pray and one by one – at different times the family went to confession and also were reconciled with each other with great happiness. Within weeks of returning home the young 'saint' died surrounded by all the family with even greater happiness. . His happiness was true because it knew its source.

The following homily was given to emphasise this point and how we rely on other things to bring us happiness after the Gospel on the rich young man.....

'We all want to be happy, but some people are never going to be happy because they look for happiness in material possession instead of looking for God who is the giver of all gifts. God is the ultimate source of true happiness. What good deeds must I do to have eternal life? The rich man asked in the Gospel. Jesus tells him to free himself from dependence on material things and turn his life over to God. Happiness is like a butterfly, the more we chase it, the more it will elude us. But if we turn our attention to God, it comes and softly sits on our shoulder.'
A Special Pastor

The source of the key to happiness is not in those things that are temporal. It is not in transitory events or in possessions. It is in the certain knowledge that we are not temporal but that we are made for eternity, everlasting life, united with our Maker, Lord and King and all the Saints and Our Lady. While we may suffer and have periods of great doubt and difficulty these will pass and will be replaced by untold happiness. Jesus said... 'I have prepared a place for you and where I am there you will be also' (John 14:3.) St Paul tells us that no eye has seen or

ear heard and no human mind can conceive the things that God has prepared for those who love Him. (1 Cor.2:9) A sign of happiness is a thankful heart. If we cultivate this then happiness will be our joy.
 Halina Holman

Pope Francis

Happiness can't be bought. And whenever you try to buy happiness, you soon realize that it has vanished. The happiness you can buy does not last. Only the happiness of love lasts! The path of love is simple: Love God and love your neighbour, love your brother or sister, love whoever is near you and whoever needs love or needs anything else. "But, Father, how do I know that I love God?" It's easy. If you love your neighbour, if you do not have hatred in your heart, you love God. That is the ultimate test.

Aug. 2015 Rome

GOING HOME

Swiftly time passes
 Gently the call comes.
 Will we be ready
 will we be glad?
 However it comes
 Do not fear.
 'Come to me', we will hear.
 Come on the wings of the dawn
 Come with gentle step and song.
 'I have a place for you here,
 Smile and stay beloved,
 This and every day.
 My place is yours today'.



HH Oct.2018

Feast Days in November

1st All Saints (Holy Day of Obligation)

2nd Feast of All Souls

3rd St Martin de Porres and St Winefride

8th Bl. John Duns Scotus

9th Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

10th St Leo the Great, Pope

12th St Josaphat, Bishop

15th St Albert the Great

16th St. Margaret of Scotland and St Gertrude

17th St Elizabeth of Hungary and St Hilda

21st Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

22nd St Cecilia

24th Ss Andrew Dung-Lac and Companions

25th Christ King of the Universe

27th St Catherine Labouré

30th St Andrew, Apostle