



International Confederation of Christian Family Movements



What is happiness?

The happiness, or joy, that Jesus promises is not the one of the world. Today happiness is often misunderstood and it is not the joy of Christ. He said to His apostles: "I leave you peace, but not the peace of the world."

We count as happiness what helps us to evade the reality of life. Happiness is fun, feasting, money, over-eating, having all the consumer goods, travel, a comfortable home and so forth. Often drink, drugs and sex are taken as a way how to be happy. Happiness becomes something we want to buy, so as to escape sacrifice, suffering and self-denial.

Many couples are frustrated, because though they have it "all", they are unhappy. They suffer from depression, stress and despair. They want to be masters of their life and have the power to end their life on earth. What a pity!

Happiness is a gift of the Spirit. Only as the poet Kahlil Gibran says: "Loving the fatigue of life, we can understand its most profound secrets."

Happiness is achieved through sacrifice. In our "San Raffaele University Hospital", in Milano (1,400 patients), I come across many young and elderly patients whose life is one of suffering. However, they find the strength to accept the joy of the Cross. I am edified and spiritually jealous of their acceptance of God's will with joy. The Cross is our only hope!

This reminds me of the prophet Job, a just man who feared God and knew no evil. He "cursed the day he was born", yet through suffering he received from God the gift of joy. To be happy he had to shout: "I am tired of my life" (Job 1.1:3, 1-26).

He accepted God's will.

Happiness means being in a state of accepting, knowing and facing one's identity. It is an interior state of life, which the couple have to live individually and then in communion together. If one is happy and the other is sad, they will sustain, support and help each other.

St. Augustine said: "You have created us for you, Lord, our heart is restless if it does not rest in You". Joy is resting in the arms of the Lord, loving Him with all our heart and loving our brethren (in case of marriage, one's spouse)



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as oneself. Only this can make a happy marriage, for if we are united in love to the Lord Jesus our heart will find comfort, serenity and joy.

If a couple does not have a full immersion in this spiritual, and we might add also psychological state, the marriage will not work. We now live in the "Me Generation" where what counts is the full liberty of the individual. We care less and less about the other, even about the unborn and the children. We live in a society which is free from values and we delve in individualism, egoism, power, self-interest, ambition and all that we think makes happy. What a delusion!