

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Parishioners,

Recently Pope Francis issued a letter to the Church on the call to holiness. We will be printing portions of it here for your edification. You can find the whole document on the Vatican's website.

With my prayers,
Fr. Conley

POPE FRANCIS

"REJOICE AND BE GLAD"

ON THE CALL TO HOLINESS IN TODAY'S WORLD

"REJOICE AND BE GLAD" (*Mt 5:12*), Jesus tells those persecuted or humiliated for his sake. The Lord asks everything of us, and in return he offers us true life, the happiness for which we were created. He wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence. The call to holiness is present in various ways from the very first pages of the Bible.... My modest goal is to re-propose the call to holiness in a practical way for our own time, with all its risks, challenges and opportunities. For the Lord has chosen each one of us "to be holy and blameless before him in love" (*Eph 1:4*).

3. The Letter to the Hebrews presents a number of testimonies that encourage us to "run with perseverance the race that is set before us" (*12:1*). It speaks of Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Gideon and others (cf. *11:1-12:3*). Above all, it invites us to realize that "a great cloud of witnesses" (*12:1*) impels us to advance constantly towards the goal. These witnesses may include our own mothers, grandmothers or other loved ones (cf. *2 Tim 1:5*). Their lives may not always have been perfect, yet even amid their faults, holiness is present.

6. Nor need we think only of those already beatified and canonized. The Holy Spirit bestows holiness in abundance among God's holy and faithful people, for "it has pleased God to make men and women holy and to save them, not as individuals without any bond between them, but rather as a people who might acknowledge him in truth and serve him in holiness".^[3] In salvation history, the Lord saved one people. We are never completely ourselves unless we belong to a people. That is why no one is saved alone, as an isolated individual. Rather, God draws us to himself, taking into account the complex fabric of interpersonal relationships present in a human community. God wanted to enter into the life and history of a people.

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 neighbors, those who, living in our midst, reflect

God's presence. We might call them "the middle class of holiness".

...with this Exhortation I would like to insist primarily on the call to holiness that the Lord addresses to each of us, the call that he also addresses, personally, to you: "Be holy, for I am holy" (*Lev 11:44*; cf. *1 Pet 1:16*). The Second Vatican Council stated this clearly: "Strengthened by so many and such great means of salvation, all the faithful, whatever their condition or state, are called by the Lord – each in his or her own way – to that perfect holiness by which the Father himself is perfect".

14. To be holy does not require being a bishop, a priest or a religious. We are frequently tempted to think that holiness is only for those who can withdraw from ordinary affairs to spend much time in prayer. That is not the case. We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves. Are you called to the consecrated life? Be holy by living out your commitment with joy. Are you married? Be holy by loving and caring for your husband or wife, as Christ does for the Church. Do you work for a living? Be holy by labouring with integrity and skill in the service of your brothers and sisters. Are you a parent or grandparent? Be holy by patiently teaching the little ones how to follow Jesus. Are you in a position of authority? Be holy by working for the common good and renouncing personal gain.^[14]

15. Let the grace of your baptism bear fruit in a path of holiness. Let everything be open to God; turn to him in every situation. Do not be dismayed, for the power of the Holy Spirit enables you to do this, and holiness, in the end, is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life (cf. *Gal 5:22-23*). When you feel the temptation to dwell on your own weakness, raise your eyes to Christ crucified and say: "Lord, I am a poor sinner, but you can work the miracle of making me a little bit better." In the Church, holy yet made up of sinners, you will find everything you need to grow towards holiness. The Lord has bestowed on the Church the gifts of scripture, the sacraments, holy places, living communities, the witness of the saints and a multifaceted beauty that proceeds from God's love, "like a bride bedecked with jewels" (*Is 61:10*).

16. This holiness to which the Lord calls you will grow through small gestures. Here is an example: a woman goes shopping, she meets a neighbour and they begin to speak, and the gossip starts. But she says in her heart: "No, I will not speak badly of anyone." This is a step forward in holiness. Later, at home, one of her children wants to talk to her about his hopes and dreams, and even though she is tired, she sits down and listens with patience and love. That is another sacrifice that brings holiness. Later she experiences some anxiety, but recalling the love of the Virgin Mary, she takes her rosary and prays with faith. Yet another path of holiness.

Later still, she goes out onto the street, encounters a poor person and stops to say a kind word to him. One more step...

17. At times, life presents great challenges. Through them, the Lord calls us anew to a conversion that can make his grace more evident in our lives, "in order that we may share his holiness" (*Heb 12:10*). At other times, we need only find a more perfect way of doing what we are already doing: In this way, led by God's grace, we shape by many small gestures the holiness God has willed for us, not as men and women sufficient unto ourselves but rather "as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (*1 Pet 4:10*).

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEWLY CONFIRMED YOUNG PEOPLE!

Geno Antonio Cantor, Michael Carlyle Cross, III, Christopher Brillantes DeLaPaz, Robert Wesley Erickson, Madyson Antosha Ferrer, Aidan Patrick Higgs, Xavier Aaron Johnson, Julie Marie McLain, Ryan Michael McLain, Erin Ann McRoy, Kaylin Grace Misko, Kelsea McKenna Misko, Alyssa Alden Murphy, Timothy Yury O'Brien, Jayla Lynese Pickeral, Erika Alarcon Quenano, Sophia Monica Rodriguez, Scottie Renee Sage, Jillian Frances Silverstone, Nicholas Joseph Tallant, Chyna Lavern Waugh, Laci Taylor Whiston.

PRAYER GROUP MEETING THIS THURSDAY

Our Prayer group meets this Thursday from 6:30 to 8:30 and dinner will be served. Everyone is invited to come and join us for Spirit-filled praise and worship of our Lord. Please contact Fr. Conley to sign up frconley@comcast.net.

THIS FRIDAY IS FIRST FRIDAY AND WE WILL HAVE ALL DAY EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT. Adoration will begin following the 9:30 Mass and continue until 7pm. Our school children will be coming to adoration by classes throughout the day. Volunteers are needed to sign up for adoration times from 10 to 11 and from 3 to 7. The sign-up sheet is in the foyer. Come and pray in the presence of the Lord in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

MAY PROCESSION WILL BE NEXT SUNDAY, FOLLOWING THE 10AM MASS. Please join our first Communion children and our newly Confirmed young people in honoring our Blessed Mother.

RELIGIOUS GOODS STORE NEEDS HELP

We need some help to work after the 12 PM Mass. Please call Ellen Walls at 301- 579-2557 or Fay Adriani at 301-645-3531.

NEW SERIES! THE WILD GOOSE: Discovering a Dearer Relationship with the Holy Spirit Twice a month on Thursday evenings from 6:30-8:45 in the hall. Dinner included. Cost is \$10. Join fellow parishioners for learning, discussion, prayer & praise about the Holy Spirit! Sessions begin on May 10 and continue on 5/24, 6/13, 6/27, 7/12, 7/26, 8/10, 8/24. It doesn't matter if you can't attend every session. Each night will have its own graces. You can sign up in the foyer or by contacting Fr. Conley at 301-870-2220 ext 13 or frconley@comcast.net

Thank All Moms This Mother's Day!

Charles County Right to Life will run an advertisement in the *Maryland Independent* on May 11, the Friday before Mother's Day, honoring all mothers. Please join others in standing for life and motherhood by placing the name of your mother (or wife, grandmother, aunt, cousin, friend) in the advertisement. Someone will be available after Mass to assist with sign ups. If no one is available, the forms will be available to take home and mail in. You may also sign up and pay by credit card online at www.charlescountyrighttolife.com (click on the Mother's Day Ad tab). A minimum donation of \$10 per name is requested. Please make checks payable to CCRTL.

*Please support our advertising sponsors. This week we recognize
Potter Heating & Electric, Inc.*

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THIS WEEK:

SUN: 8am Mary Theresa Bowen, 10am Mary Helen Tippet, **12N:** Parishioners, **MON:** 8am Joseph Jones, **TUES:** 8am Benjamin M. Edelen, **WED:** 8am John Frere, **THURS:** 8am Larry Wood, **FRI:** 9:30am Louis L. Plater, **SAT:** 9am Mary T. Edelen, 4pm Janine Burch.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR DAILY

PRAYERS: Mary Bowes, Bill Branick, Frances Card, Joe Cross, Agnes Curtis, Chuck Davis, Kendall Farrell, George Fassel, Arlene Gandolfi, Martha Gehring, Judy Istvan-Windsor, Irma Johnson, Regina Kijesky, Marie Knobel, Lillian Komar, Susie Logan, Maurice Long, Jim Middleton, Mary Emma Middleton, Larry Miller, Joseph Mona, Wayne Mullings, Ryan Myers, Joseph Quade, Mary Reeves, Sylvene Savoy, William Leon Savoy, Edna Sweeney, Beth Weise, Tim Welch, Brice Zimmer.

OFFERTORY COLLECTION LAST WEEKEND, \$10,274.50. The unidentified donations totaled \$725.00. We received \$76.00 for our School Support.