

Session 3 Rejoice and be excited: Called to holiness

Introductory Activity

5mins

Invite participants to share something that has stayed with them from last week or something from their homework.

Prayer

10mins

Lectio Divina using the gospel of the day, or the Sunday gospel or one of the following paragraphs from Pope Francis's Exhortation on holiness *Gaudete et Exsultate* (Rejoice and be glad [2018]):

7. 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. Very often it is a holiness found in our next-door neighbours, those who, living in our midst, reflect God's presence. We might call them "the middle class of holiness".

63. There can be any number of theories about what constitutes holiness, with various explanations and distinctions. Such reflection may be useful, but nothing is more enlightening than turning to Jesus' words and seeing his way of teaching the truth. Jesus explained with great simplicity what it means to be holy when he gave us the Beatitudes (cf. *Mt* 5:3-12; *Lk* 6:20-23). The Beatitudes are like a Christian's identity card. So if anyone asks: "What must one do to be a good Christian?", the answer is clear. We have to do, each in our own way, what Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount. In the Beatitudes, we find a portrait of the Master, which we are called to reflect in our daily lives.

104. 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. 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.

81. "Mercy has two aspects. It involves giving, helping and serving others, but it also includes forgiveness and understanding. Matthew sums it up in one golden rule: "In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you" (7:12). In Luke's Gospel 6:36-38 Jesus tells us how to be holy as the Heavenly Father is Holy. "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be

forgiven; give, and it will be given to you” (6:36-38). Luke then adds something not to be overlooked: “The measure you give will be the measure you get back” (6:38). Acting with mercy, that is holiness.”

Activity

10mins

Reflect on the following questions:

- When you think of holiness what comes to mind?
- Who models holiness for you?
- What criteria do you use to decide who is holy?

Large group sharing/discussion.

Input

40 mins

We are all called to holiness. Vatican II states:

It is therefore quite clear that all Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and the perfection of love, and by this holiness a more human manner of life is fostered also in earthly society (*Lumen Gentium* #39).

The forms and tasks of life are many but there is one holiness which is cultivated by all who are led by God’s Spirit...’(*Lumen Gentium*) #41.

Therefore, all the faithful are invited and obliged to holiness and the perfection of their own state of life (*Lumen Gentium* #42).

Now watch the following four short presentations on *Gaudete et Exsultate*:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xW42YZ0pAEU>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmBU5PxCsVo&t=28s> Casey
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRweQno8PJA> (James Martin)
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXcAi_DO6gk (Rome Reports)

Jot down the key points.

Activity

10mins

- What did you learn?
- What remains with you?
- What inspired/consolated you?
- What challenged/confused you?
- What left you stirred up/uncomfortable?

Small group sharing.

Input**5mins**

Read the following two paragraphs from *Gaudete et Exsultate*:

110. Within the framework of holiness offered by the Beatitudes and Matthew 25:31-46, I would like to mention a few signs or spiritual attitudes that, in my opinion, are necessary if we are to understand the way of life to which the Lord calls us. I will not pause to explain the means of sanctification already known to us: the various methods of prayer, the inestimable sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation, the offering of personal sacrifices, different forms of devotion, spiritual direction, and many others as well. Here I will speak only of certain aspects of the call to holiness that I hope will prove especially meaningful.

111. The signs I wish to highlight are not the sum total of a model of holiness, but they are five great expressions of love for God and neighbour that I consider of particular importance in the light of certain dangers and limitations present in today's culture...

Activity**10mins**

- Use the 'Signs of Holiness Today' reflection sheet to consider the implications of these signs/spiritual attitudes for holiness in your everyday life.

Small group sharing.

Homework

- Considering what you have heard/learnt in this session, spend some time looking back at your homework from the second session. There may be something you wish to change/add to your chart, list and paragraph.
- Explore one further resource listed below and be prepared to share your findings at the next session.

Action

- Considering what you have heard/learnt in this session and any implications that this may have for your own spirituality of service, commit to a concrete action. Add it to your calendar/diary.

Further online resources

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

Study Guide

<http://online.fliphtml5.com/untp/kepw/#p=16>

Summaries of *Gaudete et Exsultate*

<https://www.kerknet.be/sites/default/files/18%2004%2009%20Gaudete%20et%20exsultate%20E%20samenvatting.pdf>

<https://thejesuitpost.org/2018/04/gaudete-et-exsultate-an-overview/>

<http://catholicherald.co.uk/news/2018/04/09/gaudete-et-exsultate-key-quotes/>

As well as a helpful, brief summary describing the Exhortation as a symphony in three movements, Neil Darragh also notes what is absent in it:

<https://hail.to/tui-motu-interislands-magazine/publication/S5hzabk/article/bF7e7zy>

Individual chapter summaries

<http://www.stillromancatholicafteralltheseyears.com/call-to-holiness-apostolic-exhortation-gaudete-et-exsultate/>

<http://www.stillromancatholicafteralltheseyears.com/gaudete-et-exsultate-chapter-2-subtle-enemies-of-holiness/>

<http://www.stillromancatholicafteralltheseyears.com/gaudete-et-exsultate-chapter-3-in-the-light-of-the-master/>

<http://www.stillromancatholicafteralltheseyears.com/gaudete-et-exsultate-chapter-4-signs-of-holiness-in-todays-world/>

<http://www.stillromancatholicafteralltheseyears.com/gaudete-et-exsultate-chapter-5-spiritual-combat-vigilance-and-discernment/>

<https://www.catholicculture.org/commentary/articles.cfm?id=739> (Mirus)

Chpt 1 Reese

https://www.ncronline.org/news/spirituality/signs-times/pope-francis-spiritual-guide?utm_source=Copy+of+April+26+ +Young+Voices&utm_campaign=cc&utm_medium=email

Chpt 2 Reese

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/signs-times/pope-francis-warns-two-paths-holiness>

Chpt 3 Reese

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/signs-times/francis-does-not-see-holiness-simple-prospect>

Chpt 4 Reese

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/signs-times/pope-francis-five-loves-combat-ills-todays-culture>

Chpt 5 Reese

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/signs-times/pope-francis-teaches-discernment-coping-spiritual-battles>

Love chooses you (life of Jesus — further resource for Chpt 3)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V5Tdb-9lrol>