

GAUDETE ET EXSULTATE: REJOICE AND BE GLAD

*On the Call to Holiness in Today's World
Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis
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Pope Francis on the goal of his exhortation:

“My modest goal is to **re-propose** the call to holiness in a **practical** way for our **own time**, with its risks, challenges and opportunities. For the Lord has chosen each one of us to be holy and blameless before him in love.” (Eph 1:4)

Universal Call to Holiness (from *Lumen Gentium*, Vatican II):

“[Christ united the Church] to Himself as His own body and brought it to perfection by the gift of the Holy Spirit for God's glory. Therefore, in the Church, everyone, whether belonging to the hierarchy, or being cared for by it, is called to holiness, according to the saying of the Apostle: ‘For this is the will of God, your sanctification.’ However, this holiness of the Church is unceasingly manifested, and must be manifested, in the fruits of grace which the Spirit produces in the faithful; it is expressed in many ways in individuals, who in their walk of life, tend toward the perfection of charity, thus causing the edification of others...” – par. 39

Reflection question:

- Consider the word *holiness*. What images, words, or thoughts come to mind?

DO NOT BE AFRAID OF HOLINESS...

“Do not be afraid of holiness. It will take away none of your energy, vitality or joy. On the contrary, you will become what the Father had in mind when he created you.” – par. 32

“We must first belong to God, offering ourselves to him who was there first, and entrusting to him our abilities, our efforts, our struggle against evil, and our creativity, so that his free gift may grow and develop within us.” – par. 56

“Let us listen once more to Jesus, with all the love and respect that the Master deserves. Let us allow his words to unsettle us, to challenge us and to demand a real change in the way we live. Otherwise, holiness will remain no more than an empty word.” – par. 66

HOLINESS THROUGH SMALL GESTURES...

“This holiness to which the Lord calls you will grow through small gestures.” – par. 16

“In this way, led by God's grace, we shape by many small gestures the holiness God has willed for us, not as men and women sufficient unto ourselves but rather “as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Pet 4:10). – par. 18

Reflection question:

- Is there someone in your life whose holiness draws you closer to Christ?

A BLUEPRINT FOR HOLINESS...

“The Beatitudes are like a Christian’s identity card. So if anyone asks: “What must one do to be a good Christian?”, the answer is clear. We have to do, each in our own way, what Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount. In the Beatitudes, we find a portrait of the Master, which we are called to reflect in our daily lives.” – par. 63

“The word happy or blessed thus becomes a synonym for holy. It expresses the fact that those faithful to God and his word, by their self giving, gain true happiness.” – par. 64

“Our Lord made it very clear that holiness cannot be understood or lived apart from these demands, for mercy is the beating heart of the Gospel.” – par. 97

“The questions of our people, their suffering, their struggles, their dreams, their trials and their worries, all possess an interpretational value that we cannot ignore if we want to take the principle of the incarnation seriously.” – par. 44

“Can holiness somehow be understood apart from this lively recognition of the dignity of each human being?” – par. 98

Being poor in heart: that is holiness

Reacting with meekness and humility: that is holiness.

Knowing how to mourn with others: that is holiness.

Hungering and thirsting for righteousness: that is holiness.

Seeing and acting with mercy: that is holiness.

Keeping a heart free of all that tarnishes love: that is holiness.

Sowing peace all around us: that is holiness.

Accepting the daily path of the Gospel, even though it may cause us problems: that is holiness.

Reflection question:

- Which of the Beatitudes stands out in a new way?

HOLINESS IS A JOURNEY IN COMMUNITY...

“Growth in holiness is a journey in community, side by side with others.” – par. 141

“Jesus paid attention to details: Wine was running out. One sheep was missing. Noticing the widow who offered two small coins. Having a fire burning and a fish cooking, as he waited for the disciples.” – par. 144

“Complacency is seductive; it tells us that there is no point in trying to change things, that there is nothing we can do, because this is the way things have always been and yet we always manage to survive.” – par. 137

“We are never completely ourselves unless we belong to a people.” – par. 6

“There are those who think...that prayer should be unalloyed contemplation of God, free of all distraction, as if the names and faces of others were somehow an intrusion to be avoided.” – par. 154

