On practicing good humor: Another look at the prayer of Saint Thomas More

"It is requisite for the relaxation of the mind that we make use, from time to time, of playful deeds and jokes."

-Saint Thomas Aquinas, whose feast we celebrate today.

The effects of Snowmageddon:

The Holy Spirit has been hinting to me lately about the need for more good humor. Reminders have come in the form of articles and social media content to some of the circumstances, big and small, of our daily retired life.

The historic weather events of the past week have brought about a need for some levity too, don't you agree?

The massive blizzard, now known as Snowmageddon 2016, dumped more than two feet of snow to the mid-Atlantic region. The slow progress of many county snow plows brought about frustration in a lot of neighborhoods, making it necessary for many people to call on the virtue of patience.

Potential chair wars broke out in urban areas over shoveled-out parking spots. And most schools have closed for the week leaving parents with the daily challenge of keeping their children fed and clothed in fresh snow outerwear, while troubleshooting cries of boredom and sibling rivalry.

Oh my…

And it was during all this chaos that one of my Florida neighbors found this photo of Pope Francis on my older Facebook feed. What an animated photo of the Holy Father laughing and filled with joy!

(Photo by Luca Zennaro/Pool via Reuters)

This photo by Luca Zennaro was often linked thirteen months ago to news accounts of the Holy Father's December 22, 2014 address to the Roman Curia. In an otherwise sober year-end address, the Holy Father shared with these Vatican officials that he prays daily to English martyr Saint Thomas More for the gift of good humor, citing that a healthy dose of humor is very beneficial.

"An apostle must make an effort to be courteous, serene, enthusiastic and joyful, a person who transmits joy everywhere he goes. A heart filled with God is a happy heart which radiates an infectious joy: it is immediately evident! So let us not lose

that joyful, humorous and even self-deprecating spirit which makes people amiable even in difficult situations. How beneficial is a good dose of humour! We would do well to recite often the prayer of St. Thomas More. I say it every day, and it helps."

—Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Roman Curia,
Clementine Hall, Monday, 22 December 2014

I'm thinking today that perhaps all of us should consider making this beautiful prayer part of our daily prayer life. Our days could be richer for the laughter and light-hearted discourses that come our way!

Prayer for Good Humor:
by Saint Thomas More
Grant me, O Lord, good digestion, and also something to digest.
Grant me a healthy body, and the necessary good humor to maintain it.
Grant me a simple soul that knows to treasure all that is good
and that doesn't frighten easily at the sight of evil,
but rather finds the means to put things back in their place.
Give me a soul that knows not boredom, grumblings, sighs and laments,
nor excess of stress, because of that obstructing thing called "I."
Grant me, O Lord, a sense of good humor.
Allow me the grace to be able to take a joke to discover in life a bit of joy,
and to be able to share it with others.
Amen.

May all of us have more laughter and gracious good humor in our lives!
God is good… All the time!