

Great Expectations

The Good News about human destiny can fill us with great expectations all of the days of our lives –lives which are God-created, or seeded for eternity, using the phrase from our last conversation. This podcast is the second in a series of three which correspond with the St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, in Holladay, Utah. People who are interested in knowing more about Catholicism were welcomed recently at the parish and this conversation addresses two aspects of human destiny implied during that Welcome Session; first, human happiness, and then, second, its vital link with human freedom.

The destiny of eternal happiness is in the seed of eternity, as was discussed in the first part of this conversation. It is our God-given heart's-desire. And only God can satisfy the longing of our human heart.

True human happiness, for Catholics, is described in the little list we call the Beatitudes. These Beatitudes can be seen as a summation of Jesus' teaching. They appear in the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke. Living life following the patterns laid out here leads to bliss, to gladness of heart, to beatitude. Living life following the patterns laid out here is why God made us –to know the divine heart, to love as the Spirit leads us to, and to serve in the manner of Christ, which is without limit. As we do this, we inherit eternal life.

The pattern we establish while we are alive is the pattern we take with us after death into the *rest* of eternal life. We can either grow and mature, following God's path to truth and goodness, or remain stuck in immaturity, clinging to false gods instead. The truth is that when we choose good, over and over again, we become more and more free.

Beatitude living isn't something we achieve. It is an entirely free gift from God, flowing from the energy of love, and it is grace, pure grace. The happiness we are promised, however, requires of us that we choose carefully what is right and just and good. We shape our lives by our free will. So we better understand what true freedom is all about.

Catholics believe that, God created us with the ability to know and understand –our intellect, and the ability to choose –our will. With these two, we are able to make free choices, and thus able to love. Because we are able to make free choices, each of us literally determines our own eternal destiny; and the destiny of every human being is to be with God forever –this is our faith!

Something Else

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 61	the glad tidings, of life / freedom restored by God
Matthew 5:3-12	Jesus' description of the 'happiness' of his followers
John 8:31-36	Christ who is truth, makes us free
Romans 1:5	obedience of faith
Romans 5:12-7:61	the Christian is freed
Romans 10:16-17	hearing the word of Christ
Romans 8:18-30	glory as destiny; freed from slavery
1 Corinthians 10:23	everything is permissible
Galatians 5:1	Christ has given us freedom
Philemon v 14	goodness should be a free act of the will

CATECHISM

#'s 1691-1748 Life in Christ

life in the spirit, 1699
human dignity, 1700
man: the image of God, 1701-1709
vocation to beatitude, 1716-1729
the Beatitudes, 1716
the desire for happiness, 1718
Christian beatitude, 1720

PRAYER

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, 94D

Lord Jesus Christ,
when you climbed the mountain to preach,
you turned your disciples from the paths of sin
and revealed to them the beatitudes of your kingdom.
Help these your servants,
who hear the word of the Gospel,

and protect them from the spirit of greed, lust, and of pride.
May they find the blessings of your kingdom
in poverty and in hunger,
in mercy and in purity of heart.
May they work for peace
and joyfully endure persecution
and so come to share your kingdom
and experience the mercy you promised.
May they finally see God in the joy of heaven
where you live and reign for ever and ever.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, 224A

Do you reject sin so as to live in the freedom of God's children?

Sacramentary, Opening Prayer, 1st week of Advent

God our Father,
you loved the world so much
you gave your only son
to free us from the ancient power of sin and death.
Help us who wait for his coming,
and lead us to true liberty.

Sacramentary, Opening Prayer, Tuesday in the Octave of Easter

Father,
by this Easter mystery you touch our lives
with the healing power of your love.
You have given us the freedom of the sons of God.
May we who now celebrate your gift
find joy in it for ever in heaven.

Sacramentary, Opening Prayer, 10th Sunday of Lent

Father in heaven,
words cannot measure the boundaries of love
for those born to new life in Christ Jesus.
Raise us beyond the limits this world imposes,
so that we may be free to love as Christ teaches,
and find our joy in your glory

Sacramentary, Preface, *Lent II*

Father,
all powerful and ever-living God,
we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks.
This great season of grace
is your gift to your family
to renew us in spirit.
You give us strength
to purify our hearts,
to control our desires,
and so to serve you in freedom.
You teach us how to live
in this passing world
with our heart set on
the world that will never end.

Sacramentary, Preface, *Thanksgiving Day in the United States*

Father, we do well to join all of creation in praising you,
our almighty God through Jesus Christ our Lord.
You made man to your own image
and set him over all of creation.
Once you chose a people and gave them a destiny and,
when you brought them out of bondage to freedom,
they carried with them the promise
that all men would be blessed
and all men could be free.
What the prophets pledged
was fulfilled in Jesus Christ,
your Son and our saving Lord.
It has come to pass in every generation
for all men who have believed
that Jesus by his death and resurrection
gave them a new freedom in his Spirit.
It happened to our fathers who came to this land
as if out of the desert into a place of promise and hope.
It happens to us still, in our time
as you lead all men through your Church
to the blessed vision of peace.

Sacramentary, Prayer After Communion, *Mass of Confirmation B*

Lord,
you give you Son as food
to those you anoint with your Spirit.
Help them to fulfill your law by living as your children.
May they live in holiness and be your witnesses to the world.
Sacramentary, Solemn Blessing, *Second Sunday of Easter*

The Redeemer has given you lasting freedom.. May you inherit his everlasting life.

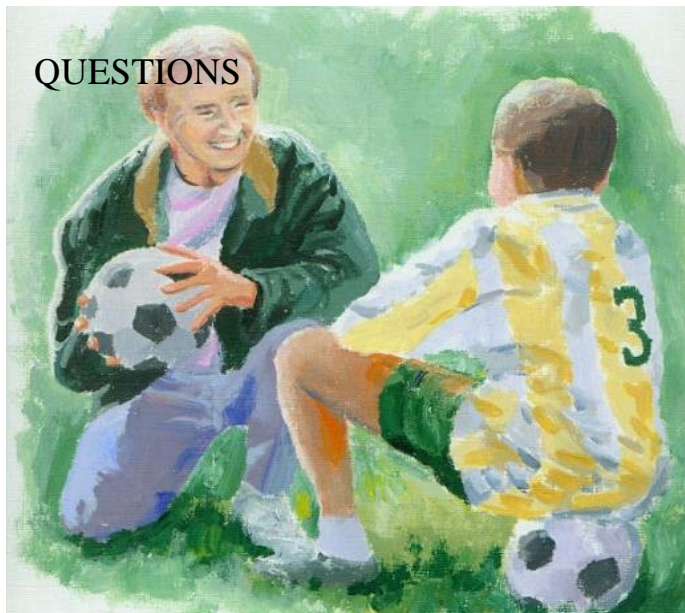
INPRINT

Proclaim Jubilee! A Spirituality for the Twenty-First Century, Maria Harris
Westminster John Know Press, 1996, ISBN 0-664-25661-9

Moment by Moment, a Retreat in Everyday Life,
Carol Ann Smith, SHCJ; Eugene F. Merz, SJ
Ave Maria Press, 2000, ISBN 0-87793-945-4

(email requests of any of the following)

- WS1B1 What Makes Us Free?
- WS1B2 The Christian Meaning of Freedom
- WS1B3 The Light of Conscience



QUESTIONS

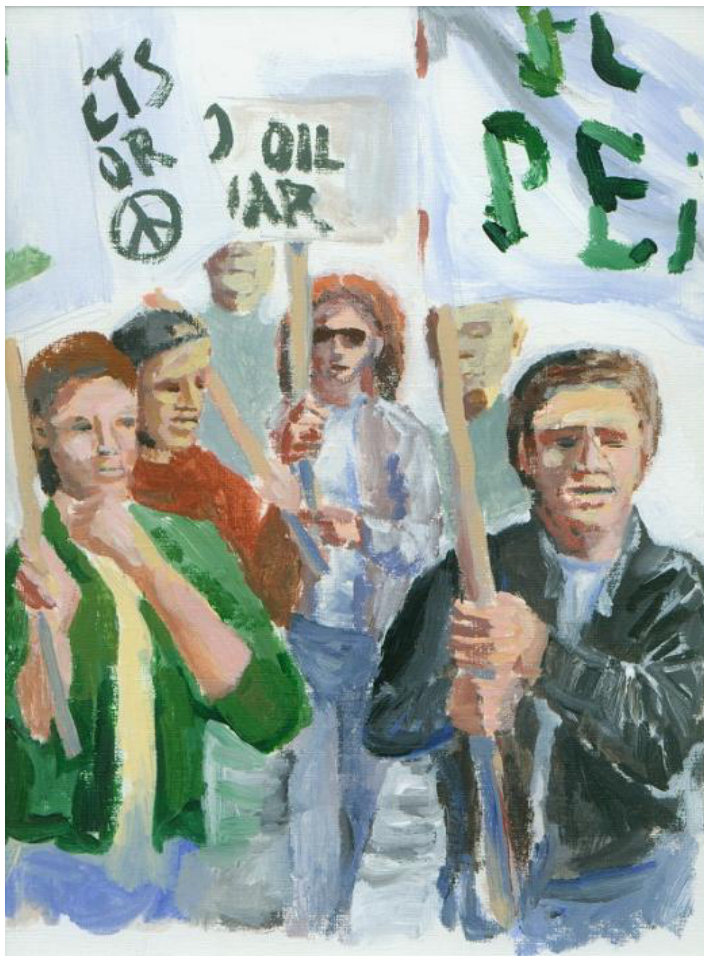
What does happiness mean to you?
What makes you happy?

What gives human beings dignity?
What gives all of creation dignity?

What make us free?

How do you experience happiness?
Dignity? Freedom?

How does human happiness result
from living in love, from caring for
others, and from dying to ourselves?



In what ways do human dignity and freedom make us responsible to change the conditions of life that cause suffering for other men and women?

Is this then, living for everyone's happiness?

How is obedience to God true freedom?

Can we live truly blessed lives only when we follow the teaching of the Gospel?

Where is your slavery –with obedience to God, or elsewhere?

LET US PRAY

Oh, God,
we know that you are with us
and that you behold all we say and do.
Now grant, that by the light of your Holy Spirit,
we might be attentive to our journey of faith
and loving toward others.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.