

LIVING JOYOUSLY

This passage from the Memoirs of Sr Vincent Harnett offers insights into the life of the Baggot Street Community and describes what Catherine was like as Reverend Mother.

‘Being of a remarkably cheerful disposition, she loved to see all under her charge cheerful and happy. She tried to make them so not only by removing whatever could disturb their peace, but also by contributing to the general cheerfulness of the community, especially at Recreation. Although burthened with many cares, she was at that duty as lively and merry as the youngest Sisters, who used to delight in being near her, listening to her amusing remarks and anecdotes. She had a natural talent for composing verses in a playful style, and would often sing them to some cheerful tune with admirable simplicity. What solid instruction these verses generally contained, the following will show... her parting advice to a newly appointed Revd. Mother...

Don't let crosses vex or tease
Try to meet all with peace and ease
Notice the faults of every day
But often in a playful way
And when you seriously complain
Let it be known to give you pain
Attend to one thing at a time
You've fifteen hours from six to nine
Be mild and sweet in all your ways
Now and again bestow some praise
Avoid all solemn declaration
All serious close investigation
Turn what you can into a jest
And with few words dismiss the rest
Keep patience ever at your side
You'll want it for a constant guide
Show fond affection every day
And above all else devoutly pray
That God may bless the charge He's given
And make of you their guide to Heaven.'

- 1 *Catherine tried to make those around her cheerful... how possible is it to spread joy?*
- 2 *Which piece of Catherine's poetic advice will you take away with you?*

Sister Vincent describes Catherine's positive mental attitude.

'Revd. Mother was a great enemy to that spirit of sadness which destroys true devotion, and... used often to quote the scripture which describes our Divine Lord as being neither sad nor troublesome. She could not allow the Sisters to take a gloomy view of passing events. Her own recollections of former friends and occurrences were all of a benevolent nature...'

- 3 *How can negativity become the enemy of a person's faith life?*
- 4 *What is the basis of our Christian joy?*
- 5 *Is there anyone you know who models positivity, or whose joy can be infectious?*

Notes

