

REJOICE & BE GLAD - REFLECTION GUIDE

CHAPTER TWO: TWO SUBTLE ENEMIES OF HOLINESS

Re-read these excerpts from chapter two of *Gaudete Et Exsultate* (Rejoice and Be Glad), Pope Francis' exhortation 'On the Call to Holiness in Today's World' and reflect on the following questions.



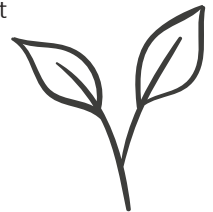
Read "God infinitely transcends us; he is full of surprises. We are not the ones to determine when and how we will encounter him... Nor can we claim to say where God is not, because God is mysteriously present in the life of every person... Even when someone's life appears completely wrecked, even when we see it devastated by vices or addictions, God is present there. If we let ourselves be guided by the Spirit rather than our own preconceptions, we can and must try to find the Lord in every human life." (41-42)

Reflect Can you recall a time when an unlikely person "surprised" you and showed you the presence of Christ? How can you seek the Lord and His goodness in every person you meet?

Read "We can think that because we know something, or are able to explain it in certain terms, we are already saints, perfect and better than the "ignorant masses". Saint John Paul II warned of the temptation on the part of those in the Church who are more highly educated "to feel somehow superior to other members of the faithful". In point of fact, what we think we know should always motivate us to respond more fully to God's love. Indeed, "you learn so as to live: theology and holiness are inseparable"". (45)

Reflect Pope Francis and St. John Paul II warn us of the temptation to feel somehow superior to others, especially if we know more than them or have some kind of "advantage". Who are the people in your life you feel superior to? How might you use your knowledge or giftedness to love better and pursue greater holiness?

Read "Grace, precisely because it builds on nature, does not make us superhuman all at once. That kind of thinking would show too much confidence in our own abilities... Unless we can acknowledge our concrete and limited situation, we will not be able to see the real and possible steps that the Lord demands of us at every moment, once we are attracted and empowered by his gift." (50)



Reflect Do you find yourself becoming impatient with your growth in holiness? Do you have limitations only grace can overcome?

Read "[God's] friendship infinitely transcends us; we cannot buy it with our works, it can only be a gift born of his loving initiative. This invites us to live in joyful gratitude for this completely unmerited gift... Yet we cannot celebrate this free gift of the Lord's friendship unless we realize that our earthly life and our natural abilities are his gift." (54)

Reflect What people, experiences, or other gifts has God given you to grow in holiness? How might you use those gifts better? How can you take time to express gratitude to God in prayer?