

# THE WAY TO JOY

The mysteries of joy that we meditate in the Holy Rosary, unveil to us the path to true joy that is in contradiction to the fleeting happiness of the world.

Joy is an enduring experience of heart, a fruit of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit that does not vanish in moments of affliction.

Pope St. Paul VI affirms it in these words: *Technological society has succeeded in multiplying the opportunities for pleasure, but it is hardly capable of generating joy. For*

*joy comes from elsewhere. It is spiritual.* As we contemplate on Christ along with Mary, may we be able to find the way to that divine joy.



## **THE MYSTERY OF ANNUNCIATION**

The first attitude needed to walk this path of joy is ***the capacity to listen and respond*** in trustful obedience to the call of God. This is the core commandment of God: “Hear, O Israel” and it is the way to life (Dt 6:4ff). Mary the true Israelite, listens to the Angel, enters into a dialogue, in that way actively gets involved only to utter her ‘yes’ of obedience in faith: “I am the servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38).

*Mary was a happy woman, and this is because she responded generously to God and opened her heart to God's plan for her. To respond to God positively is to take the first step towards being happy and making many people happy (Pope Francis).*

### ***THE MYSTERY OF VISITATION***

In the account of the Visitation, Elizabeth exalts Mary and calls her 'the blessed one' three times (Lk 1:42,45). While the first two times it is directly in praise of Mary's exalted status of being the mother of God, the third occurrence is a translation of the Greek word 'makarios' (as in the Beatitudes) which means 'blessed' or 'happy'. In the Bible, the word 'blessed' is often a synonym of 'happy'. Here the happiness of Mary consists not merely, in her becoming the mother of God but it is rooted in her faith in God's promises as Elizabeth states: "*Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord*" (v.45). Her faith is not sterile but is one that finds expression in humble service. Mary believes in 'this impossible event' of the conception of her cousin Elizabeth in her old age and sets out in haste to be of service to her cousin.

Mary's encounter with Elizabeth shows once more the way to joy: *it consists in going out to meet and serve others, to embrace another person (Pope Francis).*

### ***THE MYSTERY OF INCARNATION***

At the birth of Jesus, the angel announced to the shepherds saying, "*I am bringing you good news of great joy*" (Lk 2:10). A great joy because the child born is the savior of the world. Entering into human history and becoming a child, Jesus sanctifies and exalts the gift of human life. ***Welcoming it and becoming guardians and promoters of this life*** in all its forms is the way to participate in this joy. At the

annunciation of the angel, the shepherds hurry to see this event and what they see is a child wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.

Though apparently ordinary, the crib of Bethlehem enshrines the mystery of 'God with us' and proclaims aloud that *every child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of man* (Rabindranath Tagore).

### **THE MYSTERY OF PRESENTATION**

In the event of presentation of Jesus in the Temple, the evangelist Luke dedicates more space to speak of Simeon and Anna the prophetess than the act of presentation itself. In a world of frantic pace, these two figures show us that ***praying and expectant waiting***, for the fulfillment of God's promises is the only way to encounter Jesus, the fount of true joy.

These two attitudes prepare us for "*a vision of what we need to embrace in order to experience joy: Jesus*" (Pope Francis).

### **THE MYSTERY OF JESUS LOST AND FOUND AGAIN**

In this gospel episode of Jesus lost and found in the Temple, Luke portrays Mary and Joseph filled with two feelings that are necessary preludes to experience joy: ***astonishment at what is seen, and anxiety because Jesus is not there***. After three days of search when they find Jesus in the Temple sitting among the teachers, the first sentiment experienced by his parents is astonishment. "*Being astonished and being amazed is the opposite of taking everything for granted; it is the opposite of interpreting the reality that surrounds us and historical events according to our criteria alone.... Being astonished is being open to others, understanding others' reasons: this attitude is important for mending compromised interpersonal*

*relationships, and is also indispensable for healing open wounds in the familial environment” (Pope Francis). Hence, the capacity to be amazed is a pre-requisite for being restored to fullness of joy in a broken world.*

The other feeling is anxiety, a clear mark of absence of joy. Mary and Joseph feel anxiety because they have lost Jesus, the center of their lives and they begin to search for him. As long as I am distant from Jesus, I cannot be truly joyful. To find joy we need to set out in search for him and find him again because *he enlightens us, lights up our path, and gives us his Body in the Eucharist from which we draw vigour to face everyday difficulties.” (Pope Francis)*

#### **CONCLUDING PRAYER**

Lord,

grant us ear to listen attentively to your voice and respond to it with a generous heart;

grant us hands that know how to serve in humility and feet that readily set out in haste to meet the other in need;

grant us a mind that is free from prejudices and opens itself in an welcoming attitude;

grant us the spirit of prayer and patience to wait expectantly to behold your promises;

and finally,

grant us also eyes that are filled with astonishment at what you work in our lives and be anxious in seeking you in all things and above all things. Amen.