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The last laugh

By Elise L. Moore, C.S.B.

Is it OK to laugh at the office? If so, my husband could be a CHO - Chief Humor Officer. He often delivers a quick pun or one-liner when people get focused on a problem. He doesn't tell jokes so much as create laughter. It can help break the tension. Then everyone seems to move forward with finding solutions.

There's also an effort to infuse religion with a little humor. The Internet is rife with real-life quotations from church bulletins like this one: "Don't let worry kill you - let the church help." Or my personal favorite: "Low self-esteem support group will meet Thursday at 7 p.m. Please use the back door."

Humor isn't meant to belittle people or problems. It may help put situations in a better perspective. It can help us to stop worrying and start laughing. It can help us to realize that God is greater than any problem.

God is a God of joy, not of sorrow. "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing" (Zeph. 3:17). Realizing that God is good, and the source and creator of all that we find to be good and beautiful, opens our eyes to the fact that God is happy. How could He/She not be? God delivers us from sorrow and sin. Through getting a right idea of who God is, we are saved from humorless days and sleepless nights.

God is Love. Certainly divine Love lifts Her children into health and happiness. God, the good Shepherd, leads each one into goodness and safety.

Yes, Christianity can appear humorless. The heavenly Father is portrayed at the Passover as sacrificing His beloved Son to be crucified. The ignorance

and sins of other people killed Jesus, a faithful servant of God and an innocent son.

Left in the tomb, the story would be tragic. But Jesus had the last laugh. There is rejoicing and joy in the resurrection. And he appeared again and again to comfort his disciples and uplift their hearts. Divine Love reassures the sorrowing and sad: "Always be glad because of the Lord! I will say it again: Be glad" (Phil. 4:4, Contemporary English Version).

The founder of the newspaper you're reading once said, "I agree ... that 'there are wit, humor, and enduring vivacity among God's people'." And her textbook on healing notes that "Mind [God], joyous in strength, dwells in the realm of Mind. Mind's infinite ideas run and disport themselves" (Mary Baker Eddy, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," pg. 514).

Disport means "play." I had a lovely healing as a result of considering the joy and play of God.

While learning to ski, I tripped on a protruding tree root. Skis flew. I fell. And I remained unable to move in the snow. A dear man who had devoted his afternoon to instructing me calmly skied to me.

I was reminded of the above lines about Mind and ideas. Lying in the snow, I thought about the divine Mind being joyous in strength. Not just strong, but joyous. I knew I was one of Mind's indestructible ideas, and that Mind created me joyous - able to run and play.

I refused to think gloomy thoughts like "this will ruin my day or my whole vacation." I felt that God took delight in me and was joyous about me - right then. The power that resurrected Jesus from the grave could certainly lift me up from the snow.

My friend was silently praying with me. In a few minutes, I was able to put my skis on and continue with the activity. There was no pain, no injury, no sign of strain or sprain that day or the remainder of the vacation. It was a joyous vacation.

I'm resolving to be more joyous. After all, humor and rejoicing in God are certain to make the workday more productive and harmonious.

Behold, God will not

cast away a perfect man,
neither will he help
the evil doers: till he fill
thy mouth with laughing,
and thy lips with rejoicing.

Job 8:20, 21