

I have told you this
So that my own joy may be in you
And your joy be complete

The notion of joy is often ridiculed in our sarcastic society
Perceived as naïve
Or even worse as superficial.

Indeed Christianity suffers from the Cheshire Cat grins of those who fear sadness
And do not believe that faith has room for the suffering of personal crucifixion
Joy in terms of trust in God is deeper than any acutely felt suffering
Even in the heart of depression there is room for joy, not based upon exhilaration, but upon the
humility of faith.

The joy of Christ is an active part of the confidence
to face the challenge.

But joy in this sense is not a natural attribute deriving from chance of birth, or personal chemistry.

Joy in terms of Roman Catholicism is to a degree a developmental aptitude
All shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well.

We must learn to see.

I am preparing these words on Tuesday morning.

Outside my warm home the rain is falling, the air is cold, the sky dark and threatening
As a distraction I can listen to the radio where some well-educated correspondent speaks of the
doom and gloom.

I could turn on the TV and watch day time programmes showing homes I cannot afford, or kitchens
producing food that is beyond my capacity to prepare.

Against such an onslaught of cynicism my faith challenges me to look, and look again.

We need the rain
We live in a democracy
I have a roof over my head, and I do not know hunger

My life is blessed

There is real joy to be experienced in the reality

But it is an effort to recognise and live within the blessing.

We must learn to see

I had as a young man dreamed of being a rock and roll star.

As I grew older there were hopes that I would be a success

Indeed so far the only place my name has been published is in the telephone directory.

Against such an onslaught of disappointment my faith challenges me to look and look again

The life of our rock stars often involves drugs drink and marital break-up. Probably because it is pretty awful. My life has been a fantastic adventure.

The only thing that really succeeds in life is a budgie with no beak. I am loved, and I love. It is enough

Personal ambitions can be sources of fantastic stimulation. However talk to those who achieve and you will discover that such accomplishment rarely satisfies, and often acts only as the springboard for further action. However if I die tomorrow I have lived long enough

My life is blessed

There is real joy to be experienced in the reality

But it is an effort to recognise and live within the blessing.

We must learn to see

In the heart of depression there is an emotional smog that blinds us to any hope.

In poverty it is often hard to see beyond the next payment

When there is injustice it is often difficult to appreciate my own personal dignity and worth

Against such an onslaught of weakness compliance in desperation seems so much more comfortable

Yet in the darkness the crucified Christ is with me

As I count what money I have, I share the challenge and the fear

Even condemned by chance or circumstance my faith calls me to begin again, to assert and believe in my self-respect

Even here my life is blessed
There is real joy to be experienced in the reality
But it is an effort to recognise and live within the blessing.

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