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# FROM THE CHAPLAINCY

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## Dear Woodrose Parents

Welcome to the new school year!

Today, July 12, we had the traditional start-of-the school-year-Mass of the Holy Spirit in the covered gym. It was so nice to see the place jam-packed with parents, teachers and students. It was mentioned in the homily that the Holy Spirit is very important in our life because it is the Holy Spirit who moves us to pray, and it is in prayer that we get to know Jesus who is the joy of our heart.

As God the Father is the Creator and God the Son is the Redeemer, the Holy Spirit is the Sanctifier by appropriation. To the Holy Spirit we entrust the new school year and we ask for all the grace and guidance that we need to sanctify everything that we do during the new academic year.

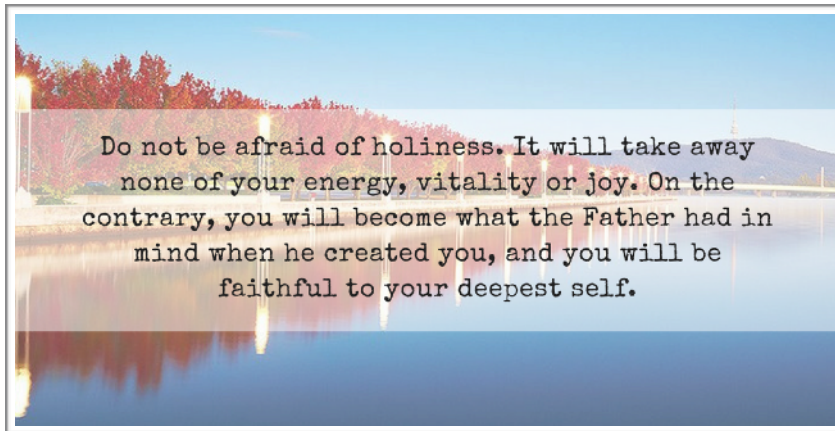
A few months ago, the Holy Father, Pope Francis, published his apostolic exhortation on holiness in the world today entitled *Gaudete et Exsultate* (Rejoice and Be Glad). We would like to share with you the article written by Kate Fowler, the blog editor of the Catholic Apostolic Center, with the hope that her article will encourage you to read and reflect on this beautiful and inspiring papal document.

## Everyday Holiness: Ten Quotes from Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation to Help You Be Holy in Today's World

Kate Fowler 5/1/2018

On April 9, the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, Pope Francis released his latest Apostolic Exhortation: *Gaudete et Exsultate* (Rejoice and Be Glad): On the Call to Holiness in Today's World. His goal was "to re-propose the call to holiness in a practical way for our own time, with all its risks, challenges and opportunities" (GE 2). Pope Francis invites us simply and straightforwardly to open ourselves to the specific and unique mission God has created us for. In this, he says, lies true joy and freedom. Our Holy Father takes us back to the Source of Holiness, Jesus Christ, and encourages us to look to the Beatitudes as guides for holiness. Below, I've compiled some of my favorite quotes and key take-aways from this approachable, yet profound, exhortation.

### 1. "The Lord asks everything of us, and in return he offers us true life, the happiness for which we were created. He wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence." -GE 1



Pope Francis echoes his predecessors in reminding us that following Christ leads to an abundant, joyful, and exciting life. We often do not equate holiness to greatness, but that's what it is. Though God expects a lot from us, he gives us so much more: true life and happiness. Our Holy Father is reminding us that holiness makes us truly happy by calling us to live abundantly.

### 2. "Holiness is the most attractive face of the Church." -GE 9

Many of us might have grown up thinking that holiness is boring and that sanctity is impossible, so why is Pope Francis saying that holiness is the most attractive face of the Church? What does this mean? When we embrace holiness, we become who we were created to be; we become our most authentic selves. This authenticity, this freedom, is attractive. It makes the Church come alive through each of her members. When we are striving for holiness, we are becoming our best and most loving selves. This witness is what evangelizes – it invites others to pursue their own journey of holiness.

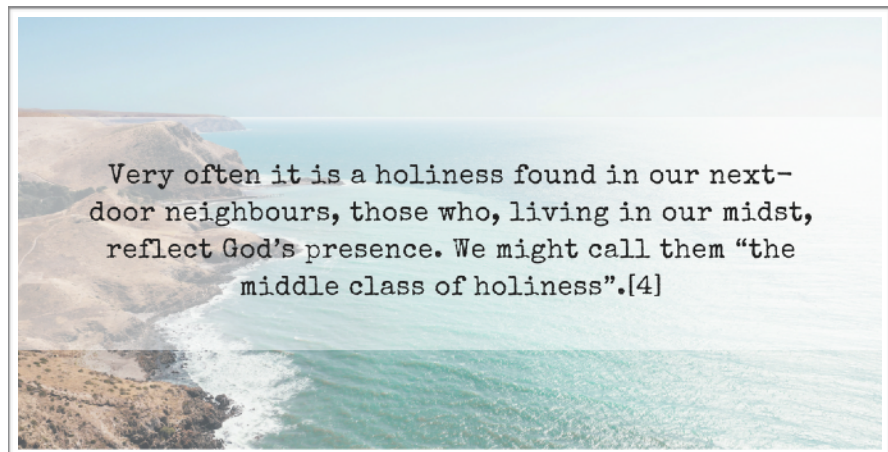
### 3. "The important thing is that each believer discern his or her own path, that they bring out the very best of themselves, the most personal gifts that God has placed in their hearts (cf. 1 Cor 12:7), rather than hopelessly trying to

**imitate something not meant for them. We are all called to be witnesses, but there are many actual ways of bearing witness.” -GE 11**

Oftentimes, it's easy to compare ourselves with others. It's tempting to see the gifts and talents of others and ask ourselves why we do not have the same. The Body of Christ is made up of all different parts – each necessary for the functioning, health, and well-being of the body itself. Here, Pope Francis reminds us that there are as many paths to holiness as there are people. Each of us was designed specifically by God for a unique purpose. We do not have to become St. Francis, St. Vincent Pallotti, St. Mother Teresa, St. Joan of Arc, or St. Francis de Sales. We become saints by becoming most fully and authentically who God made us to be: ourselves.

**4. “To be holy does not require being a bishop, a priest or a religious. We are frequently tempted to think that holiness is only for those who can withdraw from ordinary affairs to spend much time in prayer. That is not the case. We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves.” – GE 14**

In this passage, Pope Francis reminds us of the universal call to holiness which has its inception in the Gospel and which the Church has explicitly reminded us since the closing of the Second Vatican Council. Holiness is not reserved for those with theology degrees, the ordained, monks, or religious. It is not reserved for those who work for the Church or volunteer with acts of service. It is for each and every one of us: the high school student studying for exams, the single parent, the politician developing laws for his or her constituents, the factory worker, the refugee far from home, the married couple starting or raising a family, the list goes on and on. Whatever vocation, profession, or place in life we find ourselves in, let us infuse it with love in order to become holier each and every day.

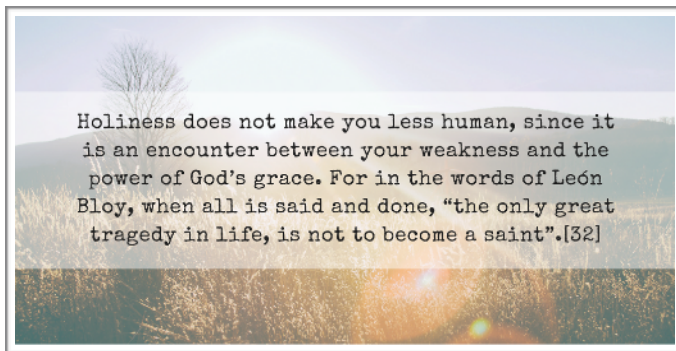


**5. “In the Church, holy yet made up of sinners, you will find everything you need to grow towards holiness. The Lord has bestowed on the Church the gifts of scripture, the sacraments, holy places, living communities, the witness of the saints and a multifaceted beauty that proceeds from God's love, “like a bride bedecked with jewels” (Is 61:10).” -GE 7**

Sometimes the journey of holiness seems impossible. We can get tired and beaten down by our own weaknesses and failures, and by the multitude of temptations and trials that seem to present themselves at every step. Here, Pope Francis is reminding us that Jesus Christ gives us everything we need to be holy. Our growth in holiness cannot exist apart from Christ's Church. Though the Church is not perfect, it is in the Body of Christ that we have access to Scripture, the sacraments, and community, so that we can have the help of others who are also striving for holiness. Do not forget to use these invaluable resources, to go back often and drink from the well of life, in order to get the strength you need to continue your journey of holiness.

## 6. “This holiness to which the Lord calls you will grow through small gestures.” -GE 16

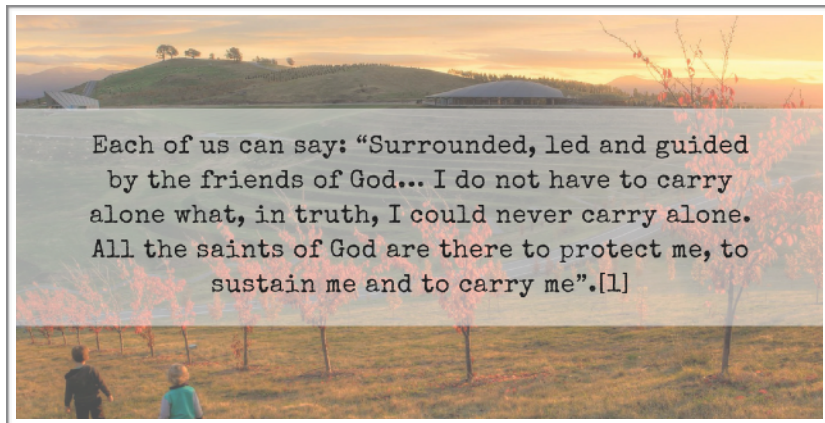
This quote reminds me of the often-referred to statement of St. Mother Teresa: “...do small things with great love.” Holiness does not happen overnight. It involves millions of decisions and actions – each one leading us closer to or further away from our goal. Pope Francis reminds us that we are called to grow in holiness in a way that may seem small and ordinary. Cleaning a dish can become an act of holiness—so can changing a diaper, writing a paper, tending a garden, submitting a work report, or sitting in traffic. Greatness, then, lies in the little things. This is the little way St. Therese of Lisieux shared with the Church. It can lead to great sanctity.



## 7. “Each saint is a mission, planned by the Father to reflect and embody, at a specific moment in history, a certain aspect of the Gospel...Every saint is a message which the Holy Spirit takes from the riches of Jesus Christ and gives to his people.” -GE 19, 21

Each of us are a product of our times. We were born at a specific time and place in order to live out a specific mission. We don't often think ourselves as “a mission,” as Pope Francis says, or as “a message,” but these are beautiful ways to think about our lives and the weight and dignity of each one. By thinking about our lives in this way, we see that each of us is planned by the Father at this exact moment in time and that our lives, actions, and interactions with others are invaluable. If we do not share the message God created us to impart, no one else will.

## 8. “Just as you cannot understand Christ apart from the kingdom he came to bring, so too your personal mission is inseparable from the building of that kingdom...Your identification with Christ and his will involves a commitment to build with him that kingdom of love, justice and universal peace.” -GE 25



After Christ's Resurrection and before his Ascension into heaven, he gave his disciples a clear command: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit." The same commission resounds for us today. Jesus came not only to overcome sin and death, but to build his kingdom on earth. For this reason, Pope Francis reminds us that we "cannot understand Christ apart from [his]

kingdom." Before joining Christ in Heaven, we've got work to do. We join Christ in his mission by working to create a world of "love, justice and universal peace." Holiness, therefore, is not for us alone, but for society, for others, and for the world.

**9. "The presence of constantly new gadgets, the excitement of travel and an endless array of consumer goods at times leave no room for God's voice to be heard...Sooner or later, we have to face our true selves and let the Lord enter." -GE 29**

The world today is an incredibly noisy place. Our access to technology enables us to be plugged in at almost every moment of the day. We see screens on our computers, smartphones, and televisions; we are bombarded by advertisements; we spend hours on social media. Without demonizing technology or refuting its benefits, Pope Francis reminds us of the temptation to drown out the voice of God with noise. If we are unable to hear the voice of God, then we will be unable to attain the holiness to which we are called. How can we carve out more time for God today in silence and in prayer?

**10. "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, and you will be faithful to your deepest self. To depend on God sets us free from every form of enslavement and leads us to recognize our great dignity." -GE 32**

Our world often views holiness as boring, enslaving, or downright impossible. Here, Pope Francis beautifully reminds us that holiness leads to true authenticity and freedom. Rather than limit our lives or diminish them with rules, regulations, and boredom, holiness leads to joy and vitality. Embracing who we were made to be leads to true happiness and satisfaction, rather than chasing the empty things of this world or trying to be who we are not. Let us not fear holiness, but strive for it wholeheartedly!

**Read and download the document here:** [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20180319\\_gaudete-et-exsultate.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudete-et-exsultate.html)