

# YEAR OF FAITH 2012-2013

**10th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME | June 8-9, 2013**

Do you know of anyone who does not want to be “happy”? We do all sorts of things and acquire all sorts of things to be “happy”. Some of us may think that if we get a new car, we will be happy. If we have a more exotic vacation, we will be happy. If we got the recognition at work we deserve, we would be happy. If our children did better in school or sports, we would be happy. All of these things focus how we think we might feel about what is attainable today. True happiness is promised by God, but it is not something that we may obtain in this world. Of course, we may have signs of true happiness that warm us with joy, but we will only have the chance to experience true happiness when we live with God forever in heaven.

True happiness is the goal of what we call the moral life. The moral life is the relationship that Jesus lays out for us to live with Him and in Him and thus reach our goal of being with Him forever in Heaven. True happiness is heaven. Jesus invites us through our baptism to choose this relationship many times a day and to strengthen the bond that keeps us close to Him as we make the journey to Heaven.

In Baptism, each Christian is set apart to live life according to what God knows is best for us. Staying faithful to this expectation is what we refer to as holiness or striving for sanctity. In other words, we are made by God to be saints. Through the teachings of Jesus through His Church, we are presented with what is good and what is evil...what is of God and that which will lead us away from God. In receiving Baptism, we become a member of Christ’s Body which provides us with His grace, most visibly through the sacraments. This grace is the in-breaking of God’s presence into this world. It strengthens us, comforts us, and reminds us that He is with us. We rely on grace to be able to choose God in the many opportunities He gives us every day. None of us is compelled to lead a moral life. Instead, we are invited into this close relationship with the God who loves us. God allows us to exercise our free will to demonstrate that we truly love Him in return. There would be no real sign of love if we were not permitted to choose.

This ability to choose God has as its converse the ability to reject Him. This is what we know as sin. It is the betrayal of what Jesus has revealed to us about what is needed to maintain our friendship with Him as we travel through this world. Sin offends both God and our fellow brothers and sisters that make up the Body of Christ, the Church. Sin turns us from the path to true happiness. It draws strength from itself. One sin often leads to more serious and more frequent occurrences of sin. It only brings about an emptiness where God should be present in our lives.

In the Gospel today, we encounter Jesus’ compassion for the mother suffering because of the death of her only son. He approaches the body and commands the young man to rise and gives the restored man back to his mother. For us, sin is spiritual illness or even death. We have the opportunity to be given back to those who love us if we can accept the pre-eminence of divine love, which inspires genuine Christian living. Jesus will restore us to life if only we are willing to return to the Church, our spiritual

mother, and live our lives with her. We still have Jesus reaching out to us. In the restoration available to us in the sacrament of confession, we are healed. In the Eucharist, we are strengthened in the moral life.

How then to be sure that we do our best when opportunities arise each day for us to choose Jesus and to choose the moral life? Our consciences are the tool which we must constantly work to hone if we wish to choose well. Some may be thinking that conscience is following their gut or perhaps some may have the image of the little angel on one shoulder and the little devil on the other, trying to convince us to choose one way or the other. But this is not conscience as we have understood it as Catholics. Instead, it is the use of our reason to judge the morality of an action. We must listen to God speaking in that choice. A good judgment of conscience is never contrary to the truth of God. In order to form it well, we must have a regular life of prayer and we must seek to learn our Faith as Jesus teaches through the Catholic Church. This struggle to form our consciences is a life-long, but necessary task if we are to maintain our relationship with God.

As we strive to be truly happy with God forever in heaven we must consider the realities of life lived in this world. We think of the choices presented to us each day. We must constantly work to know our Faith and to live according to the commandments and the teachings of Christ. We must accept those sufferings that are a natural part of a life lived in this world as an occasion to recommit ourselves to God. Finally, we must recognize that we are never alone. God wants to support us with His grace and we are surrounded by the rest of the Church striving for the same goal.