



Jesus said to his disciples: "Amen, amen, I say to you, you will weep and mourn, while the world rejoices; you will grieve, but your grief will become joy. When a woman is in labor, she is in anguish because her hour has arrived; but when she has given birth to a child, she no longer remembers the pain because of her joy that a child has been born into the world. So you also are now in anguish. But I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you. Amen, amen, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you."

Introductory Prayer: Lord, as I begin this prayer I offer you my whole self: my thoughts, desires, decisions, actions, hopes, fears, weaknesses, failures and petty successes. I open my entire being to you, aware that you know everything already. I'm certain of your mercy and of the purifying power of your penetrating, loving gaze.

Petition: Lord, give me great peace and interior joy in the midst of life's trials.

1. "You Will Weep" Grief is not an agreeable experience in itself. Jesus doesn't promise his disciples that by following him they will be shielded from the sorrow characteristic of any exile in a foreign land. A Christian's value system is diametrically opposed to the worldly view. Be honest and the common opinion will consider you backward or naive. Be kind and you will be seen as gullible. Be faithful to the love of your spouse and you will be seen as having repressive tendencies. The list could go on and on. An authentic Christian stands out among the fingers of the world as truly the sorest thumb. Have I accepted this unpleasant and challenging element of Christianity?

2. "I Will See You Again" "Your grief will become joy." The disciples were surprised and discouraged by Jesus' crucifixion, but Jesus' death would not be the final scene in the play. After the dramatic events of Calvary came the joy of the Resurrection, a new and glorious life. How happy the disciples must have been to see Our Lord again! But even then Jesus seems to play "peek-a-boo" with his disciples. He walks through walls bringing them joy and then he just disappears again. We can have a similar experience in prayer. The alternation of dryness and consolation is an essential part of God's pedagogy with us. Sometimes it seems that the Lord is right beside us and other times that he is on foreign business. Am I able to exercise my faith in the presence of the Lord beyond the state of my feelings at the moment?

3. "Your Hearts Will Rejoice" Sometimes the charge is leveled against Christianity that its moral prohibitions are a source of sorrow and frustration. A closer look shows a different picture entirely. The closeness of the Lord, along with the recognition that the goods of this world are fundamentally good gifts lavished by the Father upon his children, brings profound joy. When we are able to distinguish the presence and action of the Lord in every created thing and through every circumstance, we experience a joy unknown to the world. "I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you." Do I have this joy founded on my faith and the awareness of God's immense personal love? Does my obedience to the moral law stem from a complete trust in God who desires my happiness?

Conversation with Christ: My Jesus, when you are near me I experience great joy. I know that you are always with me. Help me to exercise my faith and to be able to strengthen the faith of those of my brothers and sisters who need me to show them your love.

Resolution: I will offer up any difficulty that the Lord sends me today for those who do not yet have the joy of his friendship.