



St Matthew's Holland Park Weekly Bulletin 5th May 2024

This week's Revd. Morris' message: ***Where do you look for your joy?***

In today's Gospel, Jesus is sharing with his confused Disciples in the Upper Room just

before he departs to Gethsemane and the Cross. The Disciples are about to face their toughest challenge of their lives - Jesus's torture and death, their denials and betrayals, the loss of their hopes and dreams of a resurgent Israel led by a warrior Messiah, the fear of retribution from the Romans and the Jewish leaders. So. Jesus has this one chance to prepare them for the coming ordeal. *How does he do this? He speaks to them of His Joy.*

When we think of *Joy* we often think of happiness, good times and success - '*things going our way*'. But this is not the type of joy Jesus spoke of to the Disciples. The Greek word '**Chara**' used by Jesus and translated as Joy in today's gospel, refers to that strong emotion that overtakes us as a deep sorrow, mourning or suffering unexpectedly becomes overwhelming joy. The total reversal of the emotions experienced adds to their strength. It is the joy of shepherd who finds the lost sheep, the woman who finds her lost coin of great value and the Father who recovers his beloved son [see Luke 15]. Some folks believe that if you are a good person or become a Christian, bad things will not happen to you - you will somehow be magically protected from them. ***It is important to note that Jesus doesn't promise this.*** He does not say that He will ensure we never experience sorrow or pain or loss or that He will remove or protect us from these. Rather he says the opposite! However, He does promise that ***He will transmute our sorrow - and turn it into Chara Joy.*** Like a woman's pain in childbirth is transmuted into rapturous joy once the baby is delivered.

How does He do this?

1. He walks with and companions us through all of our sorrows and sufferings - ***we are not left alone*** even as we pass through the most difficult path - the valley of death [Ps 23]. Note : Whilst we all will still have these dark times, He promises to comfort and strengthen us so as to endure them [2 Corinthians 1: 3ff] He also promises that we will not be tested beyond our strength if we but persevere [1 Corinthians 10:13]; and
2. *Can't we just skip the suffering to get that Joy 'bit'?* For some reason known only to God, ***we tend to grow the most spiritually and personally when we are confronted by sorrow and suffering.*** [See Romans 5: 3-5] When all is going well, we tend to simply coast along in our own strength. When in trial or sorrow, we are driven to our knees and can only go on in His strength and Grace.



So, what can we do when confronted by these dark times?

Trust in His promises. Just as He has been at your side in the past, He will be with you and get you through this. **Redouble our efforts to seek the Lord in prayer and in our scripture reading and meditation. Surround yourself with faithful supporters who will uphold you and pray for you. Strive to be conscious of your physical health** taking care of your diet, exercise and sleeping health. It's so easy to adopt poor habits to seek to cope in your own strength through overindulgence to obtain a 'quick pleasure fix'. **Be gentle with yourself - remember its human to grieve in sorrow and trials - there is a cycle to live through** [see <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK507885/>] Remember, we will **often fail to be our best selves** in these times - perhaps letting ourselves or others down. But in Jesus we have a loving and gracious God who offers **Strength, Mercy and Forgiveness** when we come to Him confessing our failures, seeking His presence and restored relationship. [see 1 John 1: 9 and 10].

Like the Disciples in today's Gospel, we can know *His joy*, despite our sorrows and suffering, due to His promises to us all of His continual Presence, Strength, Mercy and Forgiveness. As the Disciples greeted their triumphant risen Lord in that same Upper Room a few days later ... 'how wonderful was their **Chara joy**'! [John 20:20]

So, in this Sixth Sunday of Easter, I wonder **Where do you look for your Joy?** **Gospel reading: John 16:16-24** Some

resources to dig deeper: <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-86-sorrow-turned-joy-john-1616-24> ; <https://www.gotquestions.org/that-your-joy-may-be-full.html> ;

Upcoming Parish Activities: NB No Wednesday 10:30 a.m service this week ; 6:30pm **Meditation Group**; Thursday

Ascension Day service 9 am and **Maida Visit** 10:30; **This and**

next Sunday Guitars and Ukulele lessons at 3 p.m. **Next Sunday's Readings: Margaret:** Acts 1:15 17, 21-26; Ps 1; **Patricia:** 1 John 5:9 -13; John 17:6-19

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Parish website : <https://www.stmatthewshollandpark.com/>

Parish Private Facebook site : <https://www.facebook.com/groups/292308270851142> ; **Public Site:** <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61556418523933> ; **Tipper's Treasure's Facebook :** <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61559040358754>

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY:

We acknowledge and pay respect to the Turrbal and Jagera Peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather today. We acknowledge their continued spiritual connection to country and surrounding land, sky and water. We pay our respect to their Elders, past present and emerging and pray that we may continue to learn from and nurture one another in the spirit of Reconciliation.

STOP PRESS ..Bev and the Schatz family wished to pass on their thanks to Revd Morris and the whole parish for their prayers and support during Marshal's illness and upon his passing. The funeral last Tuesday was well attended with over 140 being present, was a fitting tribute to Marshal and a wonderful celebration of his life and deep faith. R.I.P.

