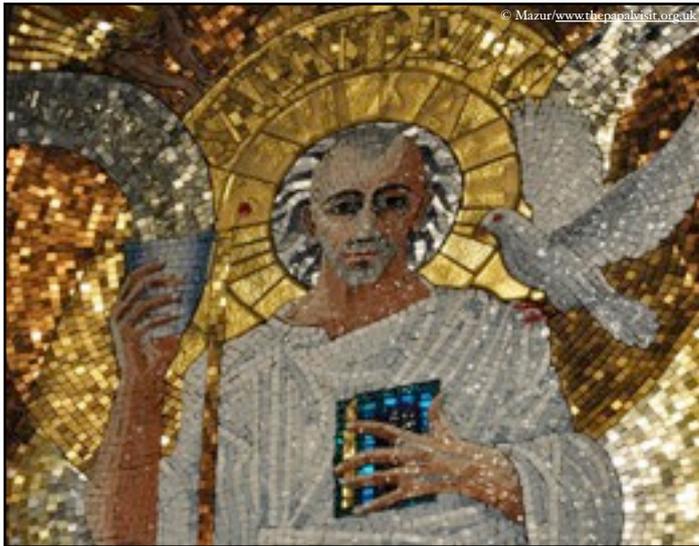




Christian Joy

Pope Benedict's Message to the Faithful of Wales

18 September 2010



‘Saint David was one of the great saints of the sixth century, that golden age of saints and missionaries in these isles, and he was thus a founder of the Christian culture which lies at the root of modern Europe. David’s preaching was simple yet profound: his dying words to his monks were, **“Be joyful, keep the faith, and do the little things”**. It is the little things that reveal our love for the one who loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4:19) and that bind people into a community of faith, love and service. May Saint David’s message, in all its simplicity and richness, continue to resound in Wales today, drawing the hearts of its people to renewed love for Christ and his Church.

FOR REFLECTION

It is seemingly the easiest of commands to live joyfully, but the demands of daily life can soon rob the best of us of our positivity. Repeatedly in the Gospels we observe the joy of so many who encountered Jesus. If we’re to be successful in our evangelistic efforts we must be conscious that people will judge the validity of what we say by our own witness. Miserable people are not the most effective ambassadors of the Gospel message. No one will be attracted to follow someone if that following appears to lead to misery. This is not

to say that as Christians we are called to put on a false witness to joy with forced smiles. What we are called to do is to daily seek out the source of joy - Jesus Christ. We are invited to pray that He shines through us, that we radiate the joy of living in relationship with Him. Our joy comes from knowing Him.



About this resource

In his speeches and homilies Pope Benedict XVI left the Church in England and Wales a legacy of reading material for ongoing reflection and prayer. From November 2011 - October 2012 one sheet will be offered monthly to assist deepening our shared appreciation and understanding of what he said.

*Home Mission,
Desk, Catholic
Bishops’
Conference of
England and
Wales*



‘Through the ages the Welsh people have been distinguished for their devotion to the Mother of God; this is evidenced by the innumerable places in Wales called “Llanfair” – Mary’s Church. As I prepare to light the candle held by Our Lady, I pray that she will continue to intercede with her Son for all the men and women of Wales. May the light of Christ continue to guide their steps and shape the life and culture of the nation... Bendith Duw ar bobol Cymru! God bless the people of Wales!’

Full text: <http://www.thepapalvisit.org.uk/Replay-the-Visit/Speeches/Speeches-18-September/Message-to-the-Faithful-of-Wales>



THE NEED FOR JOY



Image:
<http://www.pokadotcoachin.com/images/blog/jump.jpg>

Christian joy could not be properly praised if one were to remain indifferent to the outward and inward witness that God the Creator renders to Himself in the midst of His creation: "And God saw that it was good." (6) Raising up man in the setting of a universe that is the work of His power, wisdom and love, and even before manifesting Himself personally according to the mode of revelation, God disposes the mind and heart of His creature to meet joy, at the same time as truth. One should therefore be attentive to the appeal that rises from man's heart, from the age of wondering childhood to serene old age, as a presentiment of the divine mystery.

When he awakens to the world, does not man feel, in addition to the natural desire to understand and take possession of it, the desire to find within it his fulfillment and happiness? As everyone knows, there are several degrees of this "happiness." Its most noble expression is joy, or "happiness" in the strict sense, when man, on the level of his higher faculties, finds his peace and satisfaction in the possession of a known and loved good. (7) Thus, man experiences joy when he finds himself in harmony with nature, and especially in the encounter, sharing and communion with other people. All the more does

he know spiritual joy or happiness when his spirit enters into possession of God, known and loved as the supreme and immutable good. (8) Poets, artists, thinkers, but also ordinary men and women, simply disposed to a certain inner light, have been able and still are able, in the times before Christ and in our own time and among us, to experience something of the joy of God.

But how can we ignore the additional fact that joy is always imperfect, fragile and threatened? By a strange paradox, the consciousness of that which, beyond all passing pleasure, would constitute true happiness, also includes the certainty that there is no perfect happiness. The experience of finiteness, felt by each generation in its turn, obliges one to acknowledge and to plumb the immense gap that always exists between reality and the desire for the infinite.

This paradox, and this difficulty in attaining joy, seem to us particularly acute today. This is the reason for our message. Technological society has succeeded in multiplying the opportunities for pleasure, but it has great difficulty in generating joy. For joy comes from another source. It is spiritual. Money, comfort, hygiene and material security are often not lacking; and yet boredom, depression and sadness unhappily remain the lot of many.

Apostolic Exhortation of Paul VI, Gaudete in Domino on Christian Joy
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19750509_gaudete-in-domino_en.html

Pause to re-read this extract and to reflect.

A fruit of the Holy Spirit

The fruits of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory. The tradition of the Church lists twelve of them: "charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity."



Catechism of the Catholic Church 1832

St David



St David is the patron of Wales. He was a missionary and founded a number of monasteries.

His feast day is 1 March.
 More: http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=220

Seekers' Teams

Each year a team of volunteers in Pantasaph, North Wales, run a series of events for people who are interested in Catholic spirituality but who are not necessarily members of the Church. Events are offered to help people explore the Catholic faith. No demands are made on the people who attend and there are no long term expectations. What is offered is fellowship, a place to ask questions and the peace and calm found at the event venue. More: http://www.pantasaph.org.uk/seekers_programme.html