

In this week's Gospel (Jn 15:9-17), Jesus expresses his desire to fill us with HIS joy – divine joy! He tells his disciples, "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy might be complete." The truth is, our joy can never be complete unless it participates in Jesus' joy which is the joy of God. This is just another way of saying what St. Augustine famously said many years ago: "Our hearts are restless, until they rest in God." We, as human beings created by God and in his image, are made to live in communion with God, nothing else can fulfill this basic human need; nothing else can "complete" our joy.

Everyone is looking for joy just as everyone is looking for love; but, as the old Waylon Jennings song says, many today are "looking for love [joy] in all the wrong places." Pope Paul VI wrote, "Technological society has succeeded in multiplying the occasions of pleasure, but finds great difficulty in giving birth to happiness. For happiness has its origin elsewhere: it is a spiritual thing. Money, comfort, hygiene, material security etc., may often not be lacking, but nevertheless, despite these advantages, boredom, suffering and sadness are frequently to be found supervening in the lives of many people."

The question arises: where do we find this illusive "complete" joy that Jesus promises? Let us look at three clues from today's Gospel and try to discover how they may teach us the path to divine joy:

1) Jesus said, "As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love."

a. Divine joy is the offspring of knowing we are loved by God. We need to hear Jesus speak to us personally: "I love you." Jesus died for me; he wants to save me; he wants to forgive me. If Jesus the Creator and Lord of the universe were to physically walk up to you and say, "I love you as the Father loves me" would you not be moved with deep joy? The fact is, he DOES say that to us at every Mass! Look at Jesus on the Cross, why is he there? His deeds prove his love!

b. Divine joy is the fruit of remaining in his love by keeping his commandments. If we disregard the moral law which comes from God and is articulated with divine authority in his holy Catholic Church we will always carry deep in our souls a tension, a disconnect of some kind with God. By embracing all God's commandments – all the teachings of his Church – we embrace God himself and live in harmony with him. This is true joy!

2) Jesus said, "This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you."

a. To the extent that we do NOT love others as Jesus has loved us, we will NOT know divine joy. St. Augustine said, "To claim to love God and not neighbor is like embracing a man and stamping on his feet." We cannot share Jesus' joy if we're stamping on his feet! Divine joy is the fruit of loving others as Jesus has loved us.

3) Jesus said, "It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give to you."

a. Divine joy is the fruit of knowing we have been personally chosen and appointed by Jesus for a divine mission. This means our lives have sublime meaning and purpose which inspires hope. Divine joy is the fruit of divinely inspired hope.

b. Divine joy is the fruit of knowing we can talk to God as our loving Father and he always hears us. Divine joy is the fruit of faith-filled, confident, prayer.

Mother Theresa of Calcutta beautifully summarizes all I have written as only she can:

"A joyful heart is like a sunshine of God's love, the hope of eternal happiness, a burning flame of God. So if we allow Him to live His life in us, we will experience that joy. And if we pray, we will become that sunshine of God's love--in our home, the place where we live, and in the world at large. The world today is hungry for the joy that comes from a pure heart, for a pure heart can see God."

May the joy of Jesus be in us all, and may our joy be complete!

Your Servant in Christ, Fr Terry Staples

Jubilee Year 3 **“Behold, I make all things new.”** ~ Rev 24:5  
**Renewing and strengthening our faith for the future.**

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St. Mark's Catholic Church Gordonsville,  
VA

## **St. Mark's Catholic Church, Gordonsville, VA 1884-2002**

**St. Mark's Catholic Church was built in 1884 to serve the Irish population who worked on the construction of the railroad in Gordonsville. It is said that they built the church themselves.**

**On October 14, 1884, the church was dedicated by Bishop John J. Keane. At that time, Gordonsville was part of the Richmond Diocese. The Diocese of Arlington had not been established yet.**

**A priest from the Catholic Church of the Paraclete in Charlottesville traveled to Gordonsville once a month to celebrate Mass for parishioners at St. Mark's. The Church of the Paraclete was the first Catholic church in Charlottesville, established in 1880. There was no resident priest at the Church of the Paraclete either. Mass was celebrated by guest priests until 1896 when Father John Massey was appointed resident pastor by Bishop Augustine Van de Vyver. The name of the church also changed to its existing name Holy Comforter Catholic Church.**

**Until 1913, Father Massey of Holy Comforter traveled to mission churches to celebrate Mass once a month including Precious Blood in Culpeper and St. Mark's in Gordonsville.**

**From mid 19<sup>th</sup> century to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, parishioners of St. Mark's and Precious Blood as well as Catholics in Orange, Madison and Mineral were ministered to by Belgium missionary priests of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary also known as Missionhurst.**

**In 1972, St. Mark's Catholic Church in Gordonsville became an independent parish, but still shared a priest with St. John's Catholic Church in Orange which was built in 1947.**

**St. Mark's was decommissioned in 2002. The building is now in use as the Gordonsville Library.**

**Year 3 we focus on sharing our Catholic Faith with others in word and deed through evangelization and mercy. For more on preparation, visit: [www.arlingtondiocese.org/goldenjubiliecelebration/](http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/goldenjubiliecelebration/) - Office of Religious Education**