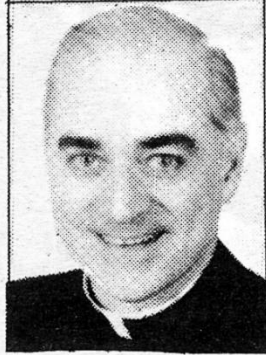


Do Something Positive

A person's emotional life is like the weather. We have good days and bad, ups and downs. Even spiritual writers who promote an attitude of joy have occasional feelings of gloom, I can attest to that. But relief is an instant away when you reflect on the wonder of God's love.



The Gene Kelly classic movie, "Singing in the Rain," comes to mind as a perfect metaphor for singing and dancing your way through the puddles and the pitfalls of life. Some people are able to improve their emotional state with a bit of music. Put on a CD and enter the world of those who are singing joyfully. I enjoy listening to the music. It helps me to thank God for my life and for the privilege of being human.

But if music doesn't work for you try something else. Try to analyze the cause of your dark mood. You may be stressed out, or simply overtired. In any case you'll need to pamper yourself a bit more. Try to be your own best friend, not your own worst enemy. Don't put yourself down by listening to the demon within which says hurtful things to you. Reject the tyranny of that inner voice. Remember, feelings are not facts. Subjective opinions are not objective reality. You are a person of status and importance because you are a baptized Christian. You are precious and God loves you with all His heart. Talk to yourself in a positive way and refuse to engage in negative thinking.

You can shift your attention away from worries by putting things in perspective. Moods pass away like rainy days. Sadness and melancholy are merely

temporary conditions. In the meantime, it helps to ventilate your fears from time to time with a trusted friend or counselor. Don't be afraid to reach out for help.

You can also do something physical to expend your negative energy. Clean the kitchen, rearrange your closet, mow the lawn or clean the attic. Sitting around and moping will only make you sadder. Beware of TV; so many shows are violent and depressing, you don't need that. Don't drink too much. Booze is a depressant by definition, and if you overdo it, you'll create brand new problems for yourself.

Do you realize that envy is defined as sadness over the good fortune of another? You'll want to resist envy as much as possible. Pray for those you envy every time you have bad feelings toward them. Refuse to be petty.

Just do something positive. Visit someone in the hospital. Go to a funny movie. Recall your favorite vacation spot. Take some crayons and draw your feelings, use different colors to express your mood.

You may not be able to change your mental landscape overnight, but with the help of God you do have the power to live joyfully because of the knowledge of His love.

If your depression lasts for more than a month, go see your doctor. You may need some medication to get yourself back on the track. Don't be afraid to take a sedative. With God's help all will be well. Trust the Lord. Meanwhile, I will keep you in Mass and prayer as well.

[For a free copy of the Christopher News Note, Live Joyfully, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to The Christophers, 12 E. 48th St., New York, N.Y. 10017.]