

# ON HAPPINESS

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the grace of God is to contemplate gratitude. Even gratitude for material blessings we have received throughout life is an opening. Thanksgiving is the recognition that one has received a gift. And if one receives a gift there is at least an implicit recognition of a gift-giver who is interested in the providential care of His creation. From there one can contemplate the gift of our life, and our own personal being from which we can experience the world through our senses and contemplate its beauty.

But wait. What about all the tragedies which beset the world – the famines, diseases, natural disasters, tyrannies, wars and threats of a nuclear armageddon. How can we contemplate happiness in the midst of misery? We are left with a seeming enigma. We live in a vale of tears. Earthly happiness is a true, albeit imperfect, happiness. Yet we are immersed in sorrow. It is only when we can look behind the events in this world to see the bloodied but loving face of the Redeemer that we can hope for the perfect happiness in heaven through God's mercy. As St. Paul said, "All things work for the good of those who love God."<sup>13</sup> In this we must have faith.

At the end of time will there be any happiness? And what type of happiness would it be? This is a question which needs to be explored for there is a linkage among faith, hope, charity and happiness. Jesus asked, "When the Son of Man returns will he find faith on earth?"<sup>14</sup> As noted by the philosopher

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Josef Pieper the end of time will be marked by calamity: total control of the world by the Antichrist, worldwide persecution of the Church, and the blood testimony of martyrs.<sup>15</sup>

growing expansiveness and virulence.<sup>16</sup>

We may rephrase the question posed by Jesus to ask whether there will be any happiness on earth when the Son of Man returns. What does happiness mean in the midst of a totality of evil? The remnant of the faithful will still



Apostasy will prevail over faith; hate will triumph over charity. The illusory personal autonomy sought by secular society by abandoning God and the Church will be willingly surrendered to the Antichrist who will demand worship and total obedience. Secular society, moved by fear and self interest will look upon the Church as an adversary and seek to destroy it. Indeed, it is currently doing this today with

have hope, but this hope is something supernatural and not directed to anything worldly for worldly hope is extinguished as well as worldly well being. Supernatural hope is the hope of martyrs, the hope for salvation. And it is in this last thread of hope that one can say there is any well being for it will be only spiritual well being. Happiness would only be in anticipation of deliverance from this world.

Our world is not at that stage yet. For all we know the apocalyptic prophecies of the Book of Revelation may be hundreds of years away. We ought not to worry about such events which are not upon us and, in any case, are beyond our control. We live in the present and there is still

ample cause for joy in this world. As long as the Catholic Church exists and as long as the Catholic Faith continues to be practiced among men there will be celebration. Christmas and Easter are times of a great happiness which shine so brightly even the secular world must take notice. The Mass and the sacraments sustain us and help keep the light of faith burning in the darkness of a world which has abandoned Christ. *Ego sum lux mundi*. It is Jesus Christ who is the light of the world. Whoever follows Him will never stumble in the darkness but will have the light of life and eternal happiness.<sup>17</sup> ■

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## End Notes

1. It is in this respect similar to the state of sanctifying grace with which it is intimately associated.
2. Ecclesiastes 1:2.
3. For example, the *pachamama*, a wooden idol, was displayed for veneration at the recent Amazon Synod in 2019. Worship of pagan fertility gods has been often accompanied by human sacrifice. Human sacrifice occurs today in the horror of abortion.
4. Psalm 95.
5. For more on this point see, Josef Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*. St Augustine's Press, 1998.
6. This is the mistake today made by those who denigrate the Traditional Latin Mass, as if the quiet contemplation by the faithful at Mass lacks lay participation in the divine mysteries. Actually, the opposite is the case.
7. John 17:3.
8. John 14:1.
9. The hate we speak of here is hatred of persons and the good. We can and should hate evil.
10. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Book II, 4, 1382a 1-15.
11. It is no accident that in secularist societies (especially socialist societies like Sweden) there is little desire to have children. The birth rate for nations in Europe have dropped below the replacement level while the population of Moslem immigrants is allowed to increase. On an individual level the Catholic News Agency recently reported data from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) showing a 34% increase in the suicide rates between 2000 and 2016 of Americans aged 16 to 64 years, and a 50% increase in the rate of suicides for 10 to 24 year olds between 2000 and 2017.
12. It has been predicted that God out of His mercy will break through all of the distractions and command our attention in no uncertain ways. Saints and mystics over the past few centuries since St. Edmund Campion have spoken of an illumination of conscience in which God in a supernatural event will show everyone on earth how their souls look to Him. Each person will see all of his sins, and what effect they've had on his own soul, on the souls of others and upon our crucified God. In the last century seers at Garabandal and Medjugorje experiencing Marian apparitions have spoken of this as a "Warning" which will happen in our generation. For more information about what has been predicted the following book may be of interest: Christine Watkins, *The Warning, Testimonies and Prophecies of the Illumination of Conscience*, Queen of Peace Media, 2019.
13. Romans 8:28.
14. Luke 18:8.
15. See, J. Pieper, *The End of Time*, Ignatius Press, 1999.
16. So great is the hatred of Catholicism and the Catholic foundation of their culture by the socialist European countries that they are willing to invite the end of European culture and civilization by the influx of Moslem peoples who want to impose their own culture, religion and laws throughout the world.
17. John 8:20.