

Third Sunday after Easter

“Your joy no man shall take from you” (John, 16:22)

Some persons have the idea that religion is intended to be a gloomy affair. This may be true of some forms of religion; but it is not true of the Catholic religion.

Our Lord established a religion of joy and happiness, as is indicated by His statement to His apostles related in today's Gospel, ***“Your joy no man shall take from you.”***

In the history of the Catholic Church this is abundantly illustrated, especially in the lives of the saints. The saints were men and women who were most happy and joyful, even though they had much suffering to endure and often practised the most severe penances.

The reasons for our happiness as Catholics are many.

1. In the first place, we have the assurance that we are in possession of the one true religion.
2. We know that in the teachings of our faith we have the satisfactory solution to the problems of life.
3. We are aware that we can obtain by prayer all that we need to lead a good life, so that temptation can never rob us of the friendship of God if we seek strength in fervent prayer.
4. And if we are in the state of sanctifying grace, as every good Catholic should be, we know that God loves us with an infinite love as adopted children, and that He is watching over us so that nothing may harm us.

This does not mean that we are assured that because of our Catholic faith we shall be free from all trials and sufferings. Sometimes it is the will of God that those who are very dear to Him shall be called on to endure poverty, sickness, the loss of reputation, and antagonism from their fellow-men. But these tribulations will not diminish our joy if we accept them in the spirit of conformity to God's Will and with the realisation that they will contribute much toward our eternal happiness.

Above all, as Catholics we have the joy of knowing that after this brief life we shall be admitted to the happiness of heaven provided we are faithful to our Divine Lord. This is the meaning of the words He spoke to His apostles and in them to all His loyal followers, *“I shall see you again.”*

Practical Application

Rid yourself of the unfortunate habit of anxiety and fear, and try to taste the true joy of those who love God. If you live up to your Catholic faith you will experience a peace of soul and happiness far greater than anything on earth can provide, and this joy *“no man shall take from you.”*

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