

### 30 Third Sunday after Easter

“I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you.” (Jn. 16: 22)

In the final words of today’s gospel, Jesus Christ sets before us the true and lasting cause of our “joy.” We see the Apostles gathered around their Divine Master shortly before his departure from them. Already the warning given to them by Our Lord that he would leave them for a little while – had filled them with sadness and confusion. But Jesus assured them that **their sorrow would be turned into joy - the “joy” of life everlasting!** Hence, frequent meditation on the article of the creed: **“I believe in life everlasting”** is necessary for our comfort and consolation during our life in this vale of tears. And therefore, today’s liturgy invites us to meditate on this first article of the Creed.

#### 1) What is Life Everlasting?

The word “life everlasting” means **“endless happiness in heaven” or endless misery in hell.** The happiness of the blessed does not consist in corporal or transitory things, but in things spiritual and eternal.

In what does eternal happiness consist?

- Eternal happiness consists in **exemption from all evils** – such as poverty, sickness, death etc.; and it consists in possession of all good! **Possession of God himself** – the source of all good!
- Eternal happiness consists in **seeing God face to face** as he is – i.e: having the **“Beatific Vision”** – from which will result **an “ecstatic love” that will completely fill our heart’s capacity.** It is this joy that Our Lord assures – which “no man can take away” from us!
- Eternal happiness consists in the **glory of the blessed** which they **will have from their fellow saints!** What a joy it will be to join again in heaven with those whom we lived on earth – and never to be separated from them. Our dear **parents, our friends and relatives** whom we have so loved in this world – and whom death had taken from us! What a happiness to see again those vanished faces of earthly days!

- And - Eternal happiness consists in **entering forever** in **the companionship of the angels and archangels and all the saints - gathered around the Blessed Virgin Mary!**

## 2) The principle of Life Everlasting

The principle is: God made man in his “likeness.” – “ ... Incorruptible, and to the image of **His own likeness**” (Wis. 2: 23). God’s likeness is Immortal and Everlasting. Therefore, man is to be Immortal and Everlasting! Yes, **Man is destined to be immortal and everlasting either in heaven or in hell!** (Gen. 1: 27, 2: 7 and 5: 1)

Yes, **life everlasting should be the ruling influence of all our thoughts and actions.** But we are inclined to place our joy in the attainment of some human delight, ambition or honour – and we find its possession causing no lasting happiness! We become restless, fearful and anxious, lest we lose what we possess!

If we listen carefully the words of Our Lord in the gospel today, we shall understand **that the “little while” of the present life in this world – is not to be filled with comfort or self-satisfaction, but to be filled with humiliation and suffering.** And therefore, everything in this life should be subordinated to our future eternal happiness, and **we should make use of every means in our power to attain that everlasting happiness.** That means: we must **practice self-sacrifice, humiliation and suffering while living on earth - as Our Lord did!**

### **Practice of Self-sacrifice, Humiliation and Suffering**

St. Paul told to the Corinthians that, **“As the sufferings of Christ abound in us; so also by Christ doth our comfort abound”** (2 Cor. 1: 5).

**St. Paul realized** - that when Christians saw the blessings and grace that poured upon him after his many trials and tribulations, they would **gain courage to suffer in their turn.**

St. Paul offered his sufferings for the good of his brethren, the Jews, for he told Timothy, “I have my own hardships to bear, even to being chained like a criminal – but they cannot chain up God’s news. So **I bear it all for the sake of those who are chosen, so that in the end they may have the salvation** that is in Christ Jesus and **the eternal glory that comes with it**” (2 Tim. 2:9-10, emphasis added).

Jesus told: in the gospel last Sunday - “The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep” (Jn. 10: 11); and he said to his Apostles at the Last Supper that “a man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends” (Jn. 15:13).

Yes, **Jesus laid down his life for our sake, and he desires that we do the same for our neighbor** if and when that opportunity presents itself. A soldier gives his life for his country, and he becomes a **hero** because his act of sacrifice is unselfish — he dies that others may live in peace.

Most Christians are not asked to make the supreme sacrifice, but **God chooses some to participate in the salvation of souls**, not by giving up their lives but **by enduring sufferings** that are over and above what they need for themselves.

Every pain we endure with love, every cross borne with resignation, **benefits** every man, woman, and child **in the Mystical Body of Christ**. Those who are chosen to bear a greater portion of suffering than others are called by God **to heal the souls of many** whose lives are bereft of the knowledge and love of God.

"Three and thirty years Christ dwelt on earth- **years of poverty, pain, toil, hardship, humiliation, disappointment, crowned with a death of agony on the Cross.....**And from that same Cross he speaks lovingly to the sick and suffering today: **"If anyone will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me** (Matt. 16:24)".

Those who became saints have become so **only through one way - total abandonment to the Will of God, and that will always involve suffering. No one becomes a saint without suffering.** (பாடுகளின் வழியாகவே அல்லாமல் எவரும் புனிதர் ஆவதில்லை)

### **Why does God allow suffering?**

1. God allows sufferings **as the consequences of our sins**. God in His mercy has chosen **to remit or lessen our sins** by means of penance (suffering).
2. God allows sufferings **to show His glory**. "And Jesus passing by, saw a man, who was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him: Rabbi, **who hath sinned, this man or his parents that he should be born blind?** Jesus answered: Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but **that the works of God should (the glory of God) be made manifest in him** (John 9:1-2)."
3. God allows **Corona Virus** that we may totally abandon ourselves to Him and His providence, trusting that He will certainly help us suffer it and become **saints**. Hence: We should make use of every means in our power by means of **penance** (enduring suffering) to attain **that** eternal happiness which is **Life Everlasting!**