

“Holy Laughter”
By the Rev. Pearse Frazier
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“Blessed are those who weep now for they shall laugh.”

Laughter is the expression of an affection for truth felt in the body, usually without control. When we see something that is true, inside of that is something good, and we respond to that with delight, with recognition and a desire for it, and sometimes with holy laughter.

Have you ever been to an after party of a memorial service? After an interment and formal religious service, people meet in a church hall or somebody's living room, and they stand around and maybe eat those little sandwiches and tell stories. They cry and they laugh. “Do you remember when?” “Do you remember this one time?” “Do you remember what they would say?” I invite you now for just a moment to think of someone you have lost and think of something that brings you joy in that memory, maybe something that you wish you could share with a friend or family member.... Can sharing that memory sometimes make us laugh?

Thanksgiving and Christmas are times of gratitude and joy. Yet for many they can be lonely or painful – there can be weeping. What is this promise of laughter the Lord offers his disciples -- nay his apostles? For others Christmas is easily joyful. It's easy to enjoy Christmas especially if you have kids around you. Imagine a little kid getting that perfect gift and they leap with joy. That is a shadow of the kind of joy the Lord promises each of us.

God has made himself flesh and dwelt among us, so that we may see His humanity and we may see Jesus Christ as our God and creator. One of the reasons this is so important is because the Lord loves us. This is not an ethereal love. He loves you like a mom or dad loves a little kid getting that leap-for-joy present. He loves you, has compassion for you, and He arranges all of creation for each one of you to maximize your potential for salvation, for becoming an angel, for sharing in his Love for others. We can love one another because His love flows through.

His love is unending, and his mercy endures forever. Mercy is a grieving heart. Mercy is when the Lord looks at us and sees when we're lonely, or perhaps when we're failing to follow him. Mercy grieves for us. When Jesus spoke to His disciples, we can imagine that He knew that He would weep for them. They didn't know who they were with and that they would abandon Him. The Lord knew this, but He also knew that He would laugh with them in the end.

The story of Jesus on earth is like the greatest private joke ever told that you've been let in on. Not a joke about laughing at someone, but that there is a hidden blessing in all the good and bad that happens. After the Lord is crucified and his disciples mourn Him, they see His resurrection. And then they have after parties. It's feasts of charity, which we call Holy Supper. They spread this good news everywhere. They tell everybody and they invite everyone, and they say things like “Do you remember when Jesus said this?” “Do you remember when he said we would laugh?” “Do you remember when he washed our feet?” And they rejoice. They leap for joy at these memories, and they laugh. Yes, they tell the story of their betrayal of Him, of them running away from Him, of His crucifixion. But it is all within the context of them knowing the ending. They wept and then they laughed.

How might the Lord answer the prayers of those who weep? By sending his angels. If we feel the Christmas spirit, the Holy Spirit, we can be His angels. We can reach out to those who suffer. We can be the Lord's messengers of love and truth, and the joy of the Lord will flow into us and make us full, and we can be a blessing to all those around us.

“Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.”