

5.11.2019

## JOY IS A GIFT It Is Ours To Accept

The Easter Season is here. It is with Joy we proclaim: He is Risen! It is a Joy in our hearts that comes forth in our thoughts, words and deeds.

The Joy of the Lord is indeed one's strength. Joy makes one attractive. Joy helps one relish and delight in one's life; Safeguards one's energy; Helps one to deal with miserable, angry and resentful people.

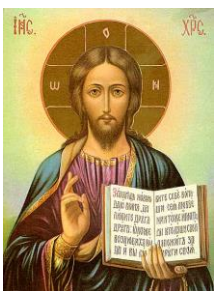


Satan will have us focus on the negative, the past and most of all....ourselves. He wants to rob our Joy from us. Whereas God would have us focus on the present moment as we are within His Spirit. God calls to us constantly and will bring us home to him if we stay in His Joy.

We men have been built from the very core to reflect the image and likeness of God. More so, we have been built with a yearning to be connected to Him. Jesus is the gift that makes that connection. He calls to each one of us with Joy. We know the sound of God's voice in our hearts. We respond to our Shepard's call by living a Joy-filled life.

Joy satisfies that yearning, hunger and ache to no longer be alone and be connected with God. Such an improvement in one's life is both quite dramatic not only personally, but to others nearby. More so, it helps one be a better follower of Jesus Christ.

Let's listen carefully as we consider the Wisdom of Holy Scripture and Catechism. May God give to each one of us the necessary means to complete His Gift of our Unique and Holy Mission.



### **Nehemiah 8:9-10** The Joy of the Lord

Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher of the Law, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, "This day is holy to the Lord your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

### **John 16:21-24** Jesus Gives the Gift of Joy

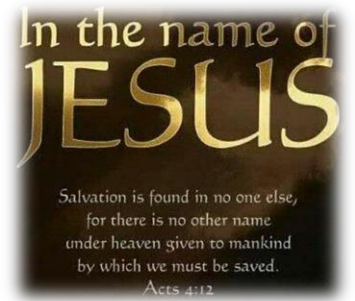
When a woman is in labor, she is in anguish because her hour has arrived; but when she has given birth to a child, she no longer remembers the pain because of her joy that a child has been born into the world.



So you also are now in anguish. But I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you. On that day you will not question me about anything. Amen, amen, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you.

Until now you have not asked anything in my name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete.

The Word of the Lord



### **Catechism**

#### **1054 - THE JOY OF CHRIST**

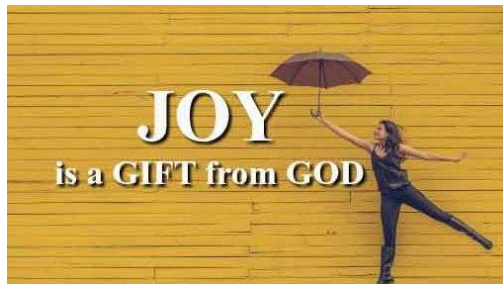
Those who die in God's grace and friendship imperfectly purified, although they are assured of their eternal salvation, undergo a purification after death, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of God.

#### **1720 - GOD CALLS EACH OF US**

1720 The New Testament uses several expressions to characterize the beatitude to which God calls man:

1. The coming of the Kingdom of God; - the vision of God: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"
2. Entering into the joy of the Lord;
3. Entering into God's rest:

There we shall rest and see, we shall see and love, we shall love and praise. Behold what will be at the end without end. For what other end do we have, if not to reach the kingdom which has no end?



### **REPEAT THE SOUNDING JOY ...rejoice in the Lord always!**

Chris Stefanick

Scripture says the JOY of the Lord is my strength (Nehemiah 8:10). Joy makes you attractive. Helps you "enjoy" your life. It safeguards your energy. Being resentful, angry, and miserable just makes you tired. Joy is strength. That is why the Devil wants to rob your joy. He wants to sap your strength. He wants to steal that next great moment with your loved ones and have you be focused on the mean stuff someone did to you at work instead. The Devil wants you to miss out on your blessings because you are busy brooding over something else.

Have you ever considered how easy it is to focus on something negative that happened to you, and how hard it is to focus on the positive? We never tend to obsess on positive interactions like, "I just can't stop thinking about the guy who was kind enough to let me in front of him on the freeway!"

Joy takes work! Chris Stefanick tells us that when he was a teenager, his mother used to tell him, "Joy is a choice." She was right, and in reflecting on those words throughout his life has helped him become a joyful man.

She didn't say "feeling good is a choice." I doubt very much that St. Paul was always feeling "tip top" when he was in prison awaiting his beheading, however he was joyful. Much of what he wrote while in chains was brimming with joy.

Paul wrote things like, "Rejoice in the Lord always" (Philippians 4:4), "Have no anxiety at all" (Philippians 4:6), "I may be struck down but I'm not destroyed" (2 Corinthians 4:9), and "In all things we are more than conquerors" (Romans 8:37).

Paul may have been in a dungeon, but his heart was set on things above. The waves of life may have been crashing around him, but he got up and rode on top of them. Something within him couldn't be conquered.

A bad doctor report, IRS audit, or mean boss aren't all powerful. They don't get the final word. The final word from God is. "He is Risen." There is a beautiful saying that our trials don't come to stay, they come to pass. Eternal blessedness comes to stay for the Christian. And that the eternal life of Heaven isn't merely waiting for you. If He who rose from the dead lives in you, eternal life has already begun in you. You just need to hang in there while God brings it to fruition!

So while you go through the trials of everyday life, go through them as Paul did. Even when an emperor had it out for him, he knew that he had the upper hand, because he had GOD's hand. A Christian can't be conquered. You can make a martyr of him, but you can't exterminate him. You can give him an opportunity to love his enemies but you can't make him bitter. You can strengthen his character but you can't knock him down. As St. Paul said, even death is gain.

If you believe in what God did for you and what He has destined for you, you should tell that to your face. Smile! Often! And even in hard times, hold your head up high and rejoice! "Set your hearts on things above" (Colossians 3:2). Glory is just around the corner.

Only the Gospel of Jesus Christ can give you that kind of joy. Enjoy it! Amen.





## Questions for Discussion



1. Can you recall an Act of Kindness that caused you to become joyful? Did you spread that Joy? Explain.

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2. How can we spread more Joy to others? Expand answer. Give an example.

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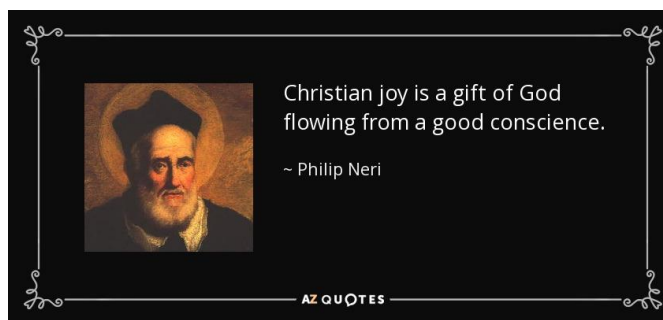
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3. The Devil constantly seeks to steal one's joy by forcing an individual to live in the past. God challenges us to live in the present. Give an example of allowing Joy to overcome a past grievance.

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His lord said unto him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your lord!' *Matthew 25:21*

## Men's Group Calendar

A Man who never quits is Never Defeated.

5/25/2019	Leadership Meeting	8 AM Sacred Heart Library
<b>6/8/2019</b>	<b>Men's Group</b>	<b>7 AM Mass</b>
<b>July &amp; August</b>	<b>NO Men's Group</b>	<b>Summer Vacation</b>
8/24/2019	Leadership Meeting	8 AM Sacred Heart Library
<b>9/14/2019</b>	<b>Men's Group</b>	<b>7 AM Mass</b>
9/28/2019	Leadership Meeting	8 AM Sacred Heart Library



**ACTION PLAN**

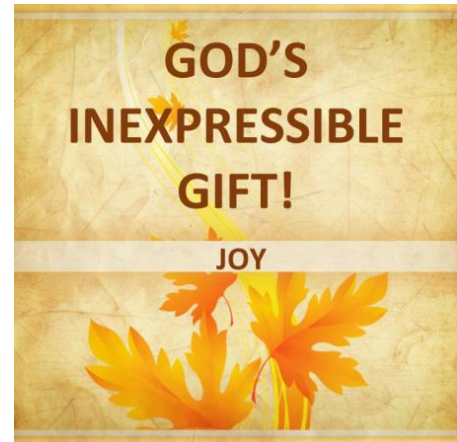
This week I will do my best to be a Man of Integrity by:

Creating a daily prayer practice

Seeking God in prayer and being quiet in His presence

Paying more attention to Blessing those in my life as God intends

Saying YES to the gift of Joy from the Lord...and sharing it with others.

**Bring Christ into the Emptiness of Our Lives**

- Spend time with Lord Jesus in Adoration. Silence fills the emptiness. Silence isn't an absence; it's a presence.
- Spend time with those who bring joy to life. Family, friends, church...
- Invite Christ into your relationships. Acknowledge His presence in every moment, whether you're alone or with others; pray together.
- Ask God for Deeper Trust. Doubting is OK if we bring it honestly to Him. He can and will use that to bring you to a place of Deeper Trust in Him.
- Just be in the emptiness, not running from it, not trying to fix or fill it.
- Ask: What is Christ trying to teach me during this period of emptiness? How does He want me to grow from this experience?

WHEN I'M  
WORRIED, IT'S  
USUALLY BECAUSE  
I'M TRYING TO  
DO EVERYTHING  
MYSELF. WHEN  
I'M AT PEACE, IT'S  
USUALLY BECAUSE  
I REMEMBER  
THAT GOD IS IN  
CONTROL.

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*Lord Jesus, I believe you are calling me to yourself. Right here. Right now. Just as I am. And though you love me too much to let me stay as I am, you take me as I am today. Help me to follow you more deeply, knowing the journey does not depend on my strength or perfection, but on your perfect Love for me.*

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**Lord, God and Savior, by your love you draw me to yourself. Forgive me – the sinner that I am, and fill me with every good thing, not withholding even the gift of your most beloved son. Come dwell in my heart.**

**Send forth your Holy Spirit to guide me in your path. Make me worthy of your love, and teach me how to forgive as you forgave.**

**Thank you for your tender mercies. I ask you to bless my family, friends and those who you put into my life. Where there is joy, give them continued joy. Where there is pain or sorrow, give them peace and mercy. Where there is doubt, release in them a renewed confidence. Fill their every need and emptiness with your Holy Grace.**

**You are indeed my Lord, God and Savior. Amen**



*"God knows our sins but calls us by name.  
Satan knows our name, but calls us by our sins."*