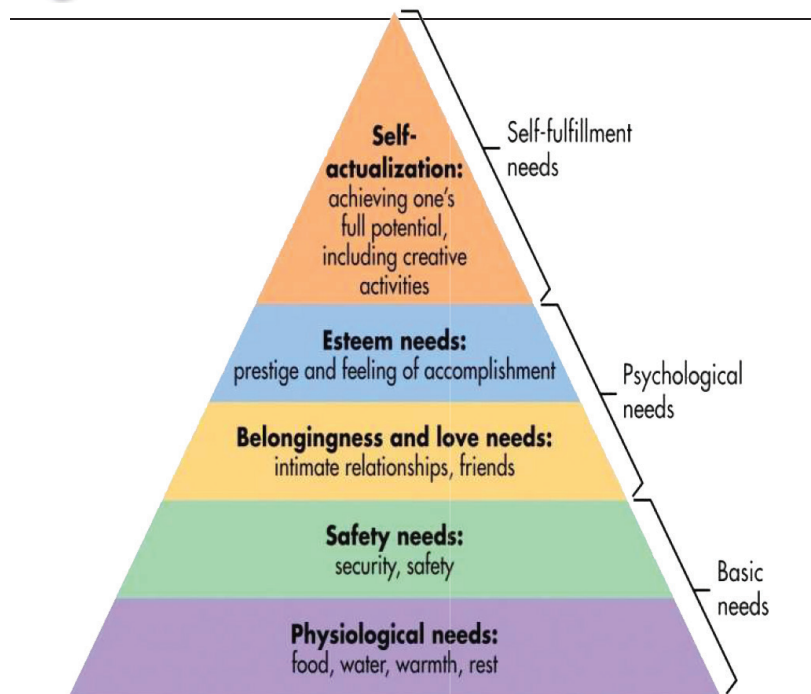


Chapter 11

Christian Life: A Life of Happiness



What is true happiness? Is Christian life joyful?



In your life, you might have fulfilled certain needs from this hierarchy while some others are unfulfilled. Identify which needs you are yet to achieve. Write them down.

'Hierarchy of Needs,' presented by renowned psychologist Abraham Maslow in his 'Theory of Motivation', is shown in the above pyramid. Maslow described that humans are driven to satisfy their needs in a hierarchical order, starting from the base of the pyramid and ascending upwards. The fulfilment of the needs results in the happiness of the individual.

Don't you aspire to fulfil all these needs? As a Christian, the journey along with Jesus helps us in achieving these needs to a great extent. The goal of every Christian is to attain the eternal happiness that Jesus gives. The Christian life gives importance to divine joy and happiness. Jesus said:

"God loves the joy of young people"
(Christ is Alive 167)
(Pope Francis).

"I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete" (Jn 15:11).

The journey along with Jesus will become a joyful experience.

Christian Happiness – Fundamental Concepts

Christian Happiness – Fundamental Concepts

Life in the risen Jesus - True happiness
Christian Life – Joy in the Holy Spirit
The Gospel - Jesus' invitation to Joy
Evangelisation
Preservation of cosmic goodness
Joy in suffering
Build heaven on earth
Universal Brotherhood - The gateway to happiness
Sacraments - A call back to a happy life
Resolve doubts - Walk together with the Church

Life In the Risen Jesus - True Happiness

- Everyone desires to be happy always. Wealth, beauty, social status, good job, salary, fame, health and such factors give us happiness. But the happiness we get from these is limited and temporary. We should truly seek the boundless, intense, and eternal joy.
- Like the prodigal son in the Bible, many people run after ephemeral pleasures and joys. They seek satisfaction in wealth, power, alcohol, drugs, illicit relationships and excessive indulgence in electronic gadgets such as mobile phones. However, they find themselves eventually disillusioned, destroying their lives in deep despair and guilt. Only those who realize what true happiness is, can find it and experience it in life. Neither wealth nor comfort gives us everlasting divine happiness.

Before his death on the cross, Jesus said to his disciples:

"...I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you" (Jn 16:22).

- The fullness of true happiness is to find and experience the risen Jesus. Those who find the risen Jesus in their lives attains an imperishable joy. The Gospel testifies that the disciples, who witnessed the ascension of the risen Jesus,

"The fruits of charity are joy, peace, and mercy" (CCC 1829).



"O God, you created me for you. My soul will be restless until it becomes one with you" (St. Augustine).



"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice" (Phil 4:4).



Explain what true happiness consists of.

“...returned to Jerusalem with great joy” (Lk 24:52)

- St. Paul speaks in detail about the troubles and sufferings he endured for Jesus (2 Cor 11:23-29). But “For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure” (2 Cor 4:17).

Christian Life – Joy in the Holy Spirit

- The kingdom of God is the goal of the Christian life. St. Paul teaches that the kingdom of God is the joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom 14:17).
- It is through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that we receive the gospel of Jesus with joy (1 Thess 1:6). It is written in the Gospel that Jesus Himself, the Son of God, rejoiced in the Holy Spirit (Lk 10:21).
- We must pray for the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit to make the Christian life joyful.

The Gospel - Jesus' Invitation to Joy

- The Gospel of Jesus is the Gospel of Joy. The Church presents the Gospel as Jesus' call to Joy. “...I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves” (Jn 17:13).

“Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete”(Jn 16:24).

The Church consistently emphasises the joy of the Gospel before its members.

- In Pope Francis' Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation ‘The Joy of Love’, he encourages us to find joy in living according to the Gospel.
- All the saints of the Church have lived through the divine joy that Jesus bestows. Despite numerous sufferings and sacrifices in their lives, these challenges never led them astray from God's love. Instead, they guided them towards the eternal joy of the Gospel.
- Priests, religious and many lay missionaries continue their missions and spread light in the world because they experience the joy of the Gospel in their lives.
- Parents spread light like candles in the domestic church – i.e. our families, live happily amidst hardships because they experience the joy of the Gospel.

“The Christian life is joy in the Holy Spirit”
(Rejoice and Be Glad, 122)
(Pope Francis).

Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

1. Wisdom
2. Understanding
3. Counsel
4. Fortitude
5. Knowledge
6. Piety
7. Fear of the Lord

Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit

1. Charity
2. Joy
3. Peace
4. Patience
5. Kindness
6. Goodness
7. Generosity
8. Gentleness
9. Faithfulness
10. Modesty
11. Self-control
12. Chastity



Explore, through a group discussion, how the saints of India transformed their suffering into joy, and present their stories in the form of a skit.



The Gospel -An invitation to the joy of Jesus. Explain.

Evangelisation

- Today, we share the joy of Jesus with the world through evangelisation.
- To make this possible, the evangelisation and re-evangelization of the Church must continue today with the grace of the Holy Spirit.
- Evangelisation is the process of bringing the Good News of the Saviour, Jesus to every human being. This involves imbibing the eternal joy of Jesus and being transformed by the Holy Spirit.

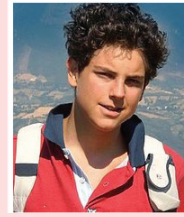
We should understand evangelisation as Jesus' invitation to joy. Citing St. Paul as a role model, Pope Francis emphasises that courageous evangelization is the need of our era.

Preservation of Cosmic Goodness

- The Christian vision is to have a creative and passionate outlook of the world.
- The book of Genesis presents that God created the earth and its inhabitants with utmost care. After each creation, God observed that it was good (Gen1:3-31). Finally, he created man in His own image and likeness. As humans are the most intelligent of his creations, God assigned them as protectors of the entire earth. Humans are entrusted with the responsibility to safeguard his beautiful creation, the earth, to ensure fairness for all creatures upon it, and to continue with his creation (Praise Be to You, 67).
- Therefore, we have the responsibility to receive the goodness of the world in its original and pleasant form and share it with others.

But, there is an intrusion of evil into the earth. It is our responsibility to fight evil and preserve the earth's goodness. Adopting an attitude of lamentation and labelling this world as 'the world of darkness,' 'the world of evil,' or 'Satan's world,' is inconsistent with the principles of Christianity.

- Man continues his spiritual journey on the earth created by God. We should develop a positive and hopeful outlook on the world we are living in. We have to share this attitude with others to make it a place for a joyful



Being a computer genius, Bl. Carlo's presence and service has made a huge impact in the digital word and social networks. Bl. Carlo was able to use the modern communications technology to spread the Gospel and its values

(Pope Francis).



Following the example of Bl. Carlo Acutis, the Patron of the Evangelisation through Cyber Space - 'Cyber Apostle', what can you do to bear witness to Jesus?

Write down.



Read 'Canticle of the Sun' by St. Francis of Assisi and prepare a review.

existence.

Joy in Suffering

- The lives of the saints tell us that poverty and illness, suffering and persecution, pain and disgrace may extinguish our happiness, but not true joy.

To find joy amidst suffering is the greatness of Christian life. Bl. Carlo Acutis, battling cancer and enduring severe pain, and St. Alphonsa, known as the mother of suffering, remained joyful until their last breath. **Let us follow the saints who steadfastly held on to their faith during times of trial; let us stand alongside Jesus in our suffering; and let us transform adversity into triumph.**

Suffering is Joyful (Saints of India)

St. Mother Teresa	St. Mariam Thresia
St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara	St. Devasahayam
St. Alphonsa	St. Euphrasia

Build Heaven on Earth

- **The Christian life is a journey towards eternal life. Heaven is the final destination of the journey** Jesus said, “Nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There it is!’ For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you” (Lk 17:21). The kingdom of God means “...righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 14:17). Jesus emphasised: “...the kingdom of God has come to you” (Mt 12:28).
- The Church teaches the importance of experiencing heaven during our existence in this world. The fullness of heavenly experience can be attained only after death. However, the foretaste of heaven can be found in the holy sacraments, particularly in the Holy Qurbana. We should experience this within our families and in our everyday interactions.
- The family of St. Louis Martin, St. Zélie Guérin Martin and St. Thérèse of Lisieux is a remarkable example of finding glimpses of heaven within family life.

Universal Brotherhood - The Gateway to Happiness

- The foundation of Christian life is the love of God and love of others. **You shall love the Lord your God above all things and your neighbour as yourself** (Lk 10:27, Jn



“My soul has matured in the crucible of exterior and interior trials. And now, like a flower strengthened by the storm, I can raise my head”
(St. Thérèse of Lisieux).



"How great is the joy of surrendering all pain to the Sacred Heart of Jesus"
(St. Alphonsa).



How can we experience a foretaste of heaven? Explain

13:35). “Those who do not love a brother or sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen” (1 Jn 4:20) – these verses should inspire us.

- In his Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* (All Brothers), Pope Francis presents the Christian perspective of universal brotherhood to the world.
- Our journey with Jesus is not solitary; it's a journey where we firmly hold our brothers along with us. God asks Cain “Where is your brother Abel?” (Gen 4:9). God asks this question to everyone. He is not pleased with the response, “Am I my brother’s keeper?”. God reminds us that we should reach for the eternal gift with our fellow beings and with those entrusted for our care. The Holy Bible makes it clear that true happiness is found in fulfilling our responsibility towards fellow beings. Accepting Jesus' command to come to sacrifice only after reconciling with one's brother (Mt 5:24), we should advance in our joyful journey, uniting all people through the concept of universal brotherhood filled with the love of Jesus.

Sacraments - A Call Back to a Happy Life

- Sacraments are channels through which the joy and peace of Jesus and the grace of God, flow to people. A sacramental life enables the members of the Church to walk in a path of divine joy.
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a loving call back from God the Father. The Sacrament of Reconciliation helps us in a special way to move forward in any situation, instils confidence in us, and thereby helps us to be joyful in life.
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation portrays a caring father welcoming back his lost son, who made mistakes and was on the brink of ruin (Lk 15:11-32). Whoever you may be, whatever paths you may have travelled, you hold a special place in God's heart; God loves you. Your life and existence are valued by him. God is waiting for you. God welcomes you back upon your sincere desire to come back, despite the denial by everyone. This is the message that the Sacrament of Reconciliation gives us.

"The fruit of charity is joy" (Rejoice and be glad 122)

(Pope Francis).



“Where is your brother?”

What is the present-day relevance of this question by God?



Find two distinct instances from Genesis in the Old Testament that narrate the unfair treatment of one's brother and the subsequent loss of joy and peace. Identify similar incidents from current events, analyze them, and then present the observations in class

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ
(Church in the Modern World, 1).

- The Sacrament of Reconciliation keeps us close to the Holy Eucharist. When problems hunt us, when despair consumes us, and when thoughts of suicide emerge, we must listen to God's call back as a comforting shelter of mercy that restores us to life. By accepting this call, the joy and peace of Jesus will pour into human hearts.

Resolve Doubts - Walk Together with the Church

- The Gospel says that Mother Mary posed questions to the angel Gabriel upon receiving the Good News (Lk 1:34). By seeking clarification, she received precise answers, enabling her to respond with the fullness of the Spirit.

The new generation lives in a world of openness. Therefore, the Church considers the questions of the young generation in their journey of faith, as constructive and takes care to address and respond to it.

- Pope Francis observes that "a substantial number of young people, for all sorts of reasons, do not ask the Church for anything" (Christ is Alive, 40).

The Gospels record the questions posed to Jesus and his responses regarding eternal life and the things to follow in this worldly life.

The response of Jesus to the question "...What must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Lk 18:18), clearly conveys the way of life one should follow in this world. The Christian vision of life is made clear through the parable of Good Samaritan, which Jesus narrated when the lawyer asked him "...Who is my neighbour?" (Lk 10:29).

- Following the path of Jesus, the Church strives to give accurate responses to the doubts and queries of its members. The answers to the questions should stem from authentic sources of knowledge and faith. The Church is ever vigilant to avoid its members being involved in anti-church movements that weaken the faith. Addressing the queries of the youth and providing them with appropriate answers will inspire them to walk happily with the Church. The Catholic Church considers open thinking, debates and question-and-answers to be channels for reaching out to the new generation.



How does the Sacrament of Reconciliation help us live confidently and find peace and joy? Explain.

"We are not some casual and meaningless product of evolution. Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary"

(Pope Benedict XVI)

(APRIL 24, 2005, YOUCAT 43).

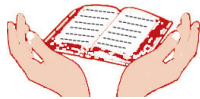
- We must strive to seek and experience Jesus on a personal level. His commitment to justice, courage, solidarity with the poor, love and mercy are ever-inspiring and help us lead a fulfilling life. Christians are called to live and act in this world as another Christ, adapting to the needs of the time. Therefore, we should take pride in bearing the name "Christian," experience the abundant joy of living as a Christian, and walk along with the Church striving for spiritual growth and holiness.

Therefore, let us explore the doubts in our life of faith. These doubts can be clarified through resources such as the, Catechism of the Catholic Church, Second Vatican Council documents, and YOUCAT, as well as through discussions with priests and catechism teachers.

My Convictions



1. Wealth or worldly comforts does not lead us to eternal happiness.
2. The fullness of true joy is to find and experience the risen Jesus.
3. We can attain true happiness when we fulfill our obligation towards our brothers and sisters.



Let Us Read the Word of God

The Gospel According to
Luke Chapters 16-20



Let Us Illumine Our Hearts

"Rejoice in our Lord always; again
I will say, Rejoice"
(Phil 4:4).



My Resolution

As a follower of Jesus, I commit to maintain the Christian joy within myself and people around me. I shall nurture the goodness in others.



"Here am I, the servant
of the Lord; let it be
with me according to
your word"
(Lk 1:38).