

## Friday Lent, Week 2



**We can become** joyful in different ways and for different causes. This diversity of the origins of joy is one of the things that intensifies the joy. It is like finding a way of being intoxicated that doesn't lead to a hangover, but just to discovering new varieties of the happy state. The short happy hour seems extended into infinity. In seeing this we perceive that it is not dependent on circumstances, good luck, satisfying our wishes, but it is simply part of the nature of being.

Such joy in being can't be circumscribed. It is activated repeatedly by different, usually very simple, things. It even seems silly that we should find happiness of this kind everywhere in things being purely as they are. Colours, people's peculiarities, even minor disappointments are all caught up in a joy that has so many potential causes that it seems causeless. This is the beginning of the experience of God reflected in the pattern of daily living.

A mirror image of this phenomenon also exists. We can undergo sadness in the same way. Submerged in a great loss and still unaware of the finding that it will in time lead us to, the sadness stains everything we do. Even what usually consoles, uplifts, delights and all that was once playful become a cause of sadness. We seem to have permanently misplaced the secret of joy. It feels as if happiness in life has drained away. And through some unseen damage to our soul the waters of sadness flood in create a sense of sinking.

Comprehending both these states leads beyond the either-or, happy-unhappy dualism. Genuine sadness is not solved by becoming joyful and true joy is not lessened by sadness. Through the discriminating art of attention illuminated by the wisdom inherent in our own spirit we rise above all duality into a new place. A new view of the world is born, where all is present and loss and finding converge. Lent serves this state of consciousness through detachment. Meditation serves it through love.

It is not an experience-of-God but the experience of being-in-God.

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