

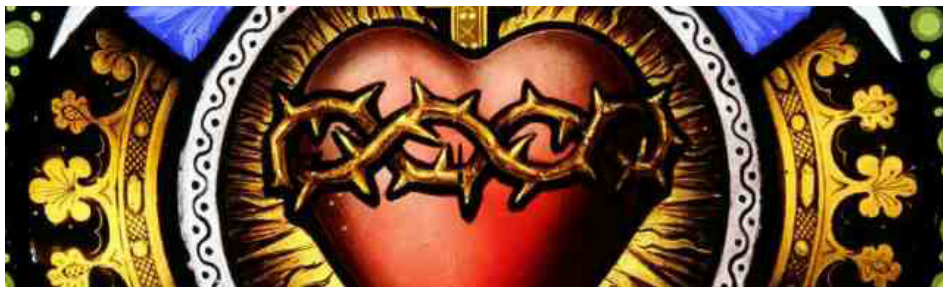
A call to holiness in today's world

**YOU SHALL BE HOLY UNTO ME,
BECAUSE I, THE LORD, AM HOLY,
AND I HAVE SEPARATED YOU
FROM THE OTHER PEOPLES,
SO THAT YOU WOULD BE MINE**

(LEV 20:26)

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The Bishops of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands asked us to call to mind once again our call to holiness, and for this reason they

chose the motto «A call to holiness in today's world». Let us see briefly what Jesus, the Church and the saints teach us about this...

1) What does **JESUS** say about **HOLINESS**?

Many times and in different ways Jesus says that we must become holy. To become holy is not *optional* in the eyes of Jesus, **but a must**. Jesus doesn't *advise* us to be saints, he *commands* us to be so. Because, to become saints is the only goal for which we have been created. **We have no other goal in this life than to follow the will of God and save our soul.** Saint Ignatius teaches us: «Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this

means to save his soul.» To save our soul -and this means to be saint!- is the only goal of our whole life. Jesus tells us: «***What does it serve a man if he gain the whole world and yet forfeit his soul***» (Mt 16:26).

Let's look closely at just one of these many calls to holiness from Jesus. During the Sermon of the Mount he said a phrase that really impressed those who were listening to him. He said: «***Therefore, be perfect, even as your heavenly***

Father is perfect» (Mt 5:48). This is one of the most difficult sentences in the New Testament, because it seems to be a commandment which cannot possibly have anything to do with us. How is it possible to become perfect as the Father? For us it is absolutely impossible to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect! So why is Jesus asking this of us? Is he asking something impossible of us?

In order to understand this text properly, we should call to mind what «**perfection**» means: a thing is perfect when it fully realizes the purpose for which it was planned, designed, and made. A knife is perfect if it is sharp and cuts well, and a torch is perfect if it illumines and

gives light. **And so, when is a man perfect?** A man is perfect if he realizes the purpose for which he was created and sent into the world. And for what purpose was man created? The Bible leaves us in no doubt as to that. In the old creation story we find God saying: «***Let us make man in our image after our likeness***» (Gn 1:26). **Man was created to be like God!** And so man is perfect when he reflects like a mirror the characteristics of God.



The characteristic of God is this universal benevolence, this unconquerable goodwill, this constant seeking of the highest good of every man. The great characteristic of God is love of saint and sinner alike. No matter what men do to him, God seeks nothing but their highest good. It is when man reproduces in his life the unwearied, forgiving, sacrificial benevolence of God that he becomes like God, and is therefore perfect in the New Testament sense of the word.

How can I know if I'm walking in the path of perfection? Easy. Take your Bible. Open it. Go to 1 Corinthians 13. Read it. Compare your deeds with those saint Paul talk about. If you can honestly say that you are fulfilling all these characteristics, you are going in the right direction. If you realize that there are still many things to change in your life, don't give up. Jesus

came to call sinners. He will help you. He only asks you to do your best. He will do the rest.

In 1 Cor 13 saint Pauls says:

If I were to speak in the language of men, or of Angels, yet not have charity, I would be like a clanging bell or a crashing cymbal. And if I have prophecy, and learn every mystery, and obtain all knowledge, and possess all faith, so that I could move mountains, yet have not charity, then I am nothing. And if I distribute all my goods in order to feed the poor, and if I hand over my body to be burned, yet have not charity, it benefits me nothing.

Charity is patient, is kind. Charity does not envy, does not act wrongly, is not inflated. Charity is not ambitious, does not seek for itself, is not provoked to anger, devises no evil. Charity does not rejoice over iniquity, but rejoices in truth. Charity suffers all, believes all, hopes all, endures all.

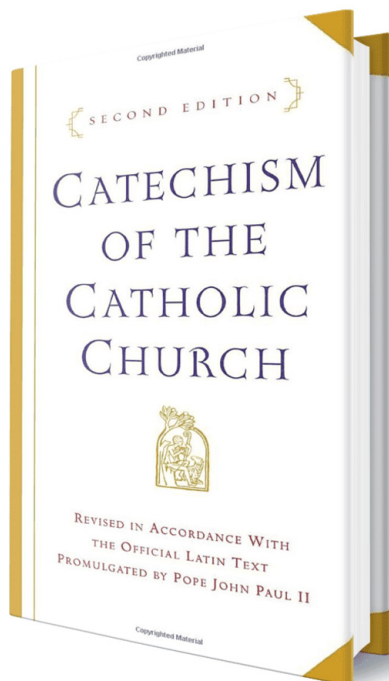
2) What does the **CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH** say about **HOLINESS**?

HOLINESS IS FOR ALL

«All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity. All are called to holiness: «Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect» (Mt 5:48). In order to reach this perfection the faithful should use the strength dealt out to them by Christ's gift, so that doing the will of the Father in everything, they may wholeheartedly devote themselves to the glory of God and to the service of their neighbor. Thus the holiness of the People of God will grow in fruitful abundance, as is clearly shown in the history of the Church through the lives of so many saints.» (CCC 2013)

HOLINESS MEANS SACRIFICE AND BATTLE

«The way of perfection passes by way of the Cross. There is no holiness without renunciation



and spiritual battle. Spiritual progress entails the ascesis and mortification that gradually lead to living in the peace and joy of the Beatitudes: «He who climbs never stops going from beginning to beginning, through beginnings that have no end. He never stops desiring what he already knows» (Saint Gregory).» (CCC 2015)

HOLINESS MEANS TO OBSERVE THE COMMANDMENTS

«The Ten Commandments reveal, in their primordial content, grave obligations. They are fundamentally immutable, and they oblige always and everywhere. No one can dispense from them. The Ten Commandments are engraved by God in the human heart.» (CCC 2072)



“The world promises you comfort, but you were not made for comfort.

YOU WERE MADE FOR GREATNESS.

*Holiness does not consist
in never having erred or sinned.
Holiness increases the capacity
for **conversion**, for **repentance**,
for **willingness to start again**
and, especially,
for **reconciliation** and **forgiveness**.”*

Pope Benedict XVI

3) What do **SAINTS** teach about **HOLINESS**?

Let's see what saints say about holiness and the good advices they give to us!

«All of us can attain Christian virtue and holiness, no matter in what condition of life we live and no matter what our life work may be.»

Saint Francis of Sales



«Nothing whatsoever pertaining to godliness and real holiness can be accomplished without grace.»

Saint Augustine



«Holiness does not consist in doing extraordinary things. It consists in accepting, with a smile, what Jesus sends us. It consists in accepting and following the will of God.»

Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta



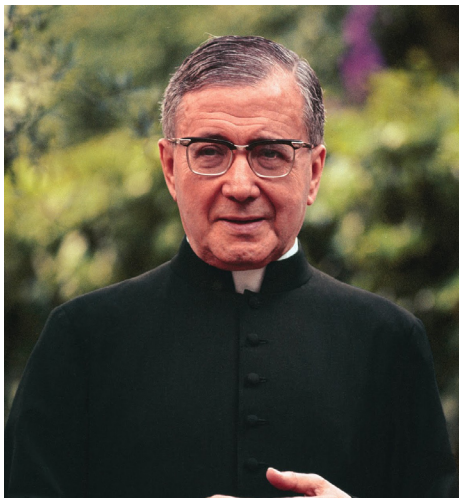


*«Do not be afraid to be holy!
Have the courage and humility
to present yourselves to the world
determined to be holy, since full,
true freedom is born from holiness.»*

Saint John Paul II

*«Holiness does not consist
in one exercise or another,
but is a disposition of the heart,
which renders us humble and little
in the hands of God, conscious of
our weakness, and confident,
even daringly confident,
in His fatherly goodness.»*

Saint Therese of Lisieux



*«Sanctity consists in struggling,
in knowing that we have defects
and in heroically trying to overcome
them. Sanctity, I insist, consists in
overcoming those defects – although
we will still have defects when we
die; for if not, as I have told you,
we would become proud.»*

Saint Josemaria Escriva



4) What does **POPE FRANCIS** say about **HOLINESS**?

Pope Francis also gives us a list of the things we need in order to go to heaven! This advice can be found in his Apostolic Exhortation *«Gaudete et Exsultate»*.

KNOWING JESUS

«Let us listen once more to Jesus, with all the love and respect that the Master deserves. Let us allow his words to unsettle us, to challenge us and to demand a real change in the way we live. Otherwise, holiness will remain no more than an empty word.»

DO NOT BE AFRAID

«Do not be afraid of holiness. It will take away none of your energy, vitality or joy.»

SMALL THINGS

«This holiness to which the Lord calls you will grow through small gestures.»

LOVE

«Thanks be to God, 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.»

HUMILITY

«We need to think of ourselves as an army of the forgiven. All of us have been looked upon with divine compassion.»

PRAYER

«I do not believe in holiness without prayer, even though that prayer need not be lengthy or involve intense emotions.»



5) Which are the **MEANS** that we should use to become **SAINTS**?

1) EUCHARIST

This is the first means, because in it we find Jesus himself, with his Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. Jesus himself said that the Eucharist is the door to eternal life: «*Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.*» (John 6:55)



2) CONFESSION

We all need to confess our sins to a priest frequently in order to obtain sacramental absolution and so be forgiven once again of our sins. Jesus says to his Apostles (and so to all the bishops and priests): «*Receive the Holy Spirit. Those whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and those whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.*» (Jn 20:22-23)



3) PRAYER

Prayer strengthens the soul in the spiritual battle and obtains the graces we need to become holy. Jesus promised to us: *«Ask, and it shall be given to you. Seek, and you shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened to you.»*

(Mt 7:7)



4) DEVOTION TO MARY

This is the great secret of Catholics! We have a Mother, the best one, the most holy and powerful, who is not only our Mother but also the Mother of God and the Queen of Heaven. Whatmore could we need? Under her protection and care we are absolutely safe!



LCI Goroka
Biblical commission