

Celebrating the Gift of Laughter

**A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance:
but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.**

- Proverbs 15: 13

Recent research has demonstrated what our grandmothers always knew: LAUGHTER is GOOD MEDICINE. Humor and laughter make a significant contribution to both our physical and mental health. Learning to adopt a lighter attitude and see the funny side of everyday situations gives us the resilience we need to cope on the tough days.

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Let us pause and recall that the God of joy and laughter is always abiding with us and filling us with life, with hope, with creativity and with a thirst for union with Him. We are God's people, alive in the Spirit and called to continually celebrate His presence in our lives.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Psalm 126

**When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, then we thought we were dreaming.
Our mouths were filled with laughter; our tongues sang for joy.**

Then it was said among the nations,

“The LORD had done great things for them.”

The LORD has done great things for us;

Oh, how happy we were!

Restore again our fortunes, LORD, like the dry streambeds of the Negeb.

Those who sow in tears will reap with cries of joy.

**Those who go forth weeping, carrying sacks of seed, will return with cries of joy,
carrying their bundled sheaves.**

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There is a season, and a time for every matter under heave

. . . a time to laugh . . . a time to dance . . . a time to embrace.

- Ecclesiastes 3:1,4,5

Humor is both God's gift and a life-saving medicine.

There's nothing like a good laugh. It tickles our very souls. Laughter is an activity of the heart. We scrunch our souls with negativity and a lack of enthusiasm, but laughter smoothes them out. Laughter makes a noise so others can hear our feelings.”

- Tickle Your Soul, Anne Bryan Smollin



If You're Happy and You Know It

**If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.
If you're happy and you know it then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.**

**If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet.
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet.
If you're happy and you know it then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet.**

**If you're happy and you know it, shout hurray.
If you're happy and you know it, shout hurray.
If you're happy and you know it then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, shout hurray.**

**If you're happy and you know it, do all three.
If you're happy and you know it, do all three.
If you're happy and you know it then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know, do all three.**

“Human beings love to laugh, and the average adult laughs 17 times a day. Humans love to laugh so much that there are actually industries built around laughter. Jokes, sitcoms and comedians are all designed to get us laughing, because laughing feels good. For us it seems so natural, but the funny thing is that humans are one of the only species that laughs. Laughter is actually a complex response that involves many of the same skills used in solving problems.”

- How Laughter Works, Marshall Brain

**Humor is a grace.
It let us wok more effectively and play more enthusiastically.
It teaches us to be more creatively flexible.**



He will yet fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy. – Job 8:21

All the days of the oppressed are wretched, but the cheerful heart has a continual feast.

– Proverbs 15:15

Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

– Proverbs 4:23

Gospel Mark 10: 13 –153

And people were bringing children to Him that He might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them.

When Jesus saw this He became indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to Me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it.”

Reflection

An aspect of a child-like spirit is joyful glee. Jesus invites us to enjoy life, to nurture our sense of humor. Our faith, and especially our prayer life is enriched through this God given gift

One of the reasons I love being around children and teenagers is that they find delight in so much of life. They find delight and wonder in so many things, and notice that which we adults often times either take for granted or simply do not see. Children then usually react without the inhibitions that we adults place upon ourselves. This reaction often takes form in laughter, joyous, bubbly laughter. The humor of life is fresh and easily accessed in the childlike spirit.

Laughter Came from Every Brick

**Just these two words He spoke
changed my life,
“Enjoy Me.”**

**What a burden I thought I was to carry –
a crucifix, as did He.**

**Love once said to me, “I know a song,
would you like to hear it?”**

**And laughter came from every brick in the street
and from every pore
in the sky.**

**After a night of prayer, He
changed my life when**

**He sang,
“Enjoy Me.”**

– from Love Poems from God, by Daniel Ladinsky



Meditation

Laughter cleanses us from discouragement, anger, apathy, and grief, making room for new feelings and thoughts. Laughter frees us from self-consciousness, anxiety, and stress. Laughter helps heal our physical ailments – it massages internal organs and strengthens the life force flowing through us. Laughter teaches us to take our troubles lightly, releasing our spirits from the weight of the world and of ourselves. Laughter unites what has been separate, connecting us to one another and to our true selves. Laughter calls forth our desire to live. Laughter, then, is a source of miracles. Surely, it's one of the places where we can meet our God.

– “Glad Day,” Joan Larkin

Intercessions

That our hearts may always be filled with joy and thanksgiving, we pray...

For those who see no joy in life, we pray...

For those who are able to lift up our spirits, we pray...

That we realize the importance of taking care of our mental and physical health through the gift of laughter, we pray...

Let us pray:

Loving Father,

Lord of clowns and smiling saints,

we rejoice that You are a God of laughter and tears.

Blessed are You, for You have rooted within us

the gifts of humor, lightheartedness and mirth.

**With jokes and comedy, You cause our hearts to sing
as laughter flows out of us.**

We are grateful that Your Son, Jesus, the Master,

daily invites us to be Fools for Your sake,

to embrace the madness

of Your prophets, holy people and saints.

We delight in that Holy Madness

which becomes medicine to heal the chaos of the cosmos

since it calls each of us

from the hum-drumness of daily life

into joy, adventure,

and most of all, into freedom.

With circus bands and organ grinders,

with fools, clowns, court jesters and comedians,

with high spirited angels and saints,

we too join in the fun and foolishness of life,

so that Your holy laughter

may ring out to the edges of the universe.

Blessed are You, O Lord, our God,

Who invites us to be filled with holy laughter.

– Prayers for the Domestic Church, Ed Hays



**Saint John Baptist de La Salle
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,
help us to appreciate a holy sense of humor.**

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!

Tips to help you put more laughter in your life

- * **Figure out what makes you laugh and do it (or read it or watch it) more often.**
- * **Surround yourself with funny people – be with them every chance you get.**
- * **Develop your own sense of humor but never at anyone else's expense.**

Little Books You Might Enjoy

Celebrate The Temporary, Clyde Reid, Harper and Row

Live Laugh and Be Blessed, Anne Bryan Smollin, Sorin Books, Notre Dame, IN

Tickle Your Soul, Anne Bryan Smollin, Sorin Books, Notre Dame, IN



*Do not give yourself over to sorrow,
and do not stress yourself deliberately.*

*A joyful heart is life itself,
and rejoicing lengthens one's life span.*

*Indulge yourself and take comfort,
and remove sorrow far from you.*

*Those who are cheerful and merry
will benefit...*

- Sirach 30: 21-25