

Gaudete et Exsultate: A Summary

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Introduction

“Rejoice and be glad”- Lord Jesus utters these words on the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:12). Pope Francis in the fifth year of his papacy uses the same to name his third apostolic exhortation, titled Gaudete et Exsultate (hereafter GE), ‘Rejoice and be Glad’. As the caption explicitly expresses, its subject is “the call to holiness in today’s world.” The pontiff launches a plain, fundamental message, showing that what matters, what is the quintessence of Christian life is to ‘seek and find God in all things.’ Whatever risks one takes in the name Jesus is a thing not to be grieved over, but rather as among the main blessings of life. This is the core of every change, both personal and ecclesial: ‘put God at the centre.’ He exhorts that the Lord “wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence” (#1). The ‘modest goal’ of the document is to re-propose the call to holiness essentially for our own particular time, with every one of its dangers, difficulties and openings (#2). The apostolic exhortation contains five chapters. I am making an effort here to summarise the document without losing its importance.

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Ch. 1: Called to be Holy (# 03-34)

Pope Francis reminds the Church to ‘run with perseverance the race that is set before us’ (Heb 12:1) to holiness like Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Gideon and others (Heb 11:1-12:3). He offers us numerous cases of blessed lives like St. Thérèse of Lisieux, the nun who discovered sacredness in doing small things; St. Ignatius of Loyola, the Jesuit founder; St. Philip Neri, the author of the Oratorians who was prestigious for his comical inclination.

This is the place Pope Francis is calling ‘the saints next door’ appears to be so vital to our development in understanding the all-inclusive call to heavenliness (#6-9). The Lord demonstrates models of holiness through the humblest of individuals: those parents who bring up their children with massive love, people who strive to help their families. Holiness is attainable to anyone irrespective of his vocation or life situation. We are altogether called to be holy by living our lives with love and by giving testimony all that we do, wherever

we get ourselves. Francis’ exhortation to all is to be holy by living out one’s commitment with joy, by labouring with integrity and skill in the service of one’s fellow being, by

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patiently teaching the little ones how to follow Jesus, and by working for the common good and renouncing personal gain (#14).

Holiness - The Most Attractive Face of the Church

Pope Francis teaches new ways of holiness in an era that is changed. He considers holiness as ‘the most attractive face of the Church’ (#9) and reminds his readers the Lord’s words to Abraham, “Walk before me, and be blame-

less” (Gen 17:1) (GE #1). This holiness is not to be attained as an ‘isolated individual’ but as part of ‘the complex fabric of interpersonal relationships present in a human community’ (EG #6). Pope exhorts the Church as a community of faithful to be holy by living the faith in charity. “Let us be spurred on by the signs of holiness that the Lord shows us through the humblest members of that people which “shares also in Christ’s prophetic office, spreading abroad a living witness to him, especially by means of a life of faith and charity”. GE teaches us to understand and embrace the call to holiness, to identify the present day enemies of holiness, to be signs of holiness in our everyday lives by understanding Christ’s call to holiness in the Beatitudes and to be strengthened in battle for holiness. Let us not fear holiness. It will take away none of our vitality or happiness. By holiness, one is dependable to one’s most profound self. We comprehend the significant truth that God, and not man, is the genuine Master. To the degree that every Christian develops in holiness, he or she will bear more noteworthy witness for the present world. Pope Francis exhorts the men women in Christ follow the simple path of holiness, i.e., “Holiness to which the Lord calls you will grow through small gestures” (#16)

Christian Life, Holiness and Mission

Christian life is a mission on earth and a path of holiness, for “this is the will of God, your sanctification” (1Thess 4:3). Thus every saint is a mission planned by God to reflect and embody, at a particular time in history, a certain aspect of the Gospel (#19). Fullest meaning of mission can only be understood through Christ, and the essence of holiness is experiencing in union with him. i.e., through uniting ourselves to his death and resurrection in a unique and personal way, constantly dying and rising anew with

him (#20). “Christ enables us to live in him all that he himself lived, and he lives it in us.” Whereas Christ himself is Father’s plan, and ourselves in him. “It is Christ who loves in us, for “holiness is nothing other than charity lived to the full.”

Our identification with Christ and his will involves a commitment to build with him that kingdom of love, justice and universal peace (#25). Pope reminds us that “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” (#26). In the midst all the distractions of today’s world, we need a spirit of holiness to live life of generous commitment to God and brethren (#27-31).

The first chapter is concluded with an invitation to live a more humane life. The pope exhorts not to be afraid of holiness. “It will take away none of your energy, vitality or joy” (#32). He requests all, “allow yourself to be loved and liberated by God” and “to let yourself be guided by the Holy Spirit” (#34). Holiness will make us more human.

Ch. 2: Enemies of Holiness (#35-62)

There are two enemies of holiness. Two particular challenges to guard against, according to the Holy Father, are the false conceit of Gnosticism, which claims a superior subjective intellectual knowledge of the faith, and the deceptive idea of Pelagianism that fails to acknowledge or appreciate our human limitations.

Contemporary Gnosticism

It presumes an absolutely subjective faith whose only interest is a certain experience or a set of ideas and bits of data which are meant to console and enlighten, but which ultimately keep one imprisoned in his or her own

thoughts and sentiments (#36). The document clarifies that Gnosticism proclaims ‘an intellect without God and without flesh’ because ‘they judge others based on their ability to understand the complexity of certain doctrines’ and ‘they think of the intellect as separate from the flesh, and thus become incapable of touching Christ’s suffering flesh in others, locked up as they are in an encyclopaedia of abstractions’ (#37). Pope Francis warns the Church to be careful of the contemporary Gnosticism (#39). He also clarifies that Gnosticism as ‘one of the most sinister ideologies,’ because ‘while unduly exalting knowledge or a specific experience, it considers its own vision of reality to be perfect’ ((#40).

Contemporary Pelagianism

Those who are enslaved to the pelagian and semi-pelagian concept now began to attribute the power to the human will and personal effort. The human will took the place of mystery and grace. It overlooks that everything “depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who shows mercy” (Rom 9:16). Even though they speak warmly of God’s grace, “ultimately trust only in their own powers and feel superior to others because they observe certain rules or remain intransigently faithful to a particular Catholic style” (GE #49). Pelagians eventually trust just in their own particular powers and feel better than others. The absence of a genuine and devoted acknowledgment of our limits stops grace from working: recognize our solid and constrained circumstance.

The Church has repeatedly taught that we are justified not by our own endeavours or particular deeds, but by the grace of the Lord, who always takes the initiative (GE #52). We cannot buy it with our works, but it is a ‘gift born of loving initiative.’ (#54). Church always the hold this great conviction firmly (#54), and “the Church has always

taught that charity alone makes growth in the life of grace possible, for “if I do not have love, I am nothing” (1Cor 13:2) (#56).

Neo-Pelagian Outlook

There are Christians who still take their own paths of justification, i.e., ‘justification by their own efforts, the worship of the human will and their own abilities.’ The result will be ‘self-centred and elitist complacency, bereft of true love.’ Pope Francis identifies the following concrete behavioural patterns:

This finds expression in a variety of apparently unconnected ways of thinking and acting: 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 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 the joy of the Gospel and seeking out the lost among the immense crowds that thirst for Christ (#57)

He criticizes rigidity, legalism, clericalism, elitism, conservatism, and traditionalism. He warns that ‘contrary to the promptings of the Spirit, the life of the Church can become a museum piece or the possession of a select few.’ This can cause an unconnected ways of thinking and acting: a fixation on the law, an ingestion with social and political points of interest, a meticulous worry 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, and thus in spite of the promptings of the Spirit, the life of the Church

may ‘end up fossilized... or corrupt’ (#57-58).

He exhorts that we do well to continue reminding ourselves that there is a hierarchy of virtues that offers us look for what is fundamental in order to avoid the presence of the above enemies of holiness in our lives. He continues, “the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself’” (Gal 5:14). Jesus gave us the formula of seeing “the face of God reflected in so many other faces” ((#60-61) and that should be one and only formula to reach holiness.

Ch. 3: Following the Master (#63-109)

Pope Francis notes in the third chapter the standard on being blessed, indicating the Beatitudes and to the judgment in Matthew’s Gospel (5:3-12, 25:31-46). “The Beatitudes are like a Christian’s identity card.” Every Christian needs to follow the footsteps of the Master, Jesus though “the world pushes us towards another way of living”. “Let us allow his words to unsettle us, to challenge us and to demand a real change in the way we live” (#63-66). Holiness, thus, won’t remain ‘an empty word’.

Blessed are the poor in spirit

Jesus invites all to be poor and trust in the richness of God’s love. “Jesus calls blessed those who are poor in spirit, those who have a poor heart, for there the Lord can enter with his perennial newness.” It is an invitation to ‘holy indifference,’ as St. Ignatius Loyola calls, which ‘brings radiant interior freedom’ and a call ‘to live a plain and austere life.’ Jesus ‘calls us to share in the life of those most in need, the life lived by the Apostles, and ultimately to configure ourselves’ to Him who, though rich, “made himself poor” (2Cor 8:9) (#67-70). Thus we achieve holiness.

Blessed are the meek

Jesus proposes another expression of holiness – the way of meekness. In a world, where pride and vanity reigns, where each person thinks he or she has the right to dominate others, the path of meekness plays a crucial role. Perfect charity consists in putting up with others' mistakes. "If we regard the faults and limitations of others with tenderness and meekness, without an air of superiority, we can actually help them and stop wasting our energy on useless complaining" (#72). Meekness, one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:23), is yet 'another expression of the interior poverty of those who put their trust in God alone' (#73-74).

Blessed are those who mourn

Pope warns that there are people who try escape the situations of pain and agony thinking that 'reality can be concealed.' A person who considers things to be they genuinely are and identifies with torment and distress is fit for touching the depths of life and finding authentic happiness. They 'share in the suffering of others,' 'understanding their anguish and bringing relief,' and 'sense that the other is flesh of our flesh.' We ought to be comforted, not by the world but rather by Jesus, unafraid to partake in the misery of others, as St. Pauls says, "Weep with those who weep" (Rom 12:15) (#75-76). This is yet another meaning of being holy.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness

Jesus says that those suffering for justice and yearn for righteousness will be satisfied, for sooner or later justice will come. We can collaborate to make that happen, even if we may not always see the fruit of our endeavours. There are people who suffer injustice, remaining by pitifully while others divvy up the great things of this life. Some surren-

der battling for genuine justice and pick to follow in the train of the victors. Genuine justice comes about in people's lives when they show justice in their decisions; it is communicated in their pursuit of justice for poor people and the marginalized. Justice can be a synonym for faithfulness to God's will in every aspect of our life and also when it is shown especially towards those who are most vulnerable: "Seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Is 1:17) (#77-79). This is holiness in other words.

Blessed are the merciful

Mercy involves two aspects: 1) Giving, helping and serving others, 2) Forgiveness and understanding. Matthew's Gospel sums up: "In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you" (7:12). When faced by circumstances that make moral judgments less guaranteed and decision difficult: Judge not, and you won't be judged; condemn not, and you won't be condemned; pardon, and you will be excused; give, and it will be given to you. The measuring stick we use for understanding and excusing others will gauge the forgiveness we get. Holiness involves seeing and acting with mercy (#80-82).

Blessed are the pure in heart

A heart capable of love concedes nothing that might harm, weaken or endanger that love (#83). There can be no love without works of charity, but this Beatitude reminds us that the Lord expects a heart which is committed to our brothers and sisters (#85). "A heart that loves God and neighbour (cf. Mt 22:36-40), genuinely and not merely in words, is a pure heart; it can see God." "Jesus promises that those who are pure in heart "will see God." He who keep a heart free of all that tarnishes love, he is in the path of holi-

ness (#86).

Blessed are the peacemakers

There are endless situations of war in the world. People of the world of gossip never bring peace or harmony; they are really enemies of peace (#87). Peacemakers truly build peace and companionship in society. To those who spread peace Jesus makes this wonderful promise: “They will be called children of God” (Mt 5:9) (#88). Every believer needs to work for peace. It is a hard work which embraces all, ‘even those who are a bit odd, troublesome or difficult, demanding, different, beaten down by life or simply uninterested.’ In our pursuit of holiness, “we need to be artisans of peace, for building peace is a craft that demands serenity, creativity, sensitivity and skill” (#89).

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake

The path Jesus proposes goes against the flow, even making us challenge society by the way we live and, as a result, becoming a nuisance. The Beatitudes are not easy to live out in a world where thirst for power and worldly interests prevail; any attempt to do so will be viewed negatively, regarded with suspicion, and met with ridicule (#91). “Whatever weariness and pain we may experience in living the commandment of love and following the way of justice, the cross remains the source of our growth and sanctification” (#92). In our pursuit of holiness, we should be ready to accept any persecution while following the path of the Gospel.

The Great Criterion

Jesus expands on the Beatitude that calls the merciful blessed (Mt 25:31-46) and offers a clear criterion on which we will be judged: “I was hungry and you gave me

food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me” (Mt 25:35-36). It is a call to recognize him in the poor and the suffering. Holiness is not a indulging in mystical bliss. St. John Paul II clearly states: “If we truly start out anew from the contemplation of Christ, we must learn to see him especially in the faces of those with whom he himself wished to be identified.” Holiness can’t be comprehended or lived separated from these demands, for mercy is “the beating heart of the Gospel.” Every Christian need an open heart to see the image of God, brother or sister redeemed by Jesus Christ in each human being. This involves a constant and healthy unease and the goal has to be the restoration of just social and economic systems (#95-99).

Two harmful errors:

Ideologies lead us to two harmful errors:

- 1) Separating the Gospel demands from personal relationship with the Lord, from interior union with him, from openness to his grace. “Christianity thus becomes a sort of NGO stripped of the luminous mysticism.”
- 2) Suspecting the social engagement of others, seeing it as superficial, worldly, secular, materialist, communist or populist; or relativizing the importance of issues 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.

Proper attitude of every Christian is to be open to each and every issues related to the human dignity and well-being. It is not proper to see migrants a secondary issue compared to the ‘grave’ bioethical questions: “the only proper attitude is to stand in the shoes of those brothers and

sisters of ours who risk their lives to offer a future to their children.” Pope Francis urges the faithful that in today’s world too, we are called to follow what prophet Isaiah proposes to pleasing God. “Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn” (58:7-8) (GE #101-103).

The worship and prayer becomes most acceptable to God when one devote himself to living generously, and allow God’s gift, granted in prayer, to be shown in with concern for our brothers and sisters. Ultimate criterion on which our lives will be judged is the thing that we have done for others. (#104) “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) According to St. Thomas Aquinas ‘the works of mercy towards our neighbour’ is more pleasing than our acts of worship. We are called to be single-minded and tenacious in the works of mercy. God relies upon us to love the world and to show how much he loves it (#107).

When we are obsessed with our own pleasure, we will end up being all too concerned about ourselves and our rights, and we feel a desperate need for free time to enjoy ourselves. We will find it hard to find to feel and show any real concern for our brethren and we become indifferent to the suffering fellow brothers and sisters. Gospel promises us a different healthier and happier life. Jesus’ words are few and straight forward, yet practical and valid for everyone. The powerful witness of the saints proved that. We Christians are to put into practice and live a genuinely happy life (#108-109).

Ch. 4: Signs of Holiness in the Present Age (#110-157)

Holy Father highlights here ‘five great expressions of love for God and neighbour’ which are of ‘particular importance in the light of certain dangers and limitations present in today’s culture’ such as sense of anxiety; negativity and sullenness; the self-content bred by consumerism; individualism; and all those forms of fake spirituality that dominate the current religious marketplace (#111). These are the five great expressions: trust in God who loves and sustains us, which helps us to be in the grace and strength of perseverance and patience in avoiding evil and doing good; Christian joy and good humour; boldness and fervour of the Holy Spirit; community and caring for one another; and “habitual openness to the transcendent, expressed in prayer and adoration” (GE #110).

Perseverance, Patience and Meekness

First of these five signs of holiness is ‘solid grounding in the God who loves and sustains us.’ This helps us to persevere amid life’s ups and downs, but also to endure hostility, betrayal and failings from others. We need cultivate the quality of patience and ‘always cling to the anchor of prayer, which puts us back in God’s hands and the source of our peace’ (#112-114). There are possibilities that Christians can be caught up in networks of verbal violence through the internet and the various forums of digital communication (#115). The Pope exhorts that we should not look down on others like heartless judges, lording it over them and always trying to teach them lessons (#117). Instead, we should be humble enough accept humiliations which is a path of holiness and ‘it is a way of imitating Jesus and growing in union with him’ (#118-120).

Joy and Sense of Humour

It is another expression of holiness, according to Pope Francis, ‘to be joyful and full of good humour.’ “The Christian life is “joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 14:17), for “the necessary result of the love of charity is joy; since every lover rejoices at being united to the beloved... the effect of charity is joy” (#122). Jesus himself “rejoiced in the Holy Spirit” (Lk 10:21) and Mother Mary recognizing the joy Jesus brought to humanity sings: “My spirit rejoices” (Lk 1:47). Prophets and saints were filled with that same joy which ‘brings deep security, serene hope and a spiritual fulfilment that the world cannot realise or appreciate’ (#123-125). “Christian joy is usually accompanied by a sense of humour.” Saints like Thomas More, Vincent de Paul and Philip Neri are great examples. God wants us to be positive, grateful and uncomplicated (Eccl 7:14,29; Phil 4:11). Today’s individualistic and consumerist culture do not conceive that joy. Fraternal love makes us capable of rejoicing in the good of others (#126-128).

Boldness and Passion

Holiness is boldness, an intense desire to evangelize and to leave a mark in this world. Biblical term *Parrhesia* (παρρησία) means boldness, enthusiasm, the freedom to speak out, apostolic fervour, etc. This word is also used in the Bible to describe the freedom of a life open to God and to others (cf. Acts 4:29, 9:28, 28:31; 2Cor 3:12; Eph 3:12; Heb 3:6, 10:19) (#129). Jesus himself draws a model before us: His deep compassion made him go out actively to preach and to send others on a mission of healing and liberation. Let us too join that mission and allow Jesus to lay hold of our weaknesses. “Boldness and apostolic courage are an essential part of mission” (#130-131). It is the ‘seal of the Spirit;’ we need the prompting of the Spirit to carry

out our mission (#132-133). We are constantly tempted, like the prophet Jonah, to flee to a safe haven, such as: individualism, spiritualism, living in a little world, addiction, intransigence, the rejection of new ideas and approaches, dogmatism, nostalgia, pessimism, hiding behind rules and regulations. The Pope exhorts not to be afraid of the fringes and to go to the fringes as Jesus, who himself became a fringe (Phil 2:6-8; Jn 1:14). He also urges us to abandon a dull and dreary mediocrity (135-138). “Let us ask for the apostolic courage to share the Gospel with others and to stop trying to make our Christian life a museum of memories” (#139).

Journey in a Community

Growth in holiness is a journey in community, side by side with others. Living or working alongside others is definitely a path of spiritual growth. The common life, regardless of whether in the family, the parish, and the religious community or any other, is comprised of small everyday things (#141-143). “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.” Any attempt to be with and grow with community in our present world where consumerist individualism is growing, is really opening a path to holiness.

Constant Prayer

Holiness consists in our constant openness to God through prayer and adoration. The saints lived a life of prayer in communion with God. Holiness is always linked with prayer. Trust-filled prayer is a response of a heart open to encountering God face to face, and in silence, we can discern, with help of the Spirit, the paths of holiness to which

the Lord is calling us (#147-150). We need to contemplate on the mysteries of Christ and remember God's work for us. Various forms of prayers are expressions of our love for God and our brethren. Prayerful reading of God's word enables us to pause and listen to the voice of the 'Master. Meeting Jesus in the Scriptures leads us to the Eucharist,' by which 'we renew our covenant with him and allow him to carry out ever more fully his work of transforming our lives' (#151-157).

Ch. 5: Spiritual Combat, Vigilance and Discernment

The Christian life is a continuous battle – on the one side temptations of devil, on the other side mission of proclaiming the Gospel.

Combat and Vigilance

Our battle is not merely against the world and a worldly mentality that would deceive us and leave us dull and mediocre, lacking in enthusiasm and joy nor against our human weaknesses and proclivities (like laziness, lust, envy, jealousy or any others). It is also a constant struggle against the devil. Devil is not a myth or symbol or representation. He poisons us with the venom of hatred, desolation, envy and vice. If we don't care, he takes advantage of it to destroy our lives, our families and our communities. God's word warns us to stand against the devil (Eph 6:11; Eph 6:16). Those who do not realize this will be prey to failure or mediocrity. For this spiritual combat, the Lord has given us the following powerful weapons: faith-filled prayer, meditation on the word of God, the celebration of Mass, Eucharistic adoration, sacramental Reconciliation, works of charity, community life, and missionary outreach. "Those who choose to remain neutral, who are satisfied with little, who renounce the ideal of giving themselves generously to the Lord, will never holdout" (#159-163).

The path of holiness is a source of peace and joy, a gift of the Holy Spirit to us. It demands us to keep “our lamps lit” (Lk 12:35) and be alert (1Thess 5:6, 22; Mt 24:42; Mk 13:35). Otherwise, there is possibility of falling into dull lethargy, ‘gradually turn lukewarm’ and end up weakened and corrupted. “Spiritual corruption is worse than the fall of a sinner, for it is a comfortable and self-satisfied form of blindness.” In such a state, everything appears acceptable such as deception, slander, egotism and other subtle forms of self-centeredness. Jesus warns us against self-deception that can lead us to corruption (Ex. Lk 11:24-26) (#164-165).

Discernment

It is through discernment, which is more than common sense or intelligence that we come to know if something is from the Holy Spirit or devil. Discernment is the gift of the Spirit which must implore through prayer, reflection, reading and good counsel (#166). Since contemporary world consists of immense possibilities for action and distraction, and that are presented as valid and good, discernment become more necessary today. Without the wisdom of discernment, there is all the possibilities of becoming victim of any passing trend. Whenever some novelty presents itself in our lives, it is important we decide whether it is from God or the spirit of the world. At other times the contrary may happen – evil forces may induce us not to change, to leave things as they are or to opt for severe opposition to change (#167-168). Discernment means ‘to be always in the light of the Lord’ by which we recognises the God’s mysterious and loving plan to make us move beyond mere good intentions. It is a supernatural gift - ‘even though it includes reason and prudence, it goes beyond them.’ We need to discern what God speaks to us in various ways – at work, through others and at all times (#169-171).

Discernment and our freedom are interconnected. We should be ready to listen to the Lord and others and to the reality; we should also recognise what God may be offering us. This attitude of listening involves obedience to the Gospel and to the Magisterium (#172-173). Progress discernment is a growing understanding of God's patience and timetable, instead of our own. This demands a readiness to make sacrifices. St Bonaventure pointing to the cross says, "This is our logic." Discernment is an authentic procedure of leaving ourselves to approach the mystery of God, who helps us to carry out the mission to which he has called us, for the good of our brothers and sisters.

Pope Francis is concluding the apostolic exhortation showing the example Mother Mary who lived out the Beatitudes of Jesus as none other. He also exhorts the whole Church to pray to the Holy Spirit to bestow on a fervent longing for holiness, to work for the greater glory of God and to share the happiness that the world will not be able to take away.

Conclusion

Pope Francis proved to be a man with a vision of Vatican II through the new document *Gaudete et Exsultate* which upholds the Council teaching of 'universal call to holiness' (#1). It is both spiritual as well as simple practical lessons of day-to-day lives. This universal call requires intimate relationship with the Almighty, through discernment. It is not intended to be a treatise on holiness, containing definitions and distinctions accommodating for understanding this essential subject, or a talk of the different methods for sanctification (#2). Holiness is, as he wrote in *Evangelii Gaudium*, an encounter "with God's love, which blossoms into an enriching friendship, we are liberated from our narrowness and self-absorption" (EG #8). Pope presents the universal call to live holy lives with a new approach. We

are urged to take strive for holiness in our regular daily existences by which we move nearer to the Lord ourselves, as well as progress toward becoming members in conveying others to Christ. GE recommends that charity is the core of holiness. Pope clarifies that “throughout the history of the Church it has always been clear that a person’s perfection is measured not by the information or knowledge they possess, but by the depth of their charity” (#37). He also reminds the faithful to be holy in all the places including online.

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