

Marist Minute

5 February 2024

Sitting with a friend at a café in the early weeks of January, she asked me, “what are you looking forward to this year?” It was an arresting question and one that I didn’t have an immediate answer to. If you’d asked me towards the end of the year, I’d probably have responded quickly with, “the holidays”. But as I sat there with the year ahead of me, I really had to think hard about my response and wondered why I didn’t have an answer ready to go. I certainly had plenty to look forward to: a new job, exciting travel opportunities, good health and the never ending adventures of family life.

It occurred to me that I was so focused on the current moment that I hadn’t stopped to think about much else. There certainly is wisdom in living in the present and Jesus encourages us to not worry about the troubles of tomorrow, for each day has enough of its own (Matthew 6:34). We all know people who are stuck in the past or worried about the future and yet, the Christian impulse is to live as a resurrection people, calling us to “face the future with audacity and hope” (In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat). It’s easy to be so caught up in the immediacy of life that we never take time for reflection or dream of future possibilities. There are plenty of reasons to take each day as they come, but it’s also good to ‘look forward’ and be excited about what is ahead.

Pope Francis invites followers of Jesus to never be bored or sad, but to be full of joy and radiate it to others. Perhaps we become so burdened by our daily crosses that we completely forget about the presence of God? We see this in the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Having lived through the loss of the crucifixion, they unexpectedly encounter the living presence of God, firing up their hearts and re-orientating their direction. We are called to honour the past, celebrate the present and embrace the future.



Journal Questions:

What are you looking forward to? This week, this month, this year?

How do you experience the joy Pope Francis describes?

