

TRUE AND PERFECT HAPPINESS



PREPARE

Chapter Focus: We all search for happiness, but it is truly found only when we give our whole selves to Christ.

Scripture: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope” (Romans 15:13).

Opening Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.



PROCLAIM

Proclamation: True and perfect happiness in this life and in the next is only found in Christ.



EXPLORE

True and Perfect Happiness

We all want to be happy, yet we find enjoyment in many different things. For example, some people love to play sports, others love to draw, and still others like to hike mountains. With all the different things people enjoy doing, it is tempting to think that happiness is something entirely subjective. Indeed, many people today have adopted this view and argue that we should be able to do whatever we want so long as it makes us happy and does not hurt anyone. But not everything that “makes us happy” or “gives one pleasure” is a good thing that should be done. In fact, we only do bad things because they give us some kind of pleasure or happiness. For example, a teen may look at a person with lust because it brings him pleasure, but that does not mean it is a good thing.





There are different kinds of happiness. First, there is the momentary pleasure we receive when we do something wrong, such as stealing, looking at another with lust, or yelling at our parents because they made us mad. These disordered pleasures are very different from the true happiness we receive from doing good things such as going for a walk or hanging out with friends. These good things bring about a real and genuine happiness that we all experience, and yet even this happiness is limited and can become disordered. For example, the happiness we experience while taking a walk is limited only to the time that we are walking and not tired; as soon as we become exhausted or stop walking, we do not experience the joy of walking anymore. We can also pursue these true goods in a disordered way. For example, we may enjoy the good of friendship with another, but if we spend so much time with our friends that we fail to perform well in school our relationships with them become disordered.

While the happiness that the things of this world offer may be real, they are limited both by time and space and can often become disordered when we indulge in them too much. The things of this world while being very good offer only a limited happiness on their own, not the true happiness we all are seeking.

However, the happiness that God has to offer, namely beatitude, is perfect happiness—it will never end nor be enjoyed too much. This perfect happiness is fulfilled when we will be united with God forever in Heaven. In Heaven, we will never suffer or die. We will not experience loneliness, suffering, or depression. We will be filled with great joy, peace, and love beyond our wildest imagination.

We can share in this perfect happiness or beatitude here on earth as well. Those who follow Christ and remain in his grace, not only have the peace that they will be with God in Heaven, but they are filled with a share of that supernatural joy here on earth. That is why the saints are the happiest people on earth even if they experienced many physical and spiritual hardships. The joy of the Christian is not a fake or naive optimism, but a calm and sturdy peace as they put their trust in God. Those who live in God's grace have the fullest share in the happiness of this earth. Those who are holy enjoy being with friends, taking walks, sports, but they know how to enjoy them to the proper degree and in the proper way. They can even unite these activities to Christ and allow him to sanctify all that they say and do.



APPLY

Live your Faith:

As you prepare for your Confirmation, consider where you find your greatest happiness. Remember we should enjoy the good things of this world, but we must enjoy them in virtuous and Godly ways. As you reflect on these things that you enjoy, consider specific ways that you can unite these activities to Christ. For example, if you enjoy painting, consider painting an image of Christ or if you like sports, consider saying a prayer with your teammates. By uniting all that you have to Christ, you can share in the perfect happiness and peace that only God can give.



CELEBRATE

We Pray: Suscipe Prayer by Saint Ignatius

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,
my memory, my understanding,
and my entire will,
All I have and call my own.

You have given all to me.
To you, Lord, I return it.

Everything is yours; do with it what you will.
Give me only your love and your grace,
that is enough for me.