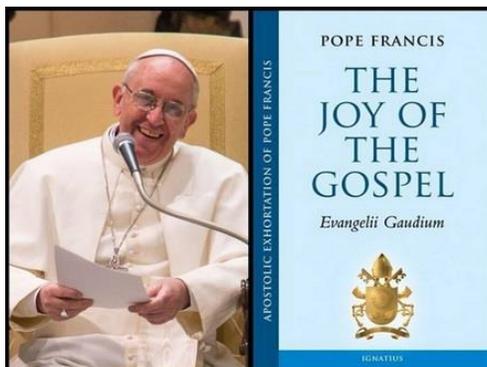


PRAYING THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL

This prayer is based on the “Introduction” to *Evangelii Gaudium*, the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis.



I. Sign of the Cross: Leader

II. Opening Prayer: Leader

“The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ, joy is constantly born anew. In this Exhortation I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church’s journey in years to come.” (#1)

III. Scriptural Response: Pray together.

“My soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is... But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness... It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord” (*Lam* 3:17, 21-23, 26). *Pause for a moment of silent reflection.*

IV. Meditative Reading of The Joy of the Gospel: Reader

“The Gospel, radiant with the glory of Christ’s cross, constantly invites us to rejoice. (#5) There are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter. I realize of course that joy is not expressed the same way at all times in life, especially at moments of great difficulty. Joy adapts and changes, but it always endures, even as a flicker of light born of our personal certainty that, when everything is said and done, we are infinitely loved. I understand the grief of people who have to endure great suffering, yet slowly but surely we all have to let the joy of faith slowly revive as a quiet yet firm trust, even amid the greatest distress.” (#6)

V. Discussion:

Reflecting on this paragraph from *The Joy of the Gospel*, how would most people you meet each day rate your Christian body language?



“Lent without Easter”

“radiant with the cross of Christ”

VI. Prayerful Response:

1. “The Gospel, radiant with the glory of Christ’s cross, constantly invites us to rejoice... ‘Rejoice!’ is the angel’s greeting to Mary. Mary’s visit to Elizabeth makes John leap for joy in his mother’s womb. In her song of praise, Mary proclaims: ‘My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.’
2. When Jesus begins his ministry, John cries out: ‘For this reason, my joy has been fulfilled.’ Jesus himself ‘rejoiced in the Holy Spirit.’ His message brings us joy: ‘I have said these things to you, so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.’
1. Our Christian joy drinks of the wellspring of his brimming heart. He promises his disciples: ‘You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy.’ He then goes on to say: ‘But I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.’
2. The disciples ‘rejoiced’ at the sight of the risen Christ. In the Acts of the Apostles we read that the first Christians ‘ate their food with glad and generous hearts.’
1. Wherever the disciples went, ‘there was great joy’; even amid persecution they continued to be ‘filled with joy.’
2. Why should we not also enter into this great stream of joy? Because we do not always see these seeds growing, we need an interior certainty, a conviction that God is able to act in every situation, even amid apparent setbacks.” (5)

VII. Closing Prayer: Leader

“The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ, joy is constantly born anew.” (#1)

ALL: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

