

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Letter of St Paul to the Philippians (*Philippians 4:4*)

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection ~ The Only One who can truly make us happy

Living our true purpose. The reason for our being is to give glory to God. *Every one who is called by My Name, whom I created for My glory, whom I formed and made (Isaiah 43:7).* It follows that apart from God, we do not achieve our true purpose in life, do not have a true identity or true happiness. It means that God created us to love Him and to be loved by Him. All other human relationships flow from this primary relationship. We love others because of the love the Holy Spirit has poured into our hearts.

Joy is from the Holy Spirit. *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22).* These are the attributes of God, and the Holy Spirit brings them to the person that is open to Its workings in his/her heart and soul. When a soul has a great desire to please God and to be in His will at all times, the soul will be open to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit speaking to his/her heart and conscience. The greater the presence of the Holy Spirit within the soul, the greater will be the presence of fruits of the Holy Spirit including true joy that is different from earthly happiness which requires an earthly reason.

Sin makes us very unhappy and blocks God's blessings and graces. Sin, depending on its gravity, makes us lose sanctifying and actual graces, and blocks us from receiving great graces. Mortal sins result in loss of sanctifying grace, and if not repented of, make the Kingdom of God closed to us upon our passing. Loss of actual graces means that we have less inner strength to do the things we know we should do. Thus, we lose our inner peace, feel empty and unfulfilled. Unlucky souls seek their solace in dangerous things and places, resulting in sinful addictions and walking further down the road to self-destruction. *Happy are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of God (Matthew 5:3).*

God created us for joy. Every parent wants the best for his/her child. God wants our eternal good more than we ourselves desire it. He Himself is the eternal fountain of joy. No created thing or person can give the true, holy, lasting joy that only God can give. *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).* God commands us to be joy filled. He knows this is possible because He is the source of joy and He wants to give it to every one of His children even when they are on pilgrimage on earth to heaven. We do not wait to be in heaven to be very happy. God wants us to be joyful in the present moment. For this, we need to be living in His will, the only path to Paradise.

Followers of Christ have every real reason to be joy filled. Though no one can claim life on earth is easy, and it is true that suffering touches every soul due to the existence of sin, nevertheless real joy is within the reach of every true follower of Christ. We come from God and are returning to God. Our existence came about through God's selfless love. Our redemption and salvation is through God's sacrificial love in Jesus Christ. At every step of our earthly pilgrimage, Christ is present at our side with His grace to help us overcome whatever difficulty or temptation that may befall us. Every bit of our suffering when united to the suffering of Jesus on Calvary shares His infinite merits, and can become meritorious, redemptive and infinite in value, helping Jesus save souls. Our true home is in heaven where Jesus has already prepared a place for each and every one of those who love Him (cf. John 14:2). Provided we walk on the true path, our final destination is assured. That is a source of joy and security. What is the point of gaining much wealth on this earth but have no reassurance of eternal life of joy after death? (cf. Mark 8:36, Matthew 16:26).

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, I have looked everywhere for peace and happiness in the early years of my life. However, the happiness was fleeting and the heart remained unfulfilled. Let me be convicted in the divine truth that my heart was made only for You. Only in You can my heart find its eternal gladness and abiding peace. May I attain the true purpose of my earthly life by seeking You above all things so that what my heart deeply desires can be mine (cf. Matthew 6:33). May I live heaven on earth by doing everything for God's glory: in what I say, think, and do. May our hearts be one in giving glory to our Heavenly Father so that His Holy Spirit can dwell deep within me bringing joy and the other fruits of the Spirit. Mary, Refuge of Holy Love, pray for me. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.