

MAGNIFICAT

My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my saviour.

The words of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Throughout the trials and tribulations

My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my saviour.

The words of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Within the Roman Catholic tradition the lived experience of faith has never had the extreme happy clappy element about it.

If anyone had ever gone up to my Northern Irish father during mass and told him to smile because Jesus loves him, he would no doubt have used blunt language in reply.

These flamboyant expressions of glee do not sit easily with the solemn nature of the Roman Catholic faith.

The excessive aspiration for total jollity at Christmas do not sit well with the solemn nature of Roman Catholicism.

However it is not a requirement of happiness that we present to the world a wide frivolous grin.

Christianity proclaims contentment not desire

Christianity proclaims joy not ecstasy.

A joy which can sustain even in crisis.

A contentment which has the strength to ignore the insatiable greed demanded by our shrinking world.

My Soul glorifies the lord and my spirit exults in God my saviour

Mary the mother seeks to protect the child who even at this young age experiments and acts in independence.

Mary watches the miracle of her child growing to maturity, and has fear

Mary is loved by Joseph who did not abandon her

Mary is loved by God who will never abandon her.

Deep, deep within the heart of Mary the mother of God there is Joy

Not the smiling facial giddiness of the fool.
But the wisdom of faith that can see the many gifts of Life

Within this Chapel there are many of you who bear very great sorrows.
Some of you have been scared by misfortune.
Probably more of you take on the trails of your children and are powerless.
So close and so far that you have only the capacity to experience their pain.

Yet you are in a church, which proclaims hope
Indeed all of you are physically fit enough to make the journey to mass.

Most of you ate well last night
Many of you may drink well tonight
You have managed to pay your way thus far.
You come from a stable and prosperous country

You are beautiful
You share in the faith of the church
You have an immense amount to be grateful for.

The Blessed Virgin Mary was poor.
The mother of Jesus dependent upon the charity of Joseph

This woman proclaimed
My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my saviour
She could see beyond the limitations of her of her immediate anxieties
Now no one is asking you to go round with a grin like a Cheshire Cat

But be inspired by the Queen of Heaven
See the vast goodness that is in your life

Recognise the blessing that God has bestowed upon you
On the feast of the Holy family measure your blessing in the scales of faith,

Do not look to model your life upon the fantasies of the television.
Do not seek to imitate the lies of perfection projected by the fearful images found on
Facebook
Do imagine you will ever be free of the struggle.

Look instead to the holy family
Unique in many ways
Like your family unique
Troubled in many ways
Like your family troubled
Beautiful
Complicated
Frustrating
Real

Look to the reality of the Holy Family.

Then feel the JOY of faith

Experience the contentment that that can only come from the love we share.
From the humility of faith.

You shall die and so shall I
And all that will be remembered of us is love
So share in that love and be free

My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my saviour.