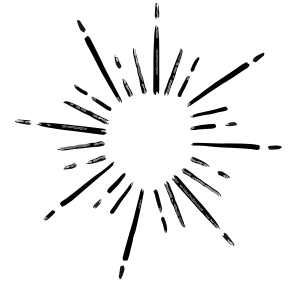


REJOICE & BE GLAD - REFLECTION GUIDE

CHAPTER FIVE: SPIRITUAL COMBAT, VIGILANCE, AND DISCERNMENT

Re-read these excerpts from chapter five 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 "The path of holiness is a source of peace and joy, given to us by the Spirit. At the same time, it demands that we keep "our lamps lit" (Lk 12:35) and be attentive. "Abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thess 5:22). "Keep awake" (Mt 24:42; Mk 13:35). "Let us not fall asleep" (1 Thess 5:6). Those who think they commit no grievous sins against God's law can fall into a state of dull lethargy. Since they see nothing serious to reproach themselves with, they fail to realize that their spiritual life has gradually turned lukewarm. They end up weakened and corrupted." (164)



Reflect Have you ever experienced a season of spiritual lethargy? How can the Sacraments and prayer help you more awaken in your faith?

Read "The gift of discernment has become all the more necessary today, since contemporary life offers immense possibilities for action and distraction, and the world presents all of them as valid and good... We can navigate simultaneously on two or more screens and interact at the same time with two or three virtual scenarios. Without the wisdom of discernment, we can easily become prey to every passing trend... If we ask with confidence that the Holy Spirit grant us this gift, and then seek to develop it through prayer, reflection, reading and good counsel, then surely we will grow in this spiritual endowment." (166-167)

Reflect Is there an area in your life where the way forward is unclear? How might you ask God for direction?



Read "We must remember that prayerful discernment must be born of a readiness to listen: to the Lord and to others, and to reality itself, which always challenges us in new ways. Only if we are prepared to listen, do we have the freedom to set aside our own partial or insufficient ideas, our usual habits and ways of seeing things. In this way, we become truly open to accepting a call that can shatter our security, but lead us to a better life. It is not enough that everything be calm and peaceful. God may be offering us something more, but in our comfortable inadvertence, we do not recognize it." (172)

Reflect Is there an area of your life where "repeating what was done in the past" is no longer working? As you seek growth in holiness, implying a change, is there a new way God is asking you to look at this situation?

Read "When, in God's presence, we examine our life's journey, no areas can be off limits. In all aspects of life we can continue to grow and offer something greater to God, even in those areas we find most difficult. We need, though, to ask the Holy Spirit to liberate us and to expel the fear that makes us ban him from certain parts of our lives. God asks everything of us, yet he also gives everything to us. He does not want to enter our lives to cripple or diminish them, but to bring them to fulfilment." (175)

Reflect Is there an area of your life where you find yourself clinging to your way of thinking or doing things? What does it mean for you to give God "everything"? What is holding you back?