

Section 18

Dignity, Beauty, Joy

The title of Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation, 'Joy of the Gospel', defines the Pope's program of evangelization. It is a clear indication of what the Pope wants to highlight, namely that our Christian dignity is a source of joy, giving meaning to our lives. This joy urges us to share the beauty of this dignity enthusiastically with as many people as possible.

The Pope encourages us to make ourselves more aware of the beauty of the gift that we have received at our baptism: the belief in God, who loves us unconditionally and whose boundless love has become human in Jesus Christ. Belief in this gift gives meaning to our present life and opens up a bright perspective on our future life in eternity. Only when we are fully aware of this gift and delight in it, we will feel enthusiastic in sharing it with others. The Pope invites us therefore, to become missionaries of *the joyful news* of the Gospel.

At the Major Seminary of Bourges, Jules Chevalier discovered the beauty of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart (In section 11, we already talked about it). The Heart of Jesus became for him a profound source of love and joy. As he himself wrote, the doctrine on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as explained by his professor of Christology, "*went straight to my heart. The more I went into it, the more attractive I found it.*" While reading a biography on St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, Chevalier also felt deeply touched by the words of Jesus to Margaret Mary: "*This is the Heart that has loved humankind so much that it has spared nothing.*" These words, he added, "*stirred up in me a keen desire to become the apostle*" of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart and to spread it everywhere.

His joy even deepened when later on in his life, Chevalier began to realize that the love of Jesus' Heart finds its source in the Heart of God, who loves the world and each one of us so much that he has sent his only Son to become human among us (John 3:16). This joy strengthened his desire to spread "*this true and most salutary Devotion*" everywhere (See also section 9).

A Reflective moment

Bishop James Cuskelly writes that
at the heart of an authentic vocation to any kind of ministry,
the desire exists, to

*“share with others something of the joy
that the faith has brought into my life.”*

(E.J. Cuskelly, p. 31)

Pope Francis urges us to

*“recover and deepen our enthusiasm,
that delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing,
even when it is in tears that we must sow.”*

(Evangelii Gaudium n. 10)