

***Thirtieth Sunday of Ordinary Time***  
***October 26, 2025***  
***Year of the Holy Spirit***

*“Since we ourselves are a gift of God, we are called to make a return gift of ourselves to him. This is to be done gradually in the course of our lives as we express that return gift of ourselves to him in our service to others. Ultimately, it will involve a total self-surrender to him at the end of our lives.” (Archbishop Emeritus Alfred C. Hughes, Spiritual Masters: Living and Praying in the Catholic Tradition, p. 159)*

As we arrive at the last Sunday of October 2025, I will conclude our reflection upon happiness (everlasting joy) with one final examination comparing what the world around us offers as opposed to what our Church teaches. As a reminder, we have studied wealth, fame, honor, power, pleasure, appearance and health to determine if any of these could provide the happiness we long for. Sadly, we are 0 for 7 in our attempt. We turn our attention to one final idea. Is being a “good” person enough to provide happiness? Following the answer to this question, we shall ponder what the Church teaches concerning our desire for happiness.

**(8) Can being a “good person” offer the happiness we seek?** Let us begin our answer to this question with a question. Who says I am a good person? My family, this is an important question. Our first attempt at an answer will depend upon our age. When we are children, it is generally the adults in our lives who make this designation for us. A parent will judge the actions of their child and pronounce them “good” based upon those actions. We might say this declaration is made through a “cause and effect” approach. My good behaviors are the reason (cause) of my parents, or other adults, saying I am good (effect). I am rewarded because I am viewed as good. However, am I truly good or do I just follow instructions?

When we become adults, the person who declares us “good” can often change. No longer dependent upon the statement of parents, we can judge ourselves good by the responses we receive from other adults. This declaration may be correct as it is based upon how they perceive us from our actions. I emphasize “may” because we are not capable of perceiving the intentions or motives as to why any one person does the things that they do. Secondly, and more concerning, we may be the ones who state our own goodness. This declaration has the potential to be more destructive to our spiritual lives because it could, again potentially, have been made out of an ignorance of who we truly are. I view myself as “good” because I do not take an appropriate amount of time each day to examine if my actions, thoughts or attitudes in that day were particularly good or Christian. In essence, we gloss over our day only considering the “big sins” and failing to see our true selves. We might have even found ourselves professing this idea. I am a good person because I did not steal or kill today; not considering if I stole another’s good name and killed their good reputation through the way I spoke of them to another. I think you can see where it may lead us. It can potentially take us all the way to the famous quote: “The unexamined life is not worth living.”

Now returning to our initial question of happiness, can being a “good” person fulfill our need for lasting happiness. In a word, one is hard pressed not to respond with No. Just because one is either viewed by others or views themselves as good will not provide happiness. The reason for this can be answered with another question: “If I am a good person, then can I be happy without necessarily needing God?” We can answer this question by stating clearly: If we can be happy through our own goodness, then we do not necessarily need God and therefore God is not necessary. We can make this statement because our goodness, our virtuousness is not our own end. Our ultimate end is life with God. The way we live is a means to that end, but never an end in itself. God is our happiness, not solely living a good life. We can become confused on this point. Some may say: “I thought God wanted me to be good?” No, God does not want you solely to be good, He wants us to be perfect. As Jesus said, “Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect.” Perfection is only accomplished through purification. Similar to the impurities being burned away as precious metal is heated, we too must be purified of all sin and sinful inclinations before we can enter into our eternal happiness (our joy) with God in Heaven.

**What the Church teaches concerning happiness.** The Church has always taught: Only God could ever fulfill our desire for complete happiness. Happiness with God is a perfect good, not a moral or virtuous good. Happiness with God in Heaven is a perfect good only achievable by our becoming perfect. Our will, our desire for a good, seeks one universal good by which all other goods can be examined. We judge temperature by our understanding of a universal idea of hotness or coldness. Our bodies, our minds, are limited to grasp the vastness of our universe, much less the vastness of time (past, present and future). They are also too limited to understand how interconnected we are to each other through time. We can be told of these things, but they seem too expansive for our thoughts. However, we must daily attempt to think of these things. Our actions, our thoughts have the potential to lead us to happiness, but we must choose to abandon ourselves to the certain belief which states our true happiness is only found in God who is eternal happiness. All else is the smell of the rose (created happiness), but not the rose itself (that which offers happiness/God).