

## Joy

Every day the Media places before our eyes the suffering of the world, tragedies, countries at war, natural disasters. We all make the observation that life is difficult, that suffering is omnipresent, the grief of the loss of our loved ones is inevitable, and yet, the mere fact of living brings us joy.

St. Paul recommends to the Philippians: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone." ( Phil.4:4-5)

Like St.Paul, our Founder advises us to live in joy and radiate it around us:

"Your Constitutions, sisters, lay upon you a special duty to work to be, and show yourselves to be always joyful, gentle, even-tempered, polite, generous, considerate in the eyes of God ..."  
(Cf. Constitutions No. 32)

"Joy, gentleness, politeness are especially recommended to the Daughters of Mary and Joseph by our Founder.  
He invites us to live our religious life with joy and gratitude, to trust in God as children trust in their father and to share his gifts with our sisters and our neighbours in a spirit of openness and simplicity. "(Cf. spirit of the Congregation no. 4)

"Filled with the joy and freedom of his Spirit, we rejoice in the gift of his call and we profess and live our vows as a response in faith." (Cf. spirit of the Congregation no.11)

Joy is part of the being of God; this joy of God became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Our Founder invites us to let ourselves be penetrated by this joy and let it shine on our faces. He insists that in our relationships with others, we express this joy of God in us, as thanksgiving, to be pardoned sinners.



The scene of the Visitation of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth (cf. Lc.1; 26-38) extols the joy expressed by the two women who believed, without reservation, in the promises of life – incredible to human reason - that God had made to each of them. The joy of the meeting is the shining example of their faith in this unimaginable future promise.

Mary and Elizabeth went to meet one another, despite what those around them said, aroused by these miraculous presences in their wombs. They threw themselves happily into each other's arms despite their submission to the mystery and their fear of the unknown. The Visitation sings the praises of the meeting lived absolutely in trust, and the graciousness of God.

In my religious life, I have had the pleasure of meeting many people. As a young religious, I had the good fortune to go to Brazil for an apostolic work as part of the mission entrusted to the DMJ.

Later, I was able to live in several countries in Africa, Europe and California (USA). I felt great joy when I met people, that I was discovering cultures and exploring new landscapes. But the challenge for all of us is to let ourselves be faced in return by unknown faces, by new questions, and foreign ways of seeing and believing. This reciprocity in the encounter is essential to our understanding of the world, as well as acceptance of all the mysteries that surround it and so we will never come to the end in this human life.

It is when we meet this challenge that we experience the joy of the encounter.

Like the majority of my sisters, I am getting old, and yet, the invitation of our Founder to be joyful is still valid for me as for the younger sisters, for joy comes from God.

I would make my own the prayer of Sister Genevieve (a Carmelite of Montpellier- France, RIP 1973)

This prayer is quoted by Father Rondet S.J. in his article "Aging"

"What happens on the other side - when everything for me has been toppled into eternity -I do not know! **I believe only that love is waiting for me.**

Yet I know that then I will have to give, poor and without weight, an account of myself, but do not think that I despair, **I believe, I believe so much that love is waiting for me.**

Do not talk of glory and praise of the blessed, nor tell me anything of angels, **all I can do is believe, stubbornly believe that love is waiting for me.**

Now, my time is so close and what can I say: what I believed, I believe more strongly on the threshold of death: **it is towards a love that I walk in my going, it is into a love I gently descend.**

If I die, do not cry, **it is a love that takes me.**

If I am afraid, and why not, simply remind me **that a love awaits me.**

**He will open me up entirely to his JOY and his LIGHT.**

**Yes, Father, I come to you in the wind of which we know neither where it comes from nor where it goes, to your love which waits for me. "**

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