

Easter6May17John15:9-17

O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour into our hearts such LOVE towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Collect)

Joy is important to me! Joy is one of those things that makes life worth living, especially when bad things happen to us and no joy can be found. Joy is good and often makes the unpleasant things in life so much nicer.

The problem with joy though is that it just can not be pursued directly. Have you ever tried to be joyful when you are really sad? It just doesn't work. It seems to be that we can just not create joy or true Happiness. The Psychoanalyst Victor Frankel said: true happiness (joy) can not be pursued, it ensues!

*(Joy is found, not made)*

What this means is that joy is a result of something different.

It reads in the Gospel: I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

What this says to me is that joy comes from God through Christ to us. It is a reaction which starts with God and ends in us being joyful.

And that which carries joy into our life is God's Love.

So the way to joy is to abide in Christ's Love.

Joy ensues when we abide in Christ's Love.

The whole life of Christ is an example of God's Love, Christ is Love, Christ gave us the 2 great commandments:  
Love God with all your heart and soul and love your neighbor as yourself.

That is it! When we abide to those commandments joy will not be in short supply in our life.

There are though some details which need a closer look.  
One of those details is: What is Love?

Our understanding of Love is somewhat ... how should I put it? ... different, incomplete ....limited.

Often our experiences with parents, partners and neighbors are not so helpful in figuring out what Love is either, and I might add here TV and advertising. We probably have all been disappointed at some time in our lives by someone we loved or still love.

We might even be disappointed with God. Feelings of anger with God are actually quite common(sp). Plenty of people feel quite disappointed by God. God's Love is different quite different then most of the Love we are used to.

God is More, always more than we can fathom, more than we understand, just More. So God's love is always so much more!

So entering and participating in God's Love is a lifelong growing process. God is never done with transforming us into his love.

To be part of this transformation starts with a simple prayer like we said it in the collect:

Pour into our hearts such LOVE towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Joy is one of those promises, joy that exceeds all we can desire.

It always starts with the prayer: Pour Love toward you into our hearts:  
Amen.

