

# Believe, and Joy Will Come

Learning to live joyfully is a formidable challenge. We are all trying to learn this difficult art, and some of us are better at it than others. Cardinal Newman once wrote: "I do not fear that I may have to die. I fear that I have never lived."



The Resurrection of Jesus lights our path, as does the promise of eternal life. Robert Muller, assistant to the Secretary General of the United Nations for more than 25 years, offered this advice: "Be happy, render others happy, proclaim your joy, love passionately your miraculous life. Do not wait for a better world; be grateful for every moment of life."

Is it possible to take such advice seriously? Is it so simple? Can we just decide to be happy? There are some who find this idea absurd. They see so much suffering in the world, they question whether one even has

the right to pursue the goal of happiness. I understand this point of view, but I do not share it. God made us for happiness; this I know from faith, not reason.

I often wish that God would intervene in a dramatic way to reveal Himself fully. But He waits patiently for us to understand that happiness is possible, even in the midst of pain and sorrow. Parallel to the river of sorrow flows the river of joy. God refrains from giving us proof positive of this truth because He wants our faith to grow. He also wants to win our love without overpowering us. No one can compel anyone to love, not even God.

Blessed Julian of Norwich saw this clearly and responded with a childlike spirit, "The greatest honor any of us can give to Almighty God is to live gladly because of the knowledge of His love." I admit, translating this level of faith into action takes effort and imagination, but it can be done. Here are some ideas to help you on your spiritual journey:

- Look at the people you meet today

with gratitude in your heart. Each one of them carries a special birthright — they are God's children, and we are all called to love one another.

- Be grateful to God for every morsel of food you eat today.
- Take initiative and make one phone call or write one letter today as a way of telling someone that you care.
- Give your body some time and attention. Follow the rules of good nutrition.
- Practice some kindness today, smile more often than usual.
- Respond to warmhearted impulses, and be a more loving person.
- Give a compliment today, point out the good in others.
- Forgive those who have offended you.

If you want to understand God's gift of happiness and joy, you must first believe in Him, not the other way around. Believe deeply and, in a leap of faith, joy will surely come to you.

