



*Lumen Fidei*

# Gaudete & Exsultate

## “Joy and Be Glad!”

ON THE CALL TO HOLINESS IN TODAY'S WORLD

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 19 March, the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, in the year 2018, the sixth of Pope Francis' Pontificate.

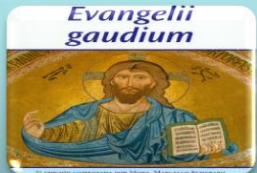
Summary by Pedro Caceres – [www.Lumen-Fidei.com](http://www.Lumen-Fidei.com) – June 2018

# Pope Francis main published documents so far



## Lumen Fidei

- Papal Encyclical started by Benedict XVI, finished by Francis
- On the Light of the Faith
- 09/29/2013 St. Peter



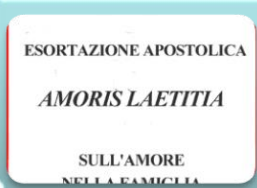
## Evangelii Gaudium

- Apostolic Exhortation
- On the Joy of the Gospel
- 11/24/2013 Christ the King. End of the Year of Faith.



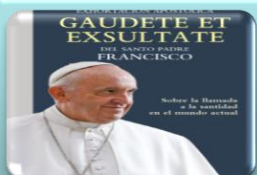
## Laudato Si

- Papal Encyclical
- On Care for the common Home
- 5/24/2015 Pentecost



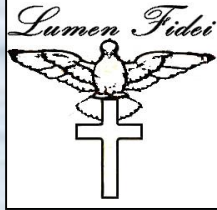
## Amoris Laetitia

- Apostolic Exhortation
- On Love in the Family
- 3/19/2016 St. Joseph



## Gaudete et Exsultate

- Apostolic Exhortation
- On the Call to Holiness in today's world
- 3/19/2018 St. Joseph



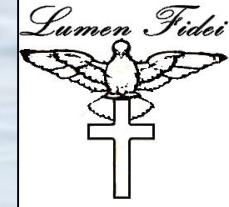
*Gaudete et Exsultate*  
*One document*  
*Two interpretations*

Pope Francis is leading the Catholic Church towards the real interpretation of the Gospel

The “core” message of Christianity is a message of love and redemption, salvation and hope, a message of mercy. A life of simplicity, acceptance, service, and sacrifice. A mission to become holy through grace and service to others.

Pope Francis is digging deeper into Situational Ethics, the most dangerous enemy of sanctity.

**Situational ethics** or **situation ethics** takes into account the particular context of an act when evaluating it ethically, rather than judging it according to absolute moral standards



# CHAPTER 1

## THE CALL TO HOLINESS



## **“REJOICE AND BE GLAD” (Mt 5:12)**

The Christian life is “joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 14:17)

The Lord asks everything of us, and in return he offers us true life,.

“The necessary result of the love of charity is joy”. [Summa Theologiae]

**The Pope wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence.**

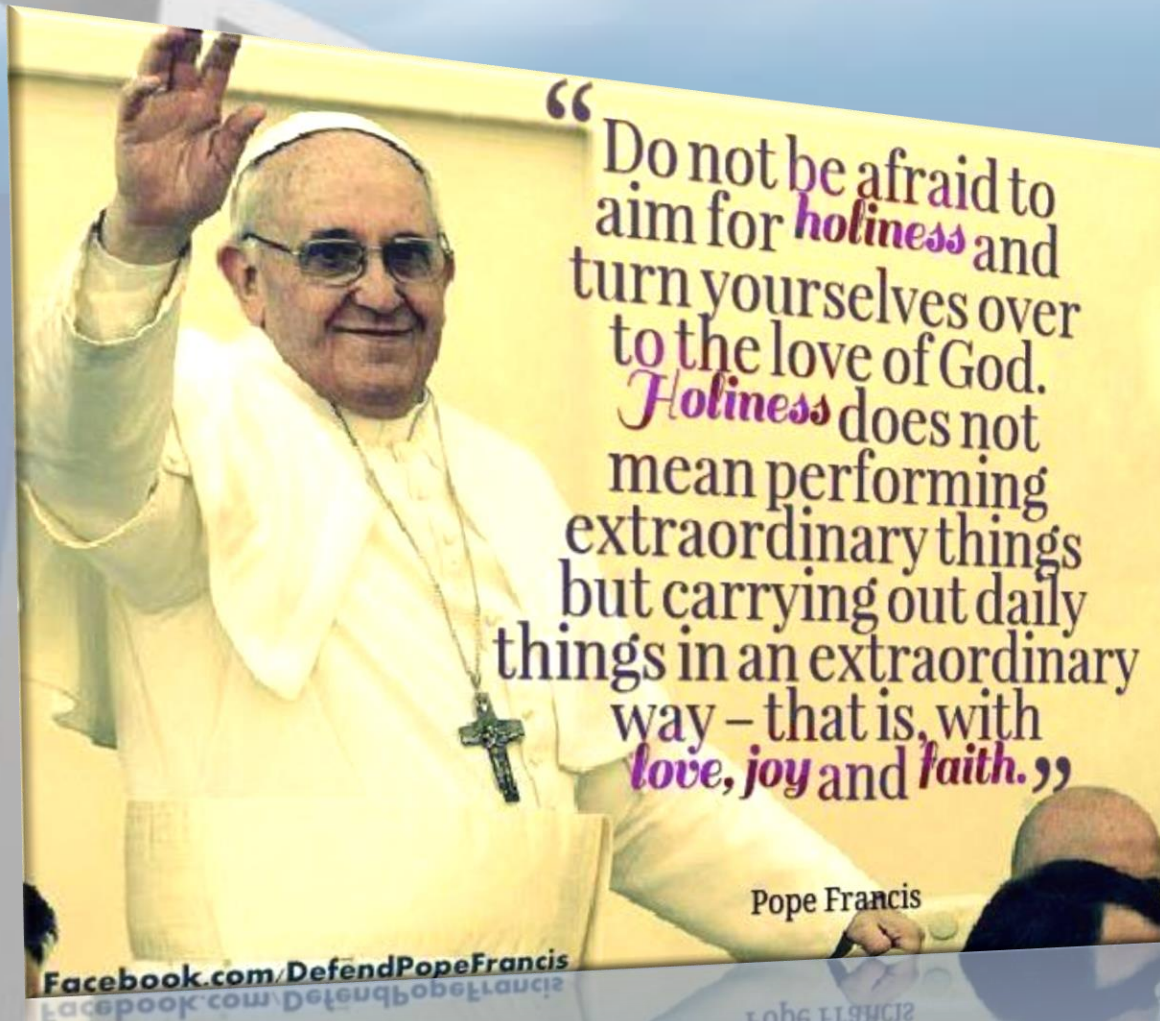
For the Lord has chosen each one of us “to be holy and blameless before him in love” (Eph 1:4).

We receive God’s word and we must embrace it “with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit” (1 Thess 1:6).

If we allow the Lord to draw us out of our shell and change our lives, then we can do as Saint Paul tells us:

**“Rejoice in the Lord always; I say it again, rejoice!” (Phil 4:4).**

# HOLINESS IS NOTHING OTHER THAN CHARITY LIVED TO THE FULL



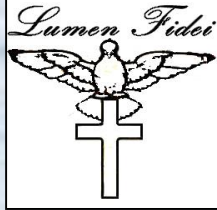
- “**The measure of our holiness stems from the stature that Christ achieves in us**, to the extent that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we model our whole life on His”.
- Every saint is a message which the Holy Spirit takes from the riches of Jesus Christ and gives to his people.



Pope Francis Motto:

“MISERANDO ATQUE ELIGENDO”  
Means : “By Mercifully Choosing”

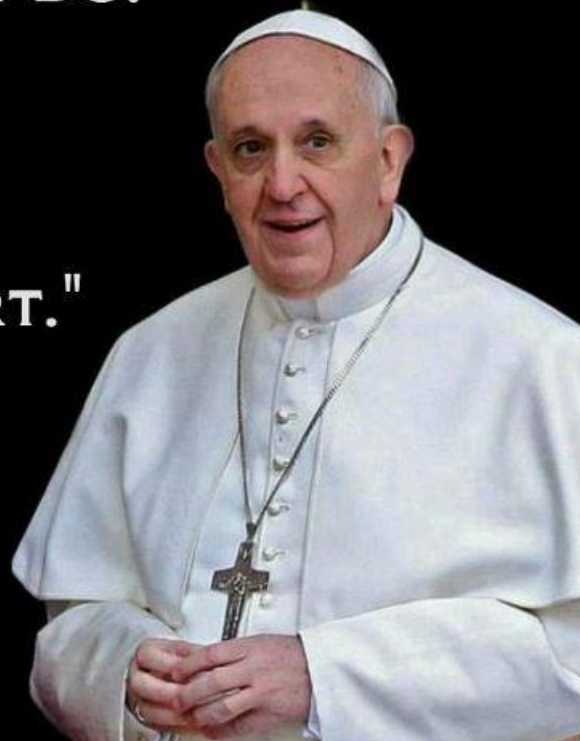
**OUR MISSION HAS ITS FULLEST MEANING IN CHRIST**  
**And a CHRISTIAN'S MISSION ON EARTH IS A PATH FOR HOLINESS**



**"HELP ONE ANOTHER**  
**THIS IS WHAT JESUS TEACHES US.**  
**THIS IS WHAT I DO.**

**AND I DO IT**  
**WITH MY HEART."**

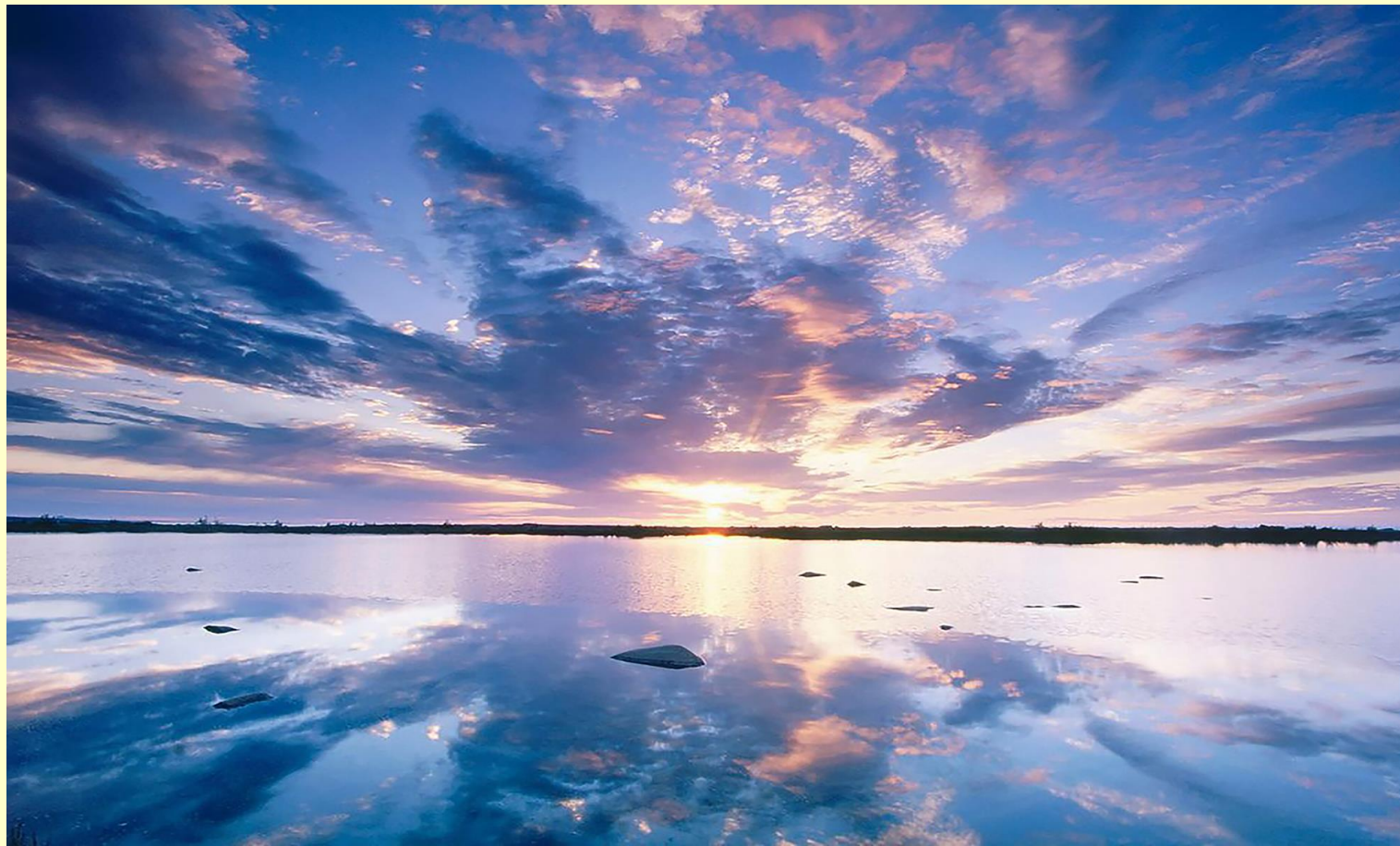
**- POPE FRANCIS**



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- A Christian cannot think of his or her mission on earth without seeing it as a path of holiness, for “this is the will of God, your sanctification” (1 Thess 4:3).
- 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.
- At its core, holiness is experiencing, in union with Christ, the mysteries of his life.
- It consists in uniting ourselves to the Lord’s death and resurrection in a unique and personal way, constantly dying and rising anew with him.

**Pope Francis’ Teaching: “It can also entail reproducing in our own lives various aspects of Jesus’ earthly life: his hidden life, his life in community, his closeness to the outcast, his poverty and other ways in which he showed his self-sacrificing love”**



**FRANCIS' teaching:  
"THE ENTIRETY OF YOUR LIFE AS A MISSION"**

- Try to do so **by listening to God in prayer and recognizing the signs that he gives you.**
- **Always ask the Spirit what Jesus expects from you at every moment of your life** and in every decision you must make, so as to discern its place in the mission you have received.
- **Allow the Spirit to forge in you the personal mystery that can reflect Jesus Christ in today's world.**
- May you come to realize what that word is, the message of Jesus that God wants to speak to the world by your life.
- **Let yourself be transformed.**
- **Let yourself be renewed by the Spirit.**
- **The Lord will bring it to fulfilment despite your mistakes and missteps,** provided that you do not abandon the path of love but **remain ever open to his supernatural grace,** which purifies and enlightens.



## REMEMBER THERE IS A GREAT CLOUD OF WITNESSES



### **Revelation 8:4**

"And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand."

- It impels us to advance constantly towards the goal.
- It may include our own mothers, grandmothers or other loved ones (cf. 2 Tim 1:5). Their lives may not always have been perfect, yet even amid their faults and failings they kept moving forward and proved pleasing to the Lord.
- The saints now in God's presence preserve their bonds of love and communion with us. The Book of Revelation attests to this when it speaks of the intercession of the martyrs.



## THE SAINTS “NEXT DOOR” – The MIDDLE CLASS of HOLINESS



- We shouldn't think only of those already beatified and canonized as the only examples of Holiness.
  - The Holy Spirit bestows holiness in abundance among God's holy and faithful people.
  - In salvation history, the Lord saved one people, not just a person.
  - God wanted to enter into the life and history of a people.
- I like to contemplate the holiness present in the patience of God's people: in those parents who raise their 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.

**FRANCIS' Teaching: "Very often it is a holiness found in our next-door neighbors, those who, living in our midst, reflect God's presence. We might call them 'The middle class of Holiness'".**

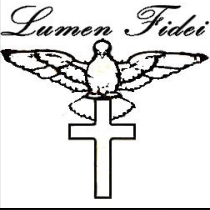
**“EACH IN HIS OR HER OWN WAY” but THROUGH OTHERS in COMMUNITY**  
**If not, it would be MORAL RELATIVISM**



# The individual path to Holiness in our ordinary lives in community.

- We should not grow discouraged before examples of holiness that appear unattainable.
- There are some testimonies that may prove helpful and inspiring, but that we are not meant to copy, for that could even lead us astray from **the one specific path that the Lord has in mind for us.**
- 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.
- Let's admire the "genius of woman" and feminine styles of holiness. Let's think too of all those unknown or forgotten women who, each in her own way, sustained and transformed families and communities.

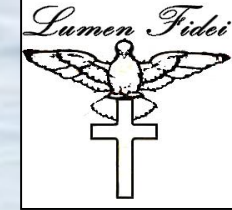
WE ARE ALL CALLED TO BE HOLY BY LIVING OUR LIVES WITH LOVE



# FORMING ORDINARY SAINTS

- 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.
- Are you called to the **consecrated life**? Be holy by living out your commitment with joy. Are you **married**? Be holy by loving and caring for your husband or wife, as Christ does for the Church. Do you **work for a living**? Be holy by laboring with integrity and skill in the service of your brothers and sisters. Are you a **parent or grandparent**? Be holy by patiently teaching the little ones how to follow Jesus. Are you **in a position of authority**? Be holy by working for the common good and renouncing personal gain

We are **all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness** (words and actions) in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves.



## LET EVERYTHING BE OPEN TO GOD; LET THE CHURCH HELP YOU

### FRANCIS' Teaching:

**"Sooner or later,  
we have to face  
our true selves  
and let the Lord  
enter.**



- Turn to God in every situation.
- Do not be dismayed, for the power of the Holy Spirit enables you to do this, **and holiness, in the end, is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life** (cf. Gal 5:22-23).
- When you feel the temptation to dwell on your own weakness, raise your eyes to Christ crucified and say: "Lord, I am a poor sinner, but you can work the miracle of making me a little bit better".
- **Your identification with Christ and His will involves a commitment to build with Him that kingdom of love, justice and universal peace.**
- **We are called to be contemplatives even in the midst of action, and to grow in holiness by responsibly and generously carrying out our proper mission.**

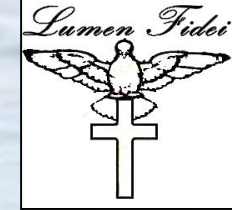
In the Church, holy yet made up of sinners, you will find everything you need to grow towards holiness. The Lord has bestowed on the Church the gifts of scripture, the sacraments, holy places, living communities, the witness of the saints and a multifaceted beauty that proceeds from God's love, "like a bride bedecked with jewels"



CHAPTER 2

# TWO SUBTLE ENEMIES OF HOLINESS

## ENEMIES OF HOLINESS: GNOSTICISM



- Gnosticism judges others based on their ability to understand the complexity of certain doctrines.
- Gnostics think that their explanations can make the entirety of the faith and the Gospel perfectly comprehensible.
- **They absolutize their own theories (Radical Dualism & Rejection of Incarnation) and force others to submit to their way of thinking.**
- It is a mind without God and without flesh. "It is a God without Christ, a Christ without a Church, a Church without a people"
- **FRANCIS' Teaching: "We cannot claim that our way of understanding the truth authorizes us to exercise a strict supervision over others' lives [ EVEN IF ] for those who long for a monolithic body of doctrine guarded by all and leaving no room for nuance, this might appear as undesirable and leading to confusion."**

## ENEMIES OF HOLINESS: PELAGIANISM

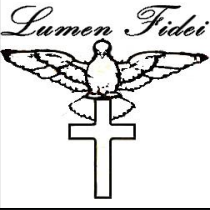


- Pelagianism is the belief that original sin did not taint human nature and that mortal will is still capable of choosing good or evil without special divine grace.
- Pelagianism forgets that everything “depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who shows mercy” (Rom 9:16) and that “he first loved us” (cf. 1 Jn 4:19).
- Pelagianism tells the weak that all things can be accomplished with God’s grace, but deep down they tend to give the idea that all things are possible by the human will, as if it were something pure, perfect, all-powerful, to which grace is then added.
- **FRANCIS’ Teaching: “Pelagianism makes people intransigently faithful to a certain Catholic style” [...]**

**“Some groups of Christians give excessive importance to certain rules, customs, or ways of acting. The Gospel then tends to be reduced and constricted, deprived of its simplicity, allure and savor”**



# Pope Francis on the DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION “An overlooked Church teaching” Is Pope Francis changing the Catholic Doctrine to “SOLA FIDE”?



FOR BY  
GRACE  
YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED  
THROUGH FAITH,  
AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES;  
IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD.  
EPHESIANS 2:8

- FRANCIS' Teaching: 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.
- The Fathers of the Church, even before Saint Augustine, clearly expressed this fundamental belief. Saint John Chrysostom said that God pours into us the very source of all his gifts even before we enter into battle. Saint Basil the Great remarked that the faithful glory in God alone.
- The Second Synod of Orange (529 ad) taught with firm authority that nothing human can demand, merit or buy the gift of divine grace, and that all cooperation with it is a prior gift of that same grace.
- Subsequently, the Council of Trent (1545 ad), while emphasizing the importance of our cooperation for spiritual growth, reaffirmed that dogmatic teaching: “We are said to be justified gratuitously because nothing that precedes justification, neither faith nor works, merits the grace of justification; for ‘if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise, grace would no longer be grace’ (Rom 11:6)”.



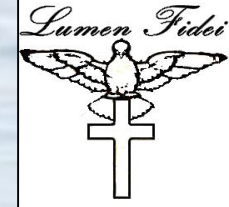
### FRANCIS' teaching:

“Some Christians insist on taking another path, that of justification by their own efforts, the worship of the human will and their own abilities. The result is a self-centered and elitist complacency, bereft of true love”

### SLAVES OF OUR OWN RELIGION:

- an obsession with the law,
- an absorption with social and political advantages,
- 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 programs of self-help and personal fulfilment,

- rather than letting themselves be led by the Spirit in the way of love,
- rather than being passionate about communicating the beauty and the joy of the Gospel and seeking out the lost among the immense crowds that thirst for Christ.



CHAPTER 3

# IN THE LIGHT OF THE MASTER

# JESUS ANSWER TO BECOME HOLY: THE BEATITUDES

(cf. Mt 5:3-12; Lk 6:20-23).



**POOR  
IN SPIRIT**  
THOSE WHO MOURN  
**THE MEEK**  
HUNGRY & THIRSTY  
THE MERCIFUL  
**PURE  
IN HEART**  
THE PEACEMAKERS  
PERSECUTED  
**INSULTED**

# BEWARE OF IDEOLOGIES THAT LEAD US INTO HARMFUL ERRORS

## PRO-LIFE means COMPREHENSIVE ETHIC OF LIFE

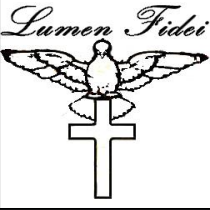


1. Christians who separate these Gospel demands from their personal relationship with the Lord, from their interior union with him, from openness to his grace.
2. Christians who find suspect the social engagement of others, seeing it as superficial, worldly, secular, materialist, communist or populist.
3. Christians who relativize as if there are other more important matters, or the only thing that counts is one particular ethical issue or cause that they themselves defend.



4. Our defense of the innocent unborn, for example, needs to be clear, firm and passionate, for at stake is the dignity of a human life, which is always sacred and demands love for each person, regardless of his or her stage of development. **"EQUALLY SACRED, HOWEVER, are the lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned and the underprivileged, the vulnerable infirm and elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection", including the "immigrants, which some Catholics consider it a secondary issue compared to the 'grave' bioethical questions. [...] Can we not realize what Jesus demands of us?"**

## THE KEY MESSAGE OF GAUDETE & EXSULTATE: HOW WE WILL BE JUDGED

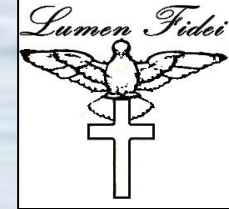


**“We may think that we give glory to God only by our worship and prayer, or simply by following certain ethical norms. It is true that the primacy belongs to our relationship with God, but we cannot forget that:**

**the ultimate criterion on which our lives will be judged is what we have done for others.**

**WHAT DO YOU WANT  
ME TO DO FOR YOU?**

**Prayer is most precious, for it nourishes a daily commitment to love. Our worship becomes pleasing to God when we devote ourselves to living generously, and allow God’s gift, granted in **prayer, to be shown in our concern for our brothers and sisters.**”**

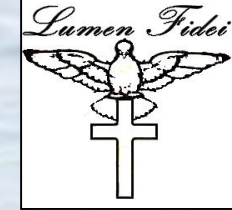


CHAPTER 4

***SIGNS OF HOLINESS IN TODAY'S WORLD***

# WORKS OF MERCY TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOR

## FRANCIS' ADVICE TO WALK IN THE PATH OF HOLINESS



- **Mercy**, whereby we supply others' defects, is a sacrifice more acceptable to God
- It is hard to feel and show any real concern for those in need unless we are able to **cultivate simplicity of life.**
- When we allow ourselves to be caught up in **superficial information we become indifferent to the suffering of others.**
- Christians too can be caught up in **networks of verbal violence through the internet** and forums of digital communication.
- It is not good when **we look down on others like heartless judges**, lording it over them and always trying to teach them lessons. That is itself a **subtle form of violence.**
- **If you are unable to suffer and offer up a few humiliations, you are not humble and you are not on the path to holiness. It is an unavoidable aspect of the imitation of Christ.**
- **Admire daily humiliations of those who keep silent to save their families, who prefer to praise others rather than boast about themselves, or who choose the less welcome tasks, at times even choosing to bear an injustice so as to offer it to the Lord.**

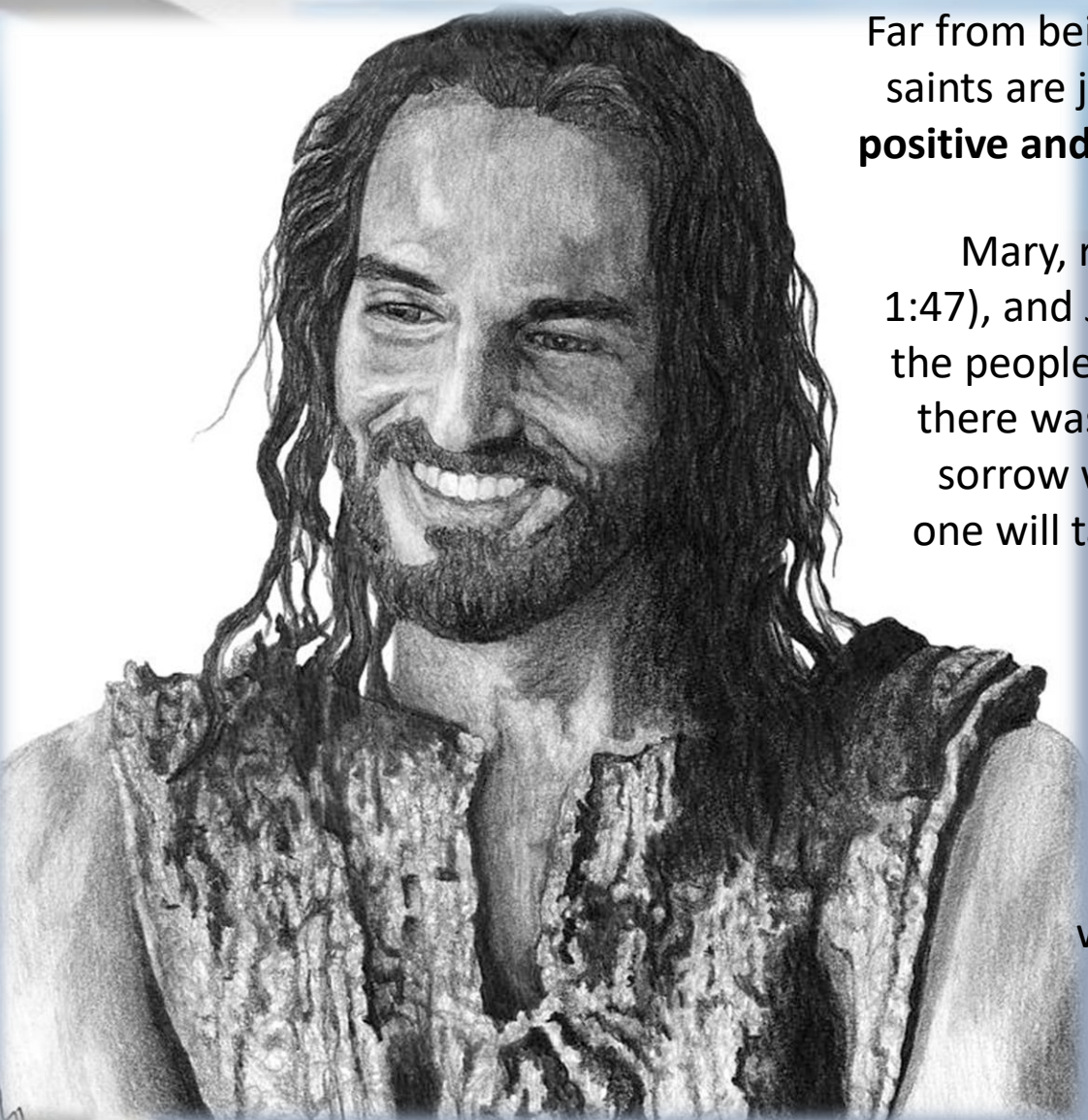
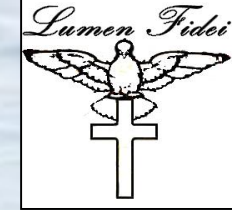
To act in this way presumes a heart set at peace by Christ, freed from the aggressiveness born of overweening egotism. That same peacefulness, the fruit of grace, makes it possible to preserve our inner trust and persevere in goodness.

When we focus primarily on our own needs, we condemn ourselves to a joyless existence.



# THE POSITIVE EFFECT ON HOLINESS of JOY AND A SENSE OF HUMOR

God wants us to be positive, grateful and uncomplicated



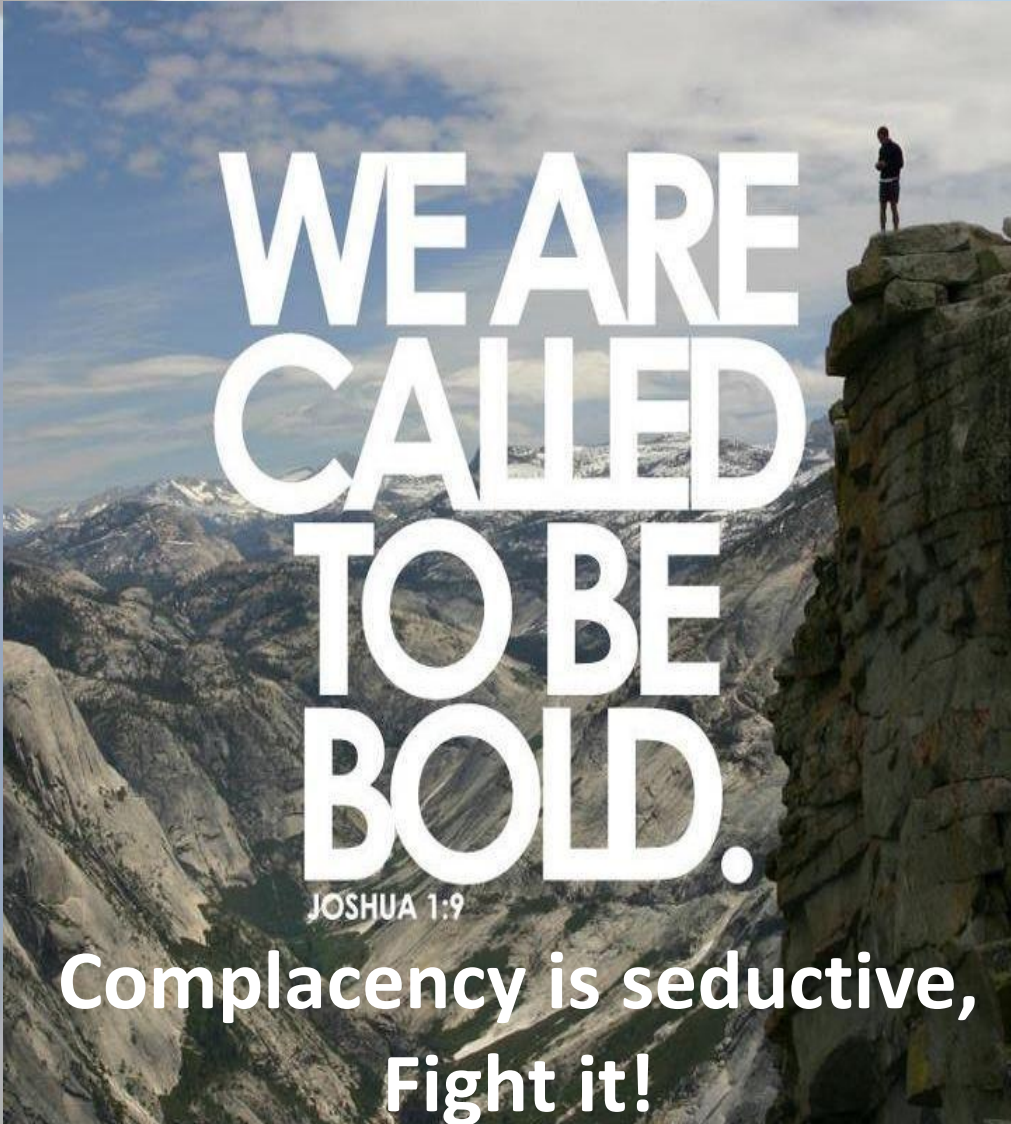
Far from being timid, morose, acerbic or melancholy, or putting on a dreary face, the saints are joyful and full of good humor. **Though completely realistic, they radiate a positive and hopeful spirit.** Christian joy is usually accompanied by a sense of humor.

Mary, recognizing the newness that Jesus brought, sang: “My spirit rejoices” (Lk 1:47), and Jesus himself “rejoiced in the Holy Spirit” (Lk 10:21). As he passed by, “all the people rejoiced” (Lk 13:17). After his resurrection, wherever the disciples went, there was “much joy” (Acts 8:8). Jesus assures us: “You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy... I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you” (Jn 16:20.22). “These things I have spoken to you, **that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full**” (Jn 15:11).

**Hard times may come, when the cross casts its shadow, yet nothing can destroy the supernatural joy that “adapts and changes, but always endures, even as a flicker of light born of our personal certainty that, when everything is said and done, we are infinitely loved”.** That joy brings deep security, serene hope and a spiritual fulfilment that the world cannot understand or appreciate.

# THE POSITIVE EFFECT ON HOLINESS of BOLDNESS and PASSION

God wants us to be bold



**WE ARE  
CALLED  
TO BE  
BOLD.**

JOSHUA 1:9

**Complacency is seductive,  
Fight it!**

**Holiness is also parrhesia: “To speak candidly”.** It is boldness, an impulse to evangelize and to leave a mark in this world. To allow us to do this, Jesus himself comes and tells us once more, serenely yet firmly: “Do not be afraid” (Mk 6:50)

Parrhesia is **a seal of the Spirit**; it testifies to the authenticity of our preaching. It is a joyful assurance that leads us to glory in the Gospel we proclaim. It is an unshakeable trust in the faithful Witness who gives us the certainty that nothing can “separate us from the love of God” (Rom 8:39).

God is eternal newness. He impels us constantly to set out anew, to pass beyond what is familiar, to the fringes and beyond. **God takes us to where humanity is most wounded, where men and women, beneath the appearance of a shallow conformity, continue to seek an answer to the question of life’s meaning. God is not afraid! He is fearless! He is always greater than our plans and schemes**

# THE POSITIVE EFFECT ON HOLINESS of LIVING in COMMUNITY

## God wants us to become Holy in our Community



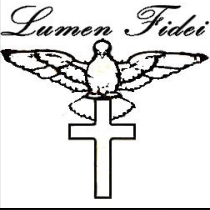
When we live apart from others, it is very difficult to fight against concupiscence, the snares and temptations of the devil and the selfishness of the world. Bombarded as we are by so many enticements, we can grow too isolated, lose our sense of reality and inner clarity, and easily succumb. **Growth in holiness is a journey in community, side by side with others.**

Jesus shared with his disciples and with ordinary people and paid attention to details:

- The little detail that wine was running out at a party.
- The little detail that one sheep was missing.
- The little detail of noticing the widow who offered her two small coins.
- The little detail of having spare oil for the lamps, should the bridegroom delay.
- The little detail of asking the disciples how many loaves of bread they had.

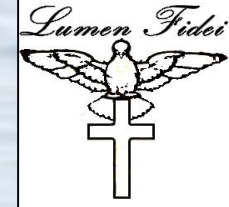
# THE POSITIVE EFFECT ON HOLINESS of LOVE and CHARITY

## God wants us to love our neighbor and pray for them



- A community that cherishes the little details of love, whose **members care for one another and create an open and evangelizing environment**, is a place where the risen Lord is present, sanctifying it in accordance with the Father's plan.
- Contrary to the growing consumerist individualism that tends to isolate us in a quest for well-being apart from others, our path to holiness can only make us identify all the more with Jesus' prayer "that **all may be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you**" (Jn 17:21).
- **In silence, we can discern**, in the light of the Spirit, the paths of holiness to which the Lord is calling us. Otherwise, any decisions we make may only be window-dressing that, rather than exalting the Gospel in our lives, will mask or submerge it.
- **Prayer of intercession has particular value**, for it is an act of trust in God and, at the same time, an expression of love for our neighbor. There are those who think, based on a **one-sided spirituality**, 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.

Yet in reality, our prayer will be all the more pleasing to God and more effective for our growth in holiness if, through intercession, we attempt to practice the twofold commandment that Jesus left us.

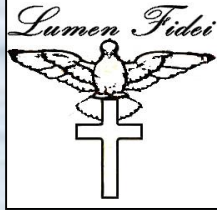


CHAPTER 5

# SPIRITUAL COMBAT, VIGILANCE, AND DISCERNMENT

# THE POSITIVE EFFECT ON HOLINESS of COMBATING THE DEVIL

## God wants us to withstand the temptations of the devil



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.



Along this journey, the cultivation of all that is good, progress in the spiritual life and growth in love are the best counterbalance to evil. **Those who choose to remain neutral, who are satisfied with little, who renounce the ideal of giving themselves generously to the Lord, will never hold out.** We are not dealing merely with a battle against the world and a worldly mentality that would deceive us and leave us dull and mediocre, lacking in enthusiasm and joy. Nor can this battle be reduced to the struggle against our human weaknesses and proclivities. It is also a constant struggle against the devil, the prince of evil.

Hence, 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 and our communities. "Like a roaring lion, he prowls around, looking for someone to devour" (1 Pet 5:8).

# THE POSITIVE EFFECT ON HOLINESS of DISCERNMENT

## God wants us to know when something comes from Him



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 only way is through discernment. We should always remember that discernment is a grace.

**Discernment calls for something more than intelligence or common sense.** Spiritual discernment does not exclude existential, psychological, sociological or moral insights drawn from the human sciences. At the same time, it transcends them. Nor are the Church's sound norms sufficient.

We are free, with the freedom of Christ. Still, **God asks us to examine what is within us** – our desires, anxieties, fears and questions – and what takes place all around us – “the signs of the times” – and thus to recognize the paths that lead to complete freedom. “Test everything; hold fast to what is good” (1 Thess 5:21).

**Listening entails obedience to the Gospel as the ultimate standard, but also to the Magisterium that guards it,** as we seek to find in the treasury of the Church whatever is most fruitful for the “today” of salvation. **It is not a matter of applying rules or repeating what was done in the past, since the same solutions are not valid in all circumstances and what was useful in one context may not prove so in another.** The Spirit alone can penetrate what is obscure and hidden in every situation, and grasp its every nuance, so that the newness of the Gospel can emerge in another light.

**When, in God's presence, we examine our life's journey, no areas can be off limits.** In all aspects of life we can continue to grow and offer something greater to God, even in those areas we find most difficult. We need, though, to ask the Holy Spirit to liberate us and to expel the fear that makes us ban him from certain parts of our lives. God asks everything of us, yet he also gives everything to us.

# CONCLUSION

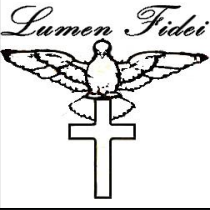
"I would like these reflections to be crowned by Mary, because she lived the Beatitudes of Jesus as none other. She is that woman who rejoiced in the presence of God, who treasured everything in her heart, and who let herself be pierced by the sword. Mary is the saint among the saints, blessed above all others. She teaches us the way of holiness and she walks ever at our side. She does not let us remain fallen and at times she takes us into her arms without judging us. Our converse with her consoles, frees and sanctifies us. Mary our Mother does not need a flood of words. She does not need us to tell her what is happening in our lives. All we need do is whisper, time and time again: "Hail Mary..."

It is my hope that these pages will prove helpful by enabling the whole Church to devote herself anew to promoting the desire for holiness. **Let us ask the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us a fervent longing to be saints for God's greater glory, and let us encourage one another in this effort.** In this way, we will share a happiness that the world will not be able to take from us."





# *Conflictive points – Open Discussion*



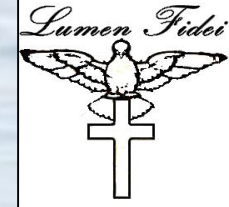
1. “P. Francis takes aim at Catholics with "an obsession with the law, an absorption with social and political advantages [and] a punctilious concern for the Church's liturgy, doctrine and prestige." There are undoubtedly a few Catholics who fixate on liturgy and doctrine in a way that can be unwise or unhealthy. But how many more Catholics obsess about “tolerance” and “openness” to certain ways of being or living—LGTB—in a way and to a degree that is far more obvious and problematic?” (1)
2. “P. Francis, as has been his common practice, warns not only against having too much concern for doctrine, but also too much emphasis on rules, describing as “Pelagian or Semi-Pelagian” those who feel superior “because they observe certain rules or remain intransigently faithful to a particular Catholic style” . The overall impression is that rules, boundaries, limits, dogma, and tradition are almost always impediments. And yet, for a growing number of people in the West today—especially those who are younger—there is a recognition that the past several decades, which have witnessed full-scale assaults on many “rules and regulations” (and certainly on dogma), bear witness to the fact that some things really should hold fast and must stay put in order for goodness, order, and authentic love to survive, never mind thrive. (1)”
3. “ ‘It is not healthy to love silence while fleeing interaction with others, to want peace and quiet while avoiding activity, to seek prayer while disdaining service.’ seems to wipe out two millennia of contemplative monasticism, male and female. “ (1)
4. All social issues have same level of moral importance (abortion, poverty, immigration, health care, ...). Not one of them is relatively more important than any of the others.
5. The doctrine of Justification only by Grace. How is this compatible with the Catholic doctrine of Salvation from Grace and Works?
6. Should the Catholic Church simplify its ways and eliminate what is superfluous and go back to its origins?

# *CRITICAL QUESTION TO DISCERN*



## Have we Catholics forgotten how to be true Christians?

GE[59]: "Once we believe that everything depends on human effort as channeled by ecclesial rules and structures, we unconsciously **complicate the Gospel and become enslaved** to a blueprint that leaves few openings for the working of grace. Saint Thomas Aquinas reminded us that the **precepts added to the Gospel** by the Church should be imposed with moderation "lest the conduct of the faithful become burdensome", for then **our religion would become a form of servitude**"



# *The End*

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