

Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation: *Gaudete et Exsultate*

Pope Francis published a new Apostolic Exhortation a few weeks ago.

It is 38 pages long and well worth the read!

The full document can be found here.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudete-et-exsultate.html

In this letter, Pope tells us how can we act with mercy and bring joy and gladness in our day today lives

Living a Holy Life

Pope Francis offers us many examples of holy lives throughout this document. The saints pray for us and give us examples of how to live, but we are not meant to be cookie-cutter versions of them. We are meant to be ourselves, and each believer is meant to “discern his or her our own path” and “bring out the very best of themselves.” As Thomas Merton said, “For me to be a saint means to be myself.” Everyone is called to be a saint. All we need to do is to “live our lives in love” and “bear witness” to God in all we do.

The Beatitudes are a Roadmap for Holiness

“*Gaudete et Exsultate*” is filled with Pope Francis’ trademark practical advice for living a life of holiness. For example, don’t gossip, stop judging and, most important, stop being cruel. That goes for online actions, too. Francis’ comments on this topic are memorable. Online, he writes, “defamation and slander can become commonplace...since things can be said there that would be unacceptable in public discourse, as people look to compensate for their own discontent by lashing out at others.... In claiming to uphold other commandments, they completely ignore the eighth, which forbids bearing false witness or lying and ruthlessly vilifying others.”

As you might guess from the document’s title, the Beatitudes, Jesus’ list of “blessed are,” are central to this exhortation. The Beatitudes are not only what Jesus means by holiness, they are also a portrait of our Lord himself. So we’re called to be poor in spirit, meek, peacemakers, to hunger and thirst for righteousness, and so on.

The Pope focuses on one of the beatitudes: “Blessed are the merciful.” Pope Francis says mercy has two aspects: helping and serving others but also forgiving and understanding. Jesus does not say, “Blessed are those who plot revenge!” And what is Pope Francis’ overall summary of holiness? It’s based on the Beatitudes: “Seeing and acting with mercy.”

Rejoice and Be Glad!