

## E-DEVOTION FOR JANUARY 14

I received a wonderful gift this Christmas. A book of conversations between the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu entitled The Book of Joy. First of all, the title grabbed me right off!

I need a 'book of joy.' There is so much in life that robs us of our joy. When we begin life we giggle, we laugh, we smile... at just about anything. Then our experiences seem to drive some of that joy away.

Remember the first time your child cried a tear? I must be honest to say, I don't. But my wife often tells the story of when she saw that first tear run down our oldest son's face. She doesn't really remember why the tear came... maybe just a moment of discomfort. But we know that as parents we would do just about anything to keep our child from experiencing sadness and losing that sense of joy.

God, our Father really wants us to find that joy in our life. As Jesus made his way to the cross, he reminded his followers that even though they would feel sadness, joy would return. In John 16, we read... *"Now you are sad, but I will see you again and your hearts will be filled with gladness."*

In The Book of Joy, I found these words... "We need unbiased love toward entire humanity, entire sentient beings, irrespective of what their attitude is toward us." The conversations went on to discuss the idea that our enemies are still our brothers and sisters and they deserve our love, our respect, and our affection.

I love the musical piece, "Ode to Joy." I have heard it played on the stage by excellent orchestras, I have heard many an accomplished organist pound it out! It's an amazing piece. But no more JOY comes to my soul than when my 11-year-old granddaughter does a video call with us and plays that favorite selection of mine on her viola. She's only taken lessons for less than a year. But joy comes to us in so many different ways, doesn't it? Sometimes in the very simplest form.

So, find some JOY in your life today. Smile, (we all can see that smile, even behind a mask) laugh, recall a special favorite memory. Let's resolve to experience joy even in these days, in sometimes the most difficult of circumstances.

And wash your hands. Fold them, bow your heads... reflect on the most joyful days of your life. Resolve to share your joy with someone... anyone. Plan to get the vaccine when available.

Pray with me: "Dear Lord, sometimes our nights are long, and our hearts are heavy. But you have promised us that there will be JOY in the morning. Give us comfort, give us peace. Instill within us the power to share our joy and our love with others. Amen. In Jesus' Name, Amen.