

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Gospel: John 16: 16-22

The false joys of the world, and the true joys
possessed by the servants of Jesus Christ

34.1 First Point

In the Gospel of this day Jesus Christ says that the world will rejoice, whereas for a time the servants of God will be made sorrowful, but that their sorrow will be turned into joy.²³⁹ This should lead you to consider the difference existing between the joy of worldly people and that of God's servants.

The world's joy will be brief, that of God's servants will have no end. This much is clear from the words of the Gospel. Worldlings, says Jesus Christ, will rejoice, but for how long? At most for as long as they remain in this world. But as soon as they leave this earth, that is, after this present life, their joy will end and the sadness which will follow will be eternal.

As for the joy of God's servants, it will be such, says Our Lord, that no one will be able to take it away from them.²⁴⁰ If now they experience trials and sorrows, these will last only for a short time;²⁴¹ the joy which will follow their pains will have no end.

Woe to those who think only of satisfying themselves in this world, for this satisfaction will not last!

34.2 Second Point

A second difference between worldlings' joy and the joy of God's servants is that the former is only superficial, whereas the latter is very deep. This difference is seen in Our Lord's words, The world will rejoice,²⁴² he tells us, whereas for the servants of God he says, Your hearts will rejoice.²⁴³ This shows us that the joy of the former is only apparent: the world knows only the pomp and outward show of joy, but when God's servants have joy, it is their hearts that rejoice.

The heart is the source of life in a person, because it is the last thing in the person to die. The joy of the just, according to Our Lord, will be unshakeable and not easily subject to changes, because it is founded on what sustains the life of grace in them, namely, the love of God and union with him by prayer and the reception of the sacraments. In this way God maintains and nourishes their joy; it is solidly based because it is based on God himself.

Your joy is genuine if you rejoice in the midst of suffering and all the most painful trials. But if you make your joy consist in sensual pleasures, ah, how true it is that your joy is completely superficial, since it has the same nature as its object, in this case, a fragile and perishable good!

34.3 Third Point

There is still a major difference between the joys of worldlings and those of God's servants. The former are entirely external, the latter are interior because they are in the heart. Hence, in the case of worldlings, the least trouble disturbs their joy and throws them into dejection; whereas the joy of God's servants, being within them, is immune to anything external that might detract from it; nothing external can penetrate the depths of their heart; for God's servants are not affected by outward things except when they allow themselves to be deceived by the senses.

Because the joy of the just is caused by God's love deep in their hearts, and because this love is directed to a good which is inalterable, immutable, and eternal, it follows that they cannot be disturbed in the possession of that delightful satisfaction so long as charity unites their soul to God.

Does your joy come from within? Do you not sometimes let yourself be absorbed by vain and entirely exterior joys?

239 Jn 16:20

240 Jn 16:22

241 Jn 16:16

242 Jn 16:20

243 Jn 16:22