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Pope Francis' new exhortation on holiness is deeply Ignatian -- Rev. Robert P. Imbelli, a priest of the Archdiocese of New York

Thus, enlisting under the banner of Christ entails both contemplating the mysteries of Christ and embodying them in all our attitudes and actions. Francis suggestively cites here his predecessor, Benedict XVI: "The measure of our holiness stems from the stature that Christ achieves in us, to the extent that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we model our whole life on his" (No. 21).

Christians inevitably confront two standards, two ways: the way of Christ, whose apparent darkness is a prelude to eternal light, and the way of the enemy, whose false light leads only to darkness and despair. And our choice is made not once for all but requires daily renewal and recommitment. Hence, according to the pope, the urgent need for discernment.

We know how dear to Francis is this theme of discernment. And how indispensable it is for the spiritual life. But I think his development of the subject in the last chapter of the exhortation is particularly nuanced and helpful.

He immediately cuts to the chase: "How can we know if something comes from the Holy Spirit or if it stems from the spirit of the world or the spirit of the devil?" (No. 166). Discernment then is not primarily about the decision to be made. It involves the more difficult and laborious process of discerning what spirit is moving us. Thus discernment requires much more than native intelligence or mere common sense. True discernment is a grace, "a gift which we must implore" (No. 166).

For we are all prone to self-deception. No one is immune. Thus the Pope urges: "I ask all Christians not to omit, in dialogue with the Lord, a sincere daily examination of conscience" (No. 169).

Throughout "Gaudete et Exsultate," Francis, like a good spiritual director, clarifies both the prize to which Christians are called and the particular pitfalls they face in today's individualist and consumerist culture. Even "discernment" can be co-opted by an all-devouring culture, a "culture of zapping" in the pope's telling phrase. Thus his pointed reminder:

[Discernment] involves more than my temporal well-being, my satisfaction at having accomplished something useful, or even my desire for peace of mind. It has to do with the meaning of my life before the Father who knows and loves me; it has to do with the real purpose of my life, that nobody knows better than he. Ultimately, discernment leads to the wellspring of undying life: to know the Father, the only true God, and the one whom he has sent, Jesus Christ (cf. Jn 17:3) (No. 170).

We rejoice and exult because we have been given to drink from that fount of life, and we yearn to drink yet more fully, to advance on the way of Christ, the Holy One who calls us to holiness.

"Gaudete et Exsultate", "The Call to Holiness" can be downloaded from www.vatican.va



ST. MONICA PARISH

12011 Woodhead Road, Richmond, BC V6V 1G2
Tel. 604.278.0844 Fax. 604.279.0334

Website: stmonicaparish.ca Email: parish.smon@rcav.org

April 29, 2018
5th Sunday of Easter



The image of the vine and the branches is a clear reminder of our dependence on God for our every breath. If we hope to bear any good fruit in this world, we must stay close to the source of goodness – God himself.



LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Saul, increasing in strength and fortitude, is preaching the truth that Jesus is the Christ. In John's letter, he challenges us to love in deed and in truth. In today's Gospel, Jesus teaches that he is the vine and the Father is the vine grower. We must abide in him in order to bear good fruit.



Today's Readings:

1st: Acts 9.26-31
Psalm: 22
2nd: 1 John 3.18-24
Gospel: John 15.1-8

PASTOR: **Rev. Robert Wong, SJ**

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Friday
9:30 am – 1 pm / 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm

MASS SCHEDULES

WEEKDAYS: **9:00 am**
SATURDAYS: **9:30 am & 5:00 pm**
SUNDAYS: **9:00 am & 11:00 am**

CONFESSION SCHEDULE

SATURDAYS: **4:30 pm – 4:55 pm**
CONFESSIONS: 10 MINUTES BEFORE DAILY
MASS OR BY REQUEST AT OTHER TIMES

NOVENA TO

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP

WEDNESDAYS: **7:00 pm**
MASS FOLLOWED BY NOVENA
& BENEDICTION

BAPTISM COURSE

EVERY 2ND TUESDAY OF THE MONTH AT **6 pm**

BAPTISMS

4th SATURDAY AFTER 9:30 am MASS

HOUSE BLESSINGS

PLEASE CALL THE PARISH OFFICE

PARISH UPDATES

KUDOS – A word of gratitude to all members of our Catholic Women League for their hardworking efforts in their dinner dance fundraising for the needy. May the Lord bless you with His abundant love and grace!
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**MARIAN MONTH** – May is the traditional month when we focus on the Virgin Mary, Our Blessed Mother. You are welcome to join us in praying the rosary before the daily Mass.  
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Legion of Mary Gathering – On **Saturday, May 12th**, our parish will be hosting the Legion of Mary groups from the different parishes in Richmond. They will begin with **praying the Rosary at 8:00am and participating at the 9:30am Mass and follow by the Crowning of Mary**. All are welcome!
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**PROJECT ADVANCE 2018 – “Support the Faith - Continue the Legacy”** is the theme for this year’s Appeal. Our share is \$25,000.00, an increase of \$5,000. We would keep our total goal the same as previous year, \$75,000.00. *Our Project Advance volunteers are available in the foyer to assist with your gift donation. You may make your pledge online at [www.projectadvance.ca](http://www.projectadvance.ca)* May Our Lord bless you abundantly for your generosity!  
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Tree of Gratitude – A few new inscriptions of Leaf plaques have been added to the beautiful sculpture on the wall. Thanks to our generous parishioners and friends. Thank YOU!

Pope Francis’ new exhortation on holiness is deeply Ignatian -- Rev. Robert P. Imbelli, a priest of the Archdiocese of New York

Pope Francis’ new apostolic exhortation, “Gaudete et Exsultate,” (“Rejoice and Be Glad”) offers Christians a rich reflection on the “Call to Holiness in Today’s World.” It is both steeped in the church’s spiritual tradition and at the same time is a passionately personal document.

The third of the pope’s apostolic exhortations, it bears the date March 19, 2018. Thus, it marks the fifth anniversary of Francis’ inaugural Mass on the Feast of St. Joseph, March 19, 2013, and, in many ways, can be read as a recapitulation of major themes and concerns of his papal magisterium.

Though other of the pope’s writings and homilies manifest the imprint of his Ignatian spiritual tradition, perhaps none does so in such a striking manner.

There is much to ponder in the document, and it will repay multiple readings. But an initial approach might helpfully consider it from the viewpoint of St. Ignatius’ great meditation on the two standards in his Spiritual Exercises. From this vantage a suggestive starting point is to begin with the fifth and last of its five chapters: “Spiritual Combat, Vigilance, Discernment.” For this is the concrete situation in which we all find ourselves.

Francis does not mince words. “The Christian life is a constant battle,” the pope writes. “We need strength and courage to withstand the temptations of the devil and to proclaim the Gospel. This battle is sweet, for it allows us to rejoice each time the Lord triumphs in our lives” (No. 158). *(continued)*

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He goes on to insist that the tradition’s reference to the evil one is no myth left over from a less enlightened age. It is our loss of the sense of the supernatural that camouflages the real nature of the battle pressing upon us. So the pope continues: “in leaving us the Our Father, Jesus wanted us to conclude by asking the Father to ‘deliver us from evil.’ That final word does not refer to evil in the abstract; a more exact translation would be ‘the evil one.’ It indicates a personal being who assails us. Jesus taught us to ask daily for deliverance from him, lest his power prevail over us” (No. 160).

The choice before us, then, is under which banner are we to enlist in the spiritual combat that perforce we face? The stakes, of course, are not less than everything. Christians, by their baptismal vocation, are already enlisted in the company of Christ. The goal of “Gaudete et Exsultate” is to provide encouragement and direction in the arduous, yet joyful journey of growth toward spiritual maturity in the Lord, growth in holiness.

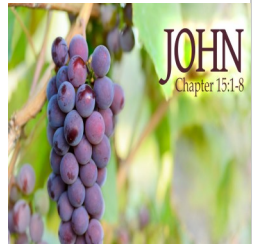
In a wonderful paragraph at the beginning of the document, Francis makes abundantly clear the Christic nature of holiness. “At its core, holiness is experiencing, in union with Christ, the mysteries of his life. It consists in uniting ourselves to the Lord’s death and resurrection in a unique and personal way, constantly dying and rising anew with him.... The contemplation of these mysteries, as Saint Ignatius of Loyola pointed out, leads us to incarnate them in our choices and attitudes” (No. 20).

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Stewardship Reflection

5th Sunday of Easter

The good steward lives the advice of St. John, loving in truth and in action, rather than just talking about it.



Mass Intentions

April 29-May 5, 2018

- Mon, Apr 30— Salamao Gomes (RIP)
- Tue, May 1— Betty Arrieta (Thanksgiving)
- Wed, May 2 — 9am, Beryl Clarke (RIP)
7pm,
- Thu, May 3— Benjamin Fernandes (RIP)
- Fri, May 4— Alma & Aida (Thanksgiving)
- Sat, May 5— 9:30am, Mona D’Silva (RIP)
5pm, Dean Fernandes (RIP)

Our new website, stmonicaparish.ca is now live. Also, visit and like us on Facebook: ‘Smon Monica’.