

Holiness

St. Paul wrote “to all the beloved in Rome, called to be holy” and to the Church on Corinth “to you who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy” and again to the Ephesians he reminded them they “are chosen before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish.”

The Philippians are called “the holy ones in Christ Jesus”

We are called to Holiness. We are called to be saints, “Holy Ones”.

We are saints in training striving for that holiness in its fullness. Eventho we have been “sanctified”, it is not a “one and done”, it is not “once saved, always saved”. We continue to “work out our salvation” by living in holiness. We realize the gift of holiness fully in heaven as we have been purified.

We are born as pagan babies under the influence of Original Sin. In Baptism we receive Sanctifying Grace, become Children of God, become Temples of the Holy Spirit, be come the Body of Christ. i.e. We have responded to the Call to Holiness.

If we had died right after receiving Sanctifying Grace in Baptism, we would have gone straight to heaven untouched by sin. But that didn’t happen. We still possess that holiness but our lives have been touched by sin. Our souls are Holy but our lives tell a different story.

A chalice is holy because it was consecrated, dedicated to God, used for Mass, and contained the Blood of Christ. We are like that chalice. Chalices can become tarnished or broken but are still holy. If we are in the State of Sanctifying Grace, we are holy, but we may also be tarnished in how we live our lives.

we are called to “live in Holiness”. We must realize the promise of God’s gift of Holiness. The Call to Holiness is a Call to Communion with God.

Holiness is an attribute of God.

I can not acquire it through any human means. It is God’s gift to us. We call it “sanctifying Grace” which we receive in Baptism. The Sacraments continue to supply us with Sanctifying Grace. We are already holy, a temple of the Holy Spirit. The basics:

1. Be Baptized and receive Sanctifying Grace.
2. Live life “Grace-Fully”
3. If you lose Sanctifying Grace thru Mortal Sin, Go to Confession
4. Die in the State of Sanctifying Grace
5. In Heaven you will have fully answered the Call to Holiness.

Can I become holier?

Holiness is not a bank account that you can add to. Works of Piety do not add to holiness but are signs of holiness expressing itself.

We Already possess infinite holiness because God abides within us. There is nothing lacking. There is nothing lacking in God.

You Can not add water to a full bucket. You can empty the bucket and lose your Sanctifying Grace through mortal sin. As long as we are in the State of Sanctifying Grace, we are full of Holiness. That is what we are “called” to. Make sure that your bucket doesn’t have a hole in it.

Do Saints have a bigger bucket? No. Holiness is infinite, not a quantity.

I can become more pious, but that is an external imitation of what holiness is. The Pharisees, the Puritans, many have exhibited the externals of holiness, often without the interior disposition. Our Call to Holiness is a call to live in God’s Sanctifying Grace, outwardly and inwardly..

Remember that “Piety” is not a negative. Acts of piety are encouraged. They should reflect the true piety or holiness in your heart.

In regards to our lives of holiness.

We are a Light bulb with a dimmer

God’s Grace flows in us like electricity

At full voltage, light shines brightly and everyone can see. Think of holy cards of your favorite saints. See the light surrounding their heads.

When we sin we dim our voltage we emit less light.

Piety is a way we turn up the voltage. If we are doing good, then we are avoiding evil and our light will shine more brightly. But, Do not get the idea that you are adding to your holiness. It is living in God’s Gift of Holiness that we share because of Sanctifying Grace.

What does holiness look like?

Scripture offers the following: *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...*

– Galatians 5:22-23

Those who are in Christ (Holy Ones) are distinguished from unbelievers (those not in Grace) in that the Holy Ones have been gifted with the Holy Spirit, enabling them to bear fruit. In other words, their works demonstrate the sanctification that is at work in their hearts.

Look for the Fruits of the Holy Spirit in your life. Cultivate them. Respond to the Call to Holiness

Love: the difference between human love and divine love is God's presence. Even pagans love one another. Human love can be selfish. God's Saints, His Holy Ones, love one another as Christ loved us. It is a love in the Communion and life of the Holy Trinity. Divine love has no limits

Joy: The promise of eternal happiness is the fulfillment of the Call to Holiness. God's Holy Ones already share in its promise, so that permeates everything we do. If Holiness is living in Communion with God, How could we be anything but joyful.

Peace: The hearts of the Holy Ones are filled with peace. First of all we know God is Lord of all and there is nothing worth being anxious about. God's Will will be done.

Patience: I read God's Book and know that He wins in the End. Because He has given me His promise of Peace, I can be patient and allow His plan to work out. Patience is hanging with God. Impatience is wanting it my way.

Kindness: Having received His love, my heart becomes more loving and gentle like the Heart of Jesus. When my heart is leading me, Jesus shapes my actions.

Generosity: When we recognize that God's has already given us every good gift, we do not need to hoard or be stingy. We know the truth of "It is in giving that we receive".

Faithfulness: Intimacy with God in our Communion with the Holy Trinity inspires us to trust Him and His promises. We "Know" He is faithful.

Gentleness: As we grow deeper in our Communion of Holiness, we are more aware of others and respond to them as "temples of the Holy Spirit" with a reverence and gentle spirit.

Self-control: When the voltage is turned up to maximum, we overcome all selfishness and sin.

Okay, so you are not walking around "glowing like a lighthouse"? Not yet!

Not all of the fruits of the Spirit are fully realized. They are virtues that we can acquire thru practice. If we desire them, ask God for them, believe He has answered those prayers, then we act like it.

turn up the voltage?

1. Eliminate all self and let Spirit shine through
2. Seek God's will actively, deliberately, intentionally.
3. The glory of God is man fully alive. Live fully in the Spirit.

Remember Holiness is sharing the Gift of Communion with God. Even tho we have been blessed with His Grace, we are still limited creatures. What we do is still part of the communion. God gave us Free Will.

While God's Grace is the key, we must Motivate ourself to turn up the power. We must eliminate those "resisters" that dim our light. "Self" is the number One resister.

overcome the Self.

All sin is selfishness and when we sin we dim God's gift of Holiness. It is only when I consider something to be good for me that my will is moved to achieve it. This applies to acquiring a virtue or to overcoming a vice.

Most of our sins are habits that we've fallen into. Every new year, we make resolutions to change one or more of them. Every year, we likely fail to follow through. Living in Holiness requires Intention and perseverance.

We start with good intentions, but as we know "the road to Hell is paved with good intention." We want to live holy, to be saints.

Our Will is a thousand times more powerful than our thoughts but our thoughts trump our will power. Our thoughts are easily distracted and we quickly forget about our intentions. Attempting to do too much can also be an obstacle. We need to be focused and committed.

Motivation and determination must come from within. For the intellect to empower our will there is a process of discernment.

Put the matter into context. Know the truth about yourselves.

Make a judgment about its benefits or consequences. we must use our reason to comprehend the truth of the virtue to be acquired or the fault to be removed. The call to Holiness involves both acquiring virtue and overcoming vices.

Think "Holy" Holy is as Holy does

Meditate on the Holiness of our awesome God's promise of Holiness. We pursue that until the result becomes appealing enough for us to act. Some saints became saints because they desired to be holy.

What do you know about "holiness"? For example, we know a billion dollars is a lot of money. Of course the government spends it like it isn't much. I recall a politician once said "A million dollars here and a million dollars there and before long you're talking about real money." A billion dollars is one million thousand dollars bills. If you were able to stack them on top of each other, they would reach a height of 666 feet. Now you really know what a billion dollars is like.

By meditating on the good and the holy we wish, we begin to see more clearly what is involved for ourselves and for others. A little change can make a great deal of difference.

No human act is ever performed without motivation. It may be a selfish motive or something more profound. Start with thinking about the love of God. This is the most powerful motive. Once we realize the power of His love, we are empowered to live in holiness.

Lives of the Saints

1. St. Aloysius died a young man. He read the lives of the saints. He associated with others who became saints. He knew what he was called to.
2. St. Augustine was a great sinner, as he confessed in his biography. He fell under the influence of St. Ambrose and changed his life completely.

Contemplation of Majesty of God

- 1.. St. Benedict and his sister St. Scholastica often dialogued about the glories of God and the beauties of Heaven. With their eyes on the prize they set an example for those they formed in their religious communities.
2. Imagine what Thomas Aquinas' contemplation of the Eucharist meant to his life. We know the influence it has had on the whole Church.
3. Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Divine Mercy lead us into the affective side of holiness. We experience the personal touch of Jesus and feel his grace flowing thru us. Not only do we know our call to holiness theologically, we experience it personally. Our humanity knows it has been touched by the Holy.

The desire to respond to the call to holiness starts with God at work in our hearts. It continues as God draws us closer until we say "yes" with all our mind, all our heart and all our soul. I have always loved Jeremiah's response "You duped me and I let myself be duped". God's plan is to seduce us so that we fall in love with Him and desire to live with Him in Holiness. The Call to Holiness is God calling us to life with Him.

Standing before the Holiness of God and feeling unworthy, Isaiah heard God ask "Who can I send?" He responded "Here am I, Lord, send me".