

Gaudete et Exsultate

The Call to Holiness in Today's World

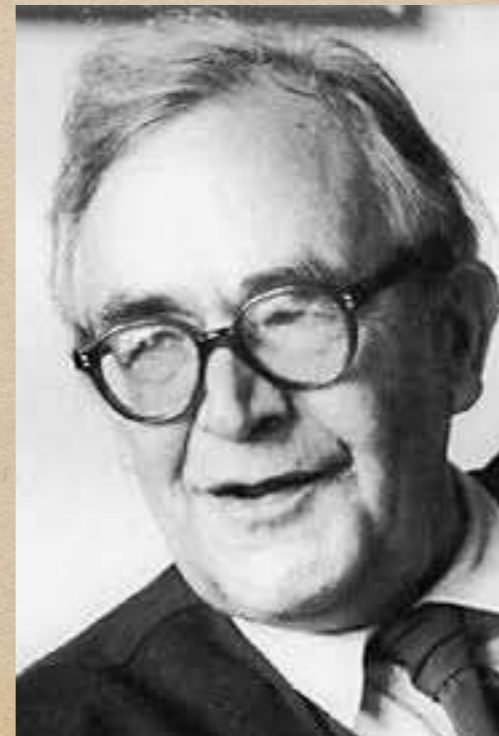
Each saint is a mission, planned by the Father to reflect and embody, at a specific moment in history, a certain aspect of the Gospel.

Gaudete et Exsultate §19

The Communion of Saints

- The Church Triumphant - in Heaven
- The Church Suffering – in Purgatory
- The Church Militant – on Earth

“I preach with my Bible in one hand and my newspaper in the other.” Karl Barth



Bible, Ipad and Twitter Account



My modest goal is to repropose the call to holiness in a practical way for our own time, with all its risks, challenges and opportunities.

GetE §2



I like to contemplate the holiness present in the patience of God's people: in those parents raising children with immense love, in those men and women who work hard to support their families, in the sick, in elderly religious who never lose their smile. In their daily perseverance I see the holiness of the Church militant. Very often it is a holiness found in our next-door neighbours, those who, living in our midst, reflect God's presence. (§7)

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. (§14)

“I will seize the occasions that present themselves every day; I will accomplish ordinary actions in an extraordinary way.”

Bishop Francois-Xavier Nguyen van Thuan, *“Five Loaves and Two Fish”*.

“Life does not have a mission, but is a mission.”

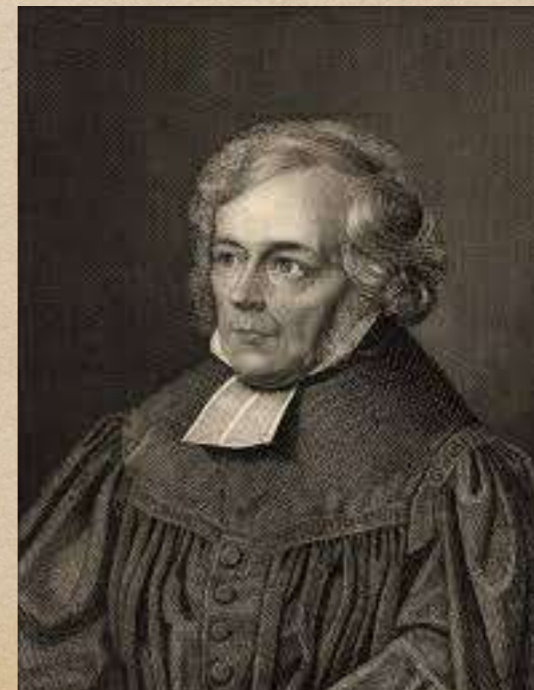
Xavier Zubiri, *Naturaleza, Historia, Dios*, Madrid, 1993, p.427. A Spanish philosopher who died in 1983.

We need to distinguish between this kind of superficial entertainment and a healthy culture of leisure, which opens us to others and to reality itself in a spirit of openness and contemplation. (footnote 29)

Leon Bloy, "When all is said and done, 'the only great tragedy in life, is not to become a saint.'" (§34)

The Four “Natural” Heresies

- Denying either Jesus’ Humanity or Divinity
- Manichaeism or Pelagianism



- Gnosticism – having special access to knowledge not available to others.
- “(Gnostics) absolutise their own theories and force others to submit to their way of thinking.” (§39),

When somebody has an answer for every question, it is a sign that they are not on the right road... God infinitely transcends us; he is full of surprises... Someone who wants everything to be clear and sure presumes to control God's transcendence. (§42)

“I am pleased that you teach sacred theology to the brothers, provided that... you do not extinguish the spirit of prayer and devotion during study of this kind.”

Francis of Assisi writing to Anthony of Padua

- Pelagianism – salvation by one's own efforts
- “Muscular Christianity”

“ God does not love us because **we** are good,
rather God loves us because **God is good.**”

Richard Rohr ofm

The Church has repeatedly taught that we are justified not by our own works or efforts, but by the grace of the Lord, who always takes the initiative. (§52)

Only on the basis of God's gift, freely accepted and humbly received, can we cooperate by our own efforts in progressive transformation. 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 this free gift may grow and develop within us... (§56)

... a punctilious concern for the Church's liturgy, doctrine and prestige, a vanity about the ability to manage practical matters, and an excessive concern with programmes of self-help and personal fulfilment. Some Christians spend their time and energy on these things, rather than letting themselves be led by the Spirit in the way of love, rather than being passionate about communicating the beauty and joy of the Gospel and seeking out the lost among the immense crowds that thirst for Christ. (§57)

The First Principle and Foundation

- We need to train ourselves to be indifferent in our attitude to all created things, in all that is permitted to our free will and not forbidden; so that for our part we do not set our hearts on good health rather than bad, riches rather than poverty, honour rather than dishonour, a long life rather than a short one, and so in all the rest. (§69)

- Holiness is “not about swooning in mystic rapture” (§96)
- The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats is not simply a call to action, it is a Christology (i.e. It tells us something fundamental about who Christ is).

Two Opposing (Incorrect) Views

- Charitable work is simply acting like an NGO – when not rooted in prayer.
- “Those who suspect the social engagement of others, seeing it as superficial, worldly, secular, materialist, communist or populist.”
(§101)

“... the best way to discern if our prayer is authentic is to judge to what extent our life is being transformed in the light of mercy.” (§105)

Five “Spiritual Attitudes”

- Perseverance, patience and meekness
- Joy and a sense of humour
- Boldness and passion
- Being part of community
- Being rooted in constant prayer

St Thomas More, "Grant me, O Lord, good digestion and something to digest. Grant me a healthy body, and the necessary good humour 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, grumbling, sighs and laments, nor excess of stress because of that obstructing thing called 'I'. Grant me, O Lord a sense of good humour. Allow me the grace to be able to take a joke and to discover in life a bit of joy, and to be able to share it with others." (§126, f.101)

- “Growth in holiness is a journey in community, side by side with others.” (§141)
- “a community that cherishes the little details of love.” (§145)

... we should not think of the devil as a myth, a representation, a symbol, a figure of speech or an idea. 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 with the venom of hatred, desolation, envy, and vice. When we let down our guard, he takes advantage of it to destroy our lives, our families, our communities... (§161)

The gift of discernment has become all the more necessary today, since contemporary life offers immense possibilities for action and distraction, and the world presents all of them as valid and good. All of us, but especially the young, are immersed in a culture of zapping. We can navigate simultaneously on two or more screens and interact at the same time with two or three virtual scenarios. Without the wisdom of discernment, we can easily become prey to every passing trend. (§167)

We should always remember that discernment is a grace. Even though it includes reason and prudence, it goes beyond them, for it seeks a glimpse of that unique and mysterious plan that God has for each of us, which takes shape amid so many varied situations and limitations. (§170)

Discernment is not about discovering what more we can get out of this life, but about recognising how we can better accomplish the mission entrusted to us at our baptism. This entails a readiness to make sacrifices, even to sacrificing everything. For happiness is a paradox. (§174)
(cf. the Cross)

The Examen

- Before you begin, as in all prayer, remind yourself that you're in God's presence, and ask God to help you with your prayer.
- Gratitude: recall anything from the day for which you are especially grateful and give thanks.
- Review: Recall the events of the day, from start to finish, noticing where you felt God's presence, and where you accepted or turned away from any invitations to grow in love.

The Examen

- Sorrow: Recall any actions for which you are sorry.
- Forgiveness: Ask for God's forgiveness.
- Grace: Ask God for the grace you need for the next day and an ability to see God's presence more clearly.
-
- James Martin, *The Jesuit Guide to Almost Everything*, Harper Collins, NY, 2010, p.97.

- 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.
(GetE§19)