

Gaudete et Exsultate

A Call to Holiness

Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation



An Overview

- What is the new papal document?
- What is new?



What is the new papal document?

- Gaudete et Exsultate (GE) is an apostolic exhortation, a type of document that ranks below an encyclical but above everyday papal homilies and speeches.
- It is the third one issued by Pope Francis.



What is new?

- The great novelty is the theme: To **remind** Catholics that we can and should aspire to become saints.
- Pope Francis explains that he wants “**to re-propose** the call to holiness in a practical way for our own time, with all its risks, challenges and opportunities”



Key Points to Understand the New Papal Documents about the Call to Holiness

4 Keys to Understanding the Document



1. Examples of Holiness

- Pope Francis proposed looking at the “**Saints Next Door**”
- Also in the woman who doesn’t speak poorly against her friends; who listens with patience and care to her children; who prays before problems; and affectionately cares for the poor.



2. The Path to Holiness

- The pope says that the path to holiness is through the Beatitudes. He also explains how each person will be judged, according to St. Matthew



3. Catholic Style of Life

The Pope ends the document proposing 5 five great expressions of love for god and neighbour:

1. Perseverance, patience, and meekness.
2. Joy and sense of humour.
3. Boldness and passion.
4. To encounter others (Communitarian)
5. In constant prayer.



4. The Enemy

- The last chapter explicitly states that **the devil exists** and he is more than a myth.
- This mistake would lead us to let down our guard, to grow careless and end up more vulnerable.
- The devil does not need to possess us. He poisons us.





APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION
GAUDETE ET EXSULTATE
OF THE HOLY FATHER
FRANCIS
ON THE CALL TO HOLINESS
IN TODAY'S WORLD



Introduction (§§1-2)

- GE is meant to be practical: it is not “a treatise on holiness, containing definitions and distinctions helpful for understanding this important subject, or a discussion of the various means of sanctification.” Rather, it is a meditation on how to respond to Christ’s invitation to be saints: to “Rejoice and be glad,” (§1).



Chap 1 (§§3-34): The Call to Holiness

- In this chapter, Pope Francis discusses the diversity of forms under which holiness appears: “We are all called to be witnesses, but there are many actual ways of bearing witness,” (§11).
- Besides those saints and martyrs whose lives were “an exemplary imitation of Christ,” Pope Francis also praises “the middle class of holiness (§7).



The middle class of holiness (§7)

- Pope Francis emphasizes the phrase “each in his or her own way,”
- For the diversity of forms of holiness means that Christians must discern how the Lord is calling each of them to holiness.
- Pope Francis notes here that Saint John of the Cross “preferred to avoid hard and fast rules for all.



Pope Francis makes specific mention of women in this section,

- Saint Hildegard of Bingen or Saint Teresa of Avila who emerged in times “when women tended to be most ignored or overlooked,” but also those “unknown or forgotten women” who nurture those around them in ways that we know have personally touched Pope Francis deeply (§12).



Everyone has a Mission

- Here Pope Francis is at his most Jesuit. To be Christian is to be a disciple of Christ, meaning **to enter into the Gospel itself.**
- “**At its core, holiness** is experiencing, in union with Christ, the mysteries of his life.” **Contemplating the mysteries of Christ’s life, death and resurrection,** “as Saint Ignatius of Loyola pointed out, leads us to incarnate them in our choices and attitudes,” (§20).



Chap 2 (§§35-62): Two Subtle Enemies of Holiness

- This chapter concerns “two false forms of holiness that can lead us astray: **gnosticism and pelagianism,**” (§35). This material will be largely familiar to those who follow this Papacy, and particularly to those who read the recent CDF Instruction **Placuit Deo.**



Gnosticism & Pelagianism

- These tendencies **draw** oneself and others **away** from holiness:
- Whereby instead of evangelising, **one analyses and classifies others**, and instead of opening the door to grace, one exhausts his or her energies **in inspecting and verifying**. In neither case is one really concerned about Jesus Christ or others”.

§35



Chap 3 (§§63-109): In the Light of the Master

- Chapter 3 centers on **the example of Jesus**, particularly in an interpretation of **the Beatitudes** and Matthew 25. For while there “can be any number of theories about what constitutes holiness, with various explanations and distinctions... nothing is more enlightening than turning to Jesus’ words and seeing his way of teaching the truth,” (§63).



In this chapter, the Pope notes two “ideologies at the heart of the Gospel”

- Those Christians who separate these Gospel demands from their personal relationship with the Lord, from their interior union with him, from openness to his grace,” and
- Those who suspect the social engagement of others, seeing it as superficial, worldly, secular, materialist, communist or populist,” (§100-§106).



A “Franciscan” Moment

- Our defense of the innocent unborn
- The dignity of a human life (§101- §102).
- Francis ends this chapter with a bold statement. **A life spent meditating on the Beatitudes** and Matthew 25 and the examples of the saints “will benefit us; they will make us genuinely happy,” (§109).



Chap 4 (§§110-157): Signs of Holiness in Today's World

- In Chapter 4, Pope Francis discusses **five** “**great expressions of love for God and neighbour**” that he takes to be “of particular importance in the light of certain dangers and limitations present in today’s culture.” Those “**signs or spiritual attitudes**” will help us “**understand the way of life to which the Lord calls us.**”



Pope Francis first states these five attitudes negatively:

- There we see a sense of anxiety, sometimes violent, that distracts and debilitates; negativity and sullenness; the self-content bred by consumerism; individualism and all those forms of fake spirituality – having nothing to do with God – that dominate the current religious marketplace. (§111)



Stated positively

The Christian should rather

1. Be patient and meek (§§112-121);
2. Joyful (§§122-128);
3. Bold and passionate (§§129-139);
4. Communal (§§140-146); and
5. Constantly prayerful (§§147-157).



Pope Francis casts this chapter in terms of following and becoming more like Jesus

- A life-long effort which leads us to and is sustained by the Eucharist:
- The greatest worship the world can give him, for it is Christ himself who is offered. When we receive him in Holy Communion, we renew our covenant with him and allow him to carry out ever more fully his work of transforming our lives. (§157)



Jesus
gives us
what we
NEED to
complete
and **WIN**
the race



Jesus
does
NOT
Run
the race
FOR us



Chap 5 (§§158-201): Spiritual Combat, Vigilance, and Discernment

Pope Francis makes no bones about his purpose in writing this way:

- The Christian life is a **constant battle**.
- We need strength and courage to **withstand the temptations** of the devil and to proclaim the Gospel.
- **This battle is sweet**, for it allows us to rejoice each time **the Lord triumphs in our lives**.



- The spiritual life demands vigilance and keeping our “lamps lit” (§164). Progress in the spiritual life does not secure one from the devil’s snares. Indeed, the “spiritual **corruption**” of such persons “is worse than the fall of a sinner, for it is a comfortable and **self-satisfied form of blindness,**” (§165)
- While Pope Francis does not make this connection, one could imagine the Gnosticism and Pelagianism of Chapter 2 arising from this corruption.



- Pope Francis ends the chapter by posing a question, the answer to which is his favorite subject. The question: “How can we know if something comes from the Holy Spirit or if it stems from the spirit of the world or the spirit of the devil?”
- **The answer: discernment.**



Conclusion (§§176-177) with Hail Mary

- Pope Francis concludes by calling on Mary's intercession to help all walk with Jesus toward holiness. Mary is a model for that holiness: "she lived the Beatitudes of Jesus as none other."
- Her example is one of joy, discernment and suffering, and fidelity: "Mary is the saint among the saints, blessed above all others."
- If we follow her example, Pope Francis urges, "we will share a happiness that the world will not be able to take from us."



Summary

Pope calling us to spirituality -
an attitude - beatitude.



Eucharist - *Paschal Mystery of Christ*

- We need to be daily initiated into the Paschal Mystery of Christ so that we can be joyful witness (Proclaimers) to the Good News that God is still working out our salvation – He has not abandoned us to ourselves!
- Through the process of initiation into sacred space and sacred time, gradually the Christian becomes a mature disciple who is able to perceive the sacred in daily life and proclaims it as a true evangeliser.



This paschal spirituality is lived out daily through the Paschal Spiral



Intentional . Integrated . Initiation



Intentional . Integrated . Initiation

