



- A RESOURCE FOR ONGOING FORMATION -

Part 4: Building the Kingdom of God on Earth

10. Perfect Joy

Messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance, they should strive to bring joy and hope to others. Rule 19

True and Perfect Joy

Then what is true joy?

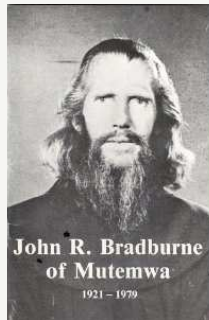
I return from Perugia and arrive here in the dead of night. It's winter time, muddy, and so cold that icicles have formed on the edges of my habit and keep striking my legs and blood flows from such wounds. Freezing, covered with mud and ice, I come to the gate and, after I've knocked and called for some time, a brother comes and asks: 'Who are you?' 'Brother Francis,' I answer. 'Go away!' he says. 'This is not a decent hour to be wandering about! You may not come in!' When I insist, he replies: 'Go away! You are simple and stupid! Don't come back to us again! There are many of us here like you—we don't need you!' I stand again at the door and say: 'For the love of God, take me in tonight!' And he replies: 'I will not! Go to the Crosiers' place and ask there!'

I tell you this: If I had patience and did not become upset, true joy, as well as true virtue and the salvation of my soul, would consist in this.

Armstrong, Hellmann, Short *Francis of Assisi: early documents* Vol I Writings of St Francis (p 166-167)



St Margaret of Cortona



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Is there a difference between happiness and joy?

What brings you most joy as a Christian?

What does this mean: 'I have learned to be content with whatever I have' (Phil 4.11). ?

Joy in 'suffering' - Declaring the power of salvific suffering, the apostle Paul says: 'In my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church.' (Col 1.24) These words seem to be found at the end of the long road that winds through the suffering which forms part of the history of man and which is illuminated by the Word of God. These words have as it were the value of a final discovery, which is accompanied by joy...The joy that comes from the discovery of the meaning of suffering, and this discovery, even if is most personally shared in by Paul...who wrote these words, is at the same time valid for others. The apostle shares his own discovery and rejoices in it because of all those whom it can help—just as it helped him—to understand *the salvific meaning of suffering*.

John Paul II *Salvifici Doloris* 1:1

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:

Its loveliness increases;
It will never pass into nothingness;
But still will keep a bower
quiet for us,
And a sleep full of sweet
dreams, health and, quiet
breathing.

John Keats, 1775-1821



Scripture—

Ps 16. 7-11

I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I keep the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure.

John 3. 29-30

‘ He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom ’ s voice. For this reason my joy has been fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. ’