

Happiness: Our Destiny

According to St. Bernard of Clairvaux, "The whole of the spiritual life consists of two elements. When we think of ourselves we are perturbed and filled with salutary sadness. And when we think of the Lord we are revived, finding consolation in the joy of the Holy Spirit. From the first we derive fear and humility; from the second, hope and love."



Since thinking about the Lord and his promise of eternal life is the highest element of the spiritual life, what would happen to you if you decided to concentrate more on the Lord and less on yourself? Would it fill your soul with hope as St. Bernard suggests? And would it enable you to share your joyful spirit

with others? St. Bernard seems to think so, and for what it's worth, so do I.

If each one of us would try to become a more joyful person in our personal lives, this would be a happier world. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we were able to put Jesus first in all things? I think it would cause a monumental change for the better.

You've heard it said that one person can make a difference. It's true. Even a little pebble when thrown in a pond can make ripples. Psychologists tell us that one person affects the lives of at least eight others for better or worse, and each of them will affect the lives of eight more. In other words, we touch many lives and change them for better or worse.

God made you a creature of love and joy, and He never made anyone else exactly like you. You are an original.

Like a snowflake, you are beautiful, fragile and utterly unique. But unlike a snowflake, you have eternal life. The Lord God wanted you to be born, and He plans an eternity of happiness for you.

This is our faith, and each of us is called to respond to this Good News with enthusiasm. So what would happen if you decided to claim your birthright by choosing to be happy because of the knowledge of God's love? Since happiness is God's will for you anyway, why wait until you're in heaven? Happiness is your destiny.

I'm not speaking here about narcissism, that inordinate love of self which leads to selfish indulgence. Just the opposite. I'm speaking about abandonment to Divine Providence which alone brings peace and joy to the soul.

Admittedly one can never be completely free of the miseries inflicted by sickness, villainy or injustice, but we can

choose to live gladly in spite of it all. Through faith we are capable of accepting the Master's grand design including the dark things that happen to us. On good days and bad, it is possible to reflect on the fact that God has an eternity of happiness waiting for us. Wouldn't it be wonderful if on the deepest level of your being, you decided to be happy right now? On the surface you may have good reason to be sad, or you may be suffering in ways you cannot understand; nevertheless, you are not a poor helpless creature. You have the power to lift up your heart and live gladly because of the knowledge of God's love. Why not try?

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