



Choosing happiness (when life gives you lemons...)

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Life sometimes throws things at us that upset our equilibrium and leave us feeling upset, angry, sad, confused etc... If the situation remains unresolved, or if the hurt lingers, we can find these initial feelings and reactions deepening and solidifying into cynicism, negativity and resentment.

We have a choice in these times as we follow down the route of our feelings – we can allow the feelings of anger and hurt to harden into bitterness, or we can choose to deal with them. Does this mean ignoring the feelings? No! It is simply that we can learn from these feelings; acknowledging the pain caused; making choices from the new insights and learnings of the situation; letting go of some course of action, some dream or even some relationships. Then we can **choose to be happy**.

I think Ignatius gives us some pointers for this in his rules for discernment. There is a difference between our emotions and spiritual desolation, but there is also a connection. Ignatius encourages us to **notice where consolation** not desolation lies, to understand its path and purpose and then to choose to follow the consolation rather than be entrapped by the desolation. We are encouraged to **actively seek and choose what gives us life**.

Of course, choosing to be happy is not straightforward, (or else we would all do it straight away!) it calls us to a deep awareness of the goodness that is around us, the beauty, the potential. It calls us to let go of the negative in practical ways. It is a **choice for what gives us life**.

“ I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.

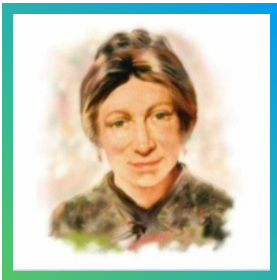
Deuteronomy 30:15-20

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I came across this poem a while back which speaks to me of the time of resting with the difficult emotions and waiting until we can once again choose life.

Trough
There is a trough in waves,
A low spot

Where horizon disappears
And only sky
And water
Are our company.
And there we lose our way
Unless
We rest, knowing the wave will bring us
To its crest again.
There we may drown
If we let fear
Hold us within its grip and shake us
Side to side,
And leave us flailing, torn, disoriented.
But if we rest there
In the trough,
Are silent,
Being with
The low part of the wave,
Keeping
Our energy and
Noticing the shape of things,
The flow,
Then time alone
Will bring us to another
Place
Where we can see
Horizon, see the land again,
Regain our sense
Of where
We are,
And where we need to swim.
~ Judy Brown ~
(*The Sea Accepts All Rivers*)



“ To have this Name, Faithful Companion of Jesus, I would give everything, all that I am. ”

Marie Madeleine d'Houët

Faithful Companions of Jesus

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