

Important to share your joys

Cycle C - 14th Sunday of OT - 2022

If you were a liturgist you would know the Gospel is the most important reading on a Sunday...
and the first reading has the same theme as the gospel...
and the psalm is a response to the first reading.
So if you want the main point of the Sunday celebration, look at the psalm response—
“Make a joyful noise to God all the earth!

We have much to be joyful about.

We live in Canada, rated as one of the best countries to live in the world.
The last time we had a military battle on Canadian ground was Battle of Steele Narrows,
in 1885, the last battle of the North-West rebellion.
We have probably the best summers of any place, and the warm weather is just beginning.
There are 100,000 lakes in our province and it would take a lifetime just to visit them
all. Our park system is second to none.
Not to mention all the enjoyments of: fishing, hunting, hockey, dance,
hiking, skiing, cycling and gardening.
We have much to be joyful about.

But I like the line that concludes the gospel.

Do not rejoice that all the spirits submit to you;
rejoice that your names are written in heaven.
Even in the midst of our joy we need to keep our priorities right.
It is not what we have here on earth that is important...
it is all the treasure that we have built up in heaven, that is important.
70, 80, 90 years may seem like a long time...
but it is a drop in the bucket in comparison to the eternity that we will spend in heaven.
And if you think that attractions of this world bring you joy...
just wait until you experience what God has prepared for us.

It is easy to multiply the joys that we experience here on earth—
all you have to do is share them with someone.

I can go on and on about the wonderful canoe trips I have been on.
The marvelous waterfalls, sunsets, glass like water, raging thunderstorms,
wind-driven rain, and delightful birdsongs,
not to mention excellent food, wine and company.
Just sharing it with you at this moment stirs many memories.
That is why I don't think I would enjoy a solo canoe trip...
there would be no one to enjoy it with.

I think this is why Jesus sends out his disciples two by two.
It is important to have someone who can share your joys...and your sorrows.
There are going to be times when a whole neighbourhood will listen to your every word...
and there will be times when someone sick's the dog on you.

Having said that, I also know that this gospel has been used to encourage young men to become priests;
and young women to become sisters.

And we dutifully pray that the number of those who are going into religious life would increase.

But that is a very narrow reading of the gospel.

The commission of the seventy-two must be seen in contrast to the commission of the twelve.

The seventy-two are called to be evangelizers;

which means we are all called to become evangelizers.

Being an evangelizer doesn't mean that we all have to go and spout the word of God
at every street corner.

I remember a priest coming to the seminary and telling us a story.

He had in his parish, a woman who had cornered the market on music in the parish.

People had tried to enter that ministry but with little success.

The priest knew he had to do something about it. So he went and spoke to her.

He said, "Mary, do you enjoy doing the music in our parish?"

She responded with a very enthusiastic yes.

He asked her why.

She said, she gets a real high, playing a part in raising hearts, minds and souls to God,
at all the celebrations.

He simply said,

"Mary, don't you think other people should have the opportunity
to experience a real high in raising hearts, minds and souls to God?"

The priest said it was as if she had been hit with a hammer.

She had never thought about it that way.

She had the golden opportunity to help others feel the presence of God in their hearts.
That's evangelization.

Not a word of God was spoken,

but the "Word of God" transformed someone that day.

Needless to say it was not long before that parish had a very active music ministry.

If the truth be known,

I always love having someone on a canoe trip that has never been on a canoe trip.

Why, because I get to see the wonder and awe--of God's great creation-- through their eyes.

I know that each and every one of you has a passion.

Sometimes all we need to do to evangelize, is to pass that passion onto another person.

When Fr. Herve was elected to Prince Albert artist's hall of fame,

one of the things that many people spoke about was his passion for art,

and how he simply loved teaching someone else his talents.

When I came to St. Mark Parish someone told me St. Mark was built on food.

The first image that popped into my mind was

the foundation of the church was made from perogies and cabbage rolls...

but I soon learned that food has always been a method of evangelizing in St. Mark.

I know there are people who can do woodworking, welding, knitting, baking,
sewing, electrical work.

There are those who can climb, mop floors, and wash dishes.

Not to mention drive a car, shop for groceries, or simply listen to the birds.

You do not need to be a reader at Mass, a greeter, a musician,

or someone who takes up the collection at Mass to be an evangelizer.

The ladies in St. James have started a sewing group, making blankets for the homeless,
and they can't wait to start up again in the fall.
This is what the priesthood of all believers is all about;
sharing the good news through our passions.

Think about the words of the Psalm, "Make a joyful noise all the earth,
sing the glory of his name, give him glorious praise.
Say to God, How glorious your deeds."

We have to make a distinction between what we do, and why we do it.
St. Paul tells us why we do what we do,
"May I never boast of anything except the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."
We burst with joy because of Jesus' great love for us.
His love was poured out upon us from the cross,
and this is something we can never forget.

But how we manifest that joy...that is in our own particular passion.
The joy we get when we interact with other people...or his creation.
Pope Francis once said, "If you are joyful about your faith, let your face reflect that joy."

When Jesus sent out the seventy two, he was inviting them to do his work.
The first words that they were to speak were "Peace to all in this house." The
72 were to extend the peace and joy that is in their hearts,
to the hearts of those that they met.

Think about the Mass we are celebrating.
Think of all the times the peace of Christ is being offered to you.
At the beginning, "Peace be with you."
At the gospel and the beginning of the Eucharist prayer.
"The Lord be with you...the peace of the Lord be with you."
Take this all of you and eat it."
Let the peace of Christ transform you from the inside out.
Take this and drink from it.
Become the catalyst in someone else's life.
"Give us this day our daily bread."
Give us the peace that we need to get through the day.
"The peace of the Lord be with you"
and the great command to share God peace with one another.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world—grant us peace.
Ending with the final blessing. "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord."

We can all extend a greeting of peace to those around us, when we share our passions.
Peace is not just an absence of war. Peace is a positive thing.
It implies openness, friendship and good will.
By just exercising openness, friendship and goodwill
we break down the barriers of suspicion, fear and prejudice.
And when we break down the barriers of suspicion, fear and prejudice,
we build the kingdom of God.

Think about it, we have never had more people who profess to be Christians than we do today.
Imagine how we could change the world if we all acted out our priesthood.