

Meditation 1

1 Thessalonians 5:12-25

The Virtue of Joy

“We ask you, brothers, to respect those who are laboring among you and who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you, and to show esteem for them with special love on account of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. We urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, cheer the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient with all. See that no one returns evil for evil; rather, always seek what is good [both] for each other and for all. Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good. Refrain from every kind of evil. May the God of peace himself make you perfectly holy and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will also accomplish it. Brothers, pray for us [too].”

Rejoice Always: Points for Meditation

- 1) “Rejoice, always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. . .”
- 2) Rejoice, always.
 - a. Definition of joy from St. Thomas Aquinas: “. . . happiness is that perfect good which entirely satisfies one’s desire.”
 - b. And he goes on to say, “. . . This is to be found, not in any creature, but in God alone, because every creature has only participated goodness. Therefore, God alone can satisfy the will of man, according to the words of the Psalm (102:5): “Who alone satisfies your desire with good things.” Therefore, God alone constitutes man’s happiness.” (*Summa Theologica* Part 2. Q.1. Article 8).
- 3) Rejoice ALWAYS?
 - a. From the Litany of Loreto to Our Lady, “Cause of our Joy, pray for us!

Quotes on Joy

“. . .(that) joy, which is precisely the joy that flows from divine charity. . . is the love of God poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.” ~ Fr. Hugh Barbour, a Norbertine priest

“St. John the Baptist "*undertook a long journey to come to bear witness to Jesus,*" . . . The journey of joy is not a walk in the park. *It takes work to always be joyful.*” ~ Pope Francis

"A Christian is a man and a woman of joy. Jesus teaches us this, the Church teaches us this, in a special way in this [liturgical]time. What is this joy? Is it having fun? No: it is not the same. Fun is good, eh? Having fun is good. But joy is more, it is something else. It is something that does not come from short term economic reasons, from momentary reasons : it is something deeper. It is a gift. Fun, if we want to have fun all the time, in the end becomes shallow, superficial, and also leads us to that state where we lack Christian wisdom, it makes us a little bit stupid, naive, no?, Everything is fun ... no. Joy is another thing. Joy is a gift from God. It fills us from within. It is like an anointing of the Spirit. And this joy is the certainty that Jesus is with us and with the Father. . .

Can we ‘bottle up’ this joy in order to always have it with us? No, because if we keep this joy to ourselves it will make us sick in the end, our hearts will grow old and wrinkled and our faces will no longer transmit that great joy only nostalgia, melancholy which is not healthy. Sometimes these melancholy Christians faces have more in common with pickled peppers than the joy of having a beautiful life. Joy cannot be held at heel: it must be let go. Joy is a pilgrim virtue. It is a gift that walks, walks on the path of life, that walks with Jesus: preaching, proclaiming Jesus, proclaiming joy, lengthens and widens that path. It is a virtue of the Great, of those Great ones who rise above the little things in life, above human pettiness, of those who will not allow themselves to be dragged into those little things within the community, within the Church: they always look to the horizon". (Pope Francis’ radio transcript, http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2013/05/10/pope_at_mass:_christian_joy_far_from_simple_fun/en1-690760)

