

Mid-Week Meditation
June 3, 2020
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Years ago, I attended a conference on Holy Humour at Five Oaks Centre near Paris, ON.

One of the crucial learnings was the meaning of humour.
Humour is not the opposite of seriousness, it is the opposite of despair.

I remember a quote, attributed to Stephen Leacock:
"If I didn't laugh, I'd cry"
which seems to bear out that definition.

Consider Frederick Buechner's thought on humour [paraphrased a little]:
"A GOOD JOKE is one that catches you by surprise—like God's, for instance.

Who would have guessed that Israel of all nations would be the one God picked
or Sarah would have Isaac at the age of ninety
or the Messiah would turn up in a manger?
Who could possibly see the duck-billed platypus coming
or Saint Simeon Stylites [Google the name!]
or the character currently occupying the pulpit at New St. James?
The laugh in each case results from astonished delight at the sheer unexpectedness of the thing.

Satan's jokes, on the other hand, you can usually spot a mile off.
As soon as the serpent came slithering up to Adam and Eve, almost anybody could tell that the laugh was going to be on them.
That a person as blameless, upright, and well-heeled as Job was bound to have the rug pulled out from under him before he was through.
That Faust, being Faust, was sure to be conned out of his soul. And so on.

In the last analysis, the only one who gets much of a kick out of Satan's jokes is Satan himself.

With God's, however, even the most hardened cynics and bitterest pessimists have a hard time repressing an occasional smile.

When God really gets going, even the morning stars burst into singing and all the sons of God shout for joy."

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In all my years, I have never heard anyone say *"I wish I had laughed less"*