

## Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Dec 14th 2014

Everyone wants to be happy. Everyone seeks happiness in different ways. “Where is happiness? I badly need it.” seems to be the constant question. People look for it in different ways. Some seek happiness in Churches, temples and masques while others look for it in pleasure, worldly things, human beings, drugs, sex, etc. Sadly, instead of being happy and satisfied, people often end up with frustration and disappointment. Genuine happiness seems to be a rare commodity. It is in this context, St. Paul invites us to be happy and happy always. Prophet Isaiah exclaimed, “I rejoice heartily in the Lord, in my God is the joy of my soul”. Well, everyone longs for happiness but how can one be genuinely happy? The readings of today propose two keys.

We are all created by God. He is the only creator. Everything else is created by him. So, we need to be detached from creatures and the worldly things and be attached to the Lord, the creator. It is important to question ourselves to see where we have put our trust and attachment. When we cling on to God, even if we have difficulties, problems and sufferings, we will not be shattered. St. Paul was happy and happy always because he was fully in the Lord and mingled himself with the Lord to such an extent that he would say, “it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me”. Since his complete dependence and attachment was with the Lord, he was able to say in the letter of joy, the letter to the Philippians, “I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ” (Phil 3:8). He continues, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice” (4:4).

The second key to be happy always in spite of the ocean of suffering is self-acceptance, accepting ourselves as we are. We are created in the image of God and we are the crown of creation. As Jim Jigler says, God does not create useless fellows. We are the wonders and miracles of the world. If we do not accept ourselves, who then will accept us? People often suffer because they do not accept themselves; they do not appreciate the goodness that is in them. Instead, they go on dreaming of what they are not and what they do not have. Often, we compare with others and think as if all others are happy except us. This leads to inferiority complex, frustration, disappointment and finally to depression. John the Baptist accepted himself as he was; he was not Messiah or Elijah but he was the voice of one crying out in the desert.” He confessed that. He did not grab someone’s identity but was happy in what he was. Let us be happy by being attached with the Lord and accepting ourselves as we are.

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