

The Universal Call to Holiness

PREPARATION – LITURGY OF THE WORD

If beginning with a hymn or song, see previous page for suggestions

First Reading: Eph 4:22-5:2

Response: Ps 24

Gospel: Mt 11:29-30

PROCLAMATION

Jesus has called us to the perfection of his Father, perfection in love. Holiness is the call of all the baptized. Our wholehearted response to God's grace will fill us with joy surpassing human understanding.

EXPLANATION

Human nature and the nature of our call (see 1 Pt 1:6-9)

- ✦ Within each of us is a God-implanted desire for happiness that only he can fulfill
- ✦ Holiness is not optional; on earth, authentic happiness is achieved only through sanctity: the joy of holiness
- ✦ In Heaven, happiness is participation in Trinitarian love, joy beyond measure

The nature of holiness: forming ourselves into “other Christs” (see Rom 13:8-14)

- ✦ Jesus Christ, Son of God become Son of Mary for the salvation of all humankind, came among us as the visible image of his invisible Father
- ✦ Holiness is being like Christ, conforming ourselves to him as our model of holiness
- ✦ The more clearly our intellects grasp Jesus, the more powerful will be the action of our will (see Phil 1:9-11)
- ✦ The Holy Spirit is our source of strength to be like Christ; holiness manifests the Spirit's fruits (see Gal 5:22-25)

The pursuit of holiness in this world (see Rom 12:2)

- ✦ The lifeblood of holiness is charity: the more we die to self and lay down our lives in love to others, and the more vigorously we work to sanctify the world, the more we attain holiness and the easier it becomes for others to become holy (see Col 3:9-17)
- ✦ We offer up life's sufferings, which Jesus sanctified and made redemptive for ourselves and others
- ✦ God asks us to do only what he gives us sufficient grace to do (see 1 Cor 10:13)

The obstacles to our call

- ✦ Salvation is the responsibility of each person, but for good or ill, others influence our efforts and we influence theirs
- ✦ All Christians discover that the world is hostile to our efforts to attain holiness (see Jn 15:18-20)
- ✦ The flesh, that is, our own disordered desires make us prone to sin (see Rom 7:18-20)
- ✦ The Devil ceaselessly tempts us to pursue counterfeit pleasure and happiness (see 2 Thes 2:9-12)

The resources to answer God's call (see Eph 1:5-23 and Eph 3:8-12)

- ✦ Mother Mary has been given to us as a model of holiness and our prime intercessor with her Son
- ✦ The Church gives us all that we need for salvation, including the truths God intends us to know, the graces of the sacraments, and the witness of holiness of the saints
- ✦ Frequent reception of Jesus in the Eucharist and of the sacrament of Reconciliation fill us with supernatural life and strengthen us against sin
- ✦ The Christian family is the school of holiness, the most basic unit of the Body of Christ
- ✦ The Christian fellowship of the faithful offers example, support, encouragement, and inspiration
- ✦ A relationship with God developed through prayer intensifies our yearning for him and desire to please him
- ✦ The heart of holiness is to will what God wills, for the sake of love

APPLICATION – SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Does God expect too much of me? Is it really possible for me to be holy in this world?
2. What are some concrete ways that I can follow Jesus?
3. What can I learn about holiness by focusing on Jesus on the cross?
4. What ways would the world be worse without the Church?

CELEBRATION – SUGGESTIONS FOR CLOSING PRAYER

1. Pray for an ever-stronger desire for holiness in the world and to see God's face forever.
2. Hymn or song (see previous page for suggestions)
3. Pray together Psalm 33 or Psalm 34 (see *Participant's Book*)