



DIOCESE OF CALICUT



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GAUDETE ET EXSULTATE- APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION OF POPE FRANCIS

(a short summary from Fr Bill Mc Cormick, S.J., taken from

<https://thejesuitpost.org/2018/04/gaudete-et-exsultate-an-overview/> , accessed on 3 April 2018)

Pope Francis is often called a “man of Vatican II.” In his newly-released *Gaudete et Exsultate*, he offers a powerful magisterial reflection on the Council’s “universal call to holiness”

Introduction (§§1-2)

GE is meant to be practical: it is not “a treatise on holiness, containing definitions and distinctions helpful for understanding this important subject, or a discussion of the various means of sanctification.” Rather, it is a meditation on how to respond to Christ’s invitation to be saints: to “Rejoice and be glad,” (§1).

Chapter 1 (§§3-34): The Call to Holiness

In this Chapter Pope Francis discusses the diversity of forms under which holiness appears: “We are all called to be witnesses, but there are many actual ways of bearing witness,” (§11). Besides those saints and martyrs whose lives were “an exemplary imitation of Christ,” Pope Francis also praises “the middle class of holiness”: the everyday sanctity of “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,” (§7). “The Holy Spirit bestows holiness in abundance among God’s holy and faithful people,” the Pope writes, which begins from baptism (§15). Here he invokes the theme of the universal call to holiness, citing *Lumen Gentium* §11: “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”. Pope Francis emphasizes the phrase “each in his or her own way,” for the diversity of forms of holiness means that Christians must discern how the Lord is calling each of them to holiness. While there are many good forms of life, every person has a unique vocation to whom he or she is called by God. While everyone has a unique vocation, every mission “has its fullest meaning in Christ, and can only be understood through him,” (§20).

Chapter 2 (§§35-62): Two Subtle Enemies of Holiness

This chapter concerns “two false forms of holiness that can lead us astray: Gnosticism and Pelagianism,” (§35). Pope Francis notably underlines how these tendencies draw oneself and others away from holiness: whereby instead of evangelizing, one analyses and classifies others, and instead of opening the door to grace, one exhausts his or her energies in inspecting and verifying. In neither case is one really concerned about Jesus Christ or others”. §35

Chapter 3 (§§63-109): In the Light of the Master

This chapter centres on the example of Jesus, particularly in an interpretation of the Beatitudes and Matthew 25. For while there “can be any number of theories about what constitutes holiness, with various explanations and distinctions... nothing is more enlightening than turning to Jesus’ words and seeing his way of teaching the truth,” (§63). Pope Francis writes that “Jesus explained with great simplicity what it means to be holy when he gave us the Beatitudes (cf. Mt 5:3-12; Lk 6:20-23),” such that “The Beatitudes are like a Christian’s identity card,” (§63). The Beatitudes are thus our guide to imitate Jesus.

Pope notes two “ideologies striking at the heart of the Gospel”: “those Christians who separate these Gospel demands from their personal relationship with the Lord, from their interior union with him, from openness to his grace,” and “those who suspect the social engagement of others, seeing it as superficial, worldly, secular, materialist, communist or populist,” (§100). The Church is more than an “NGO,” Francis argues, but one should also affirm the good of one’s neighbour as integral to the Christian life. Francis elaborates on this second point at some length, invoking St. Thomas Aquinas again to argue that “works of mercy towards our neighbour” give greater glory to God than even acts of worship (§106).

One of the most “Franciscan” moments in the text comes here: Our defence of the innocent unborn, for example, needs to be clear, firm and passionate, for at stake is the dignity of a human life, which is always sacred and demands love for each person, regardless of his or her stage of development. Equally sacred, however, are the lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned and the underprivileged, the vulnerable infirm and elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection. (§101)

Chapter 4 (§§110-157): Signs of Holiness in Today’s World

In this chapter, Pope Francis discusses five “great expressions of love for God and neighbour” that he takes to be “of particular importance in the light of certain dangers and limitations present in today’s culture.” Those “signs or spiritual attitudes” will help us “understand the way of life to which the Lord calls us.” Pope Francis first states these five attitudes negatively: There we see a sense of anxiety, sometimes violent, that distracts and debilitates; negativity and sullenness; the self-content bred by consumerism; individualism and all those forms of ersatz spirituality – having nothing to do with God – that dominate the current religious marketplace. (§111) Stated positively, the Christian should rather be patient and meek (§§112-121); joyful (§§122-128); bold and passionate (§§129-139); communal (§§140-146); and constantly prayerful (§§147-157). Pope Francis casts this chapter in terms of following and becoming more like Jesus, a life-long effort which leads us to and is sustained by the Eucharist: In the Eucharist, the one true God receives the greatest worship the world can give him, for it is Christ himself who is offered. When we receive him in Holy Communion, we renew our covenant with him and allow him to carry out ever more fully his work of transforming our lives. (§157)

Chapter 5 (§§158-201): Spiritual Combat, Vigilance, and Discernment

The title of this chapter reminds us that the Pope is hard to put in a box: “spiritual combat” will sound old-fashioned and even reactionary for some. But Pope Francis makes no bones about his purpose in writing this way: The Christian life is a constant battle. 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 (§158). Pope Francis continues that we “are not dealing merely with a battle against the world and a worldly mentality,” or “against our human weaknesses and proclivities... It is also a constant struggle against the devil, the prince of evil,” (§159). And the devil is real: “Hence, we should not think of the devil as a myth, a representation, a symbol, a figure of speech or an idea.” (§161)

The spiritual life demands vigilance and keeping our “lamps lit” (§164). Progress in the spiritual life does not secure one from the devil’s snares. Indeed, the “spiritual corruption” of such persons “is worse than the fall of a sinner, for it is a comfortable and self-satisfied form of blindness,” (§165).

Pope Francis ends the chapter by posing a question, the answer to which is his favourite subject. The question: “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?” The answer: discernment. Discernment, of course, has been at the forefront of many discussions surrounding this papacy. At root is the question whether “some novelty... is new wine brought by God or an illusion created by the spirit of this world or the spirit of the devil.” But not only choosing new directions requires discernment, Francis urges, but also staying the course: “At other times, the opposite can happen, when the forces of evil induce us not to change, to leave things as they are, to opt for a rigid resistance to change.” Francis

has spoken against the “rigidity” that he says often refuses to countenance needful change in Church disciplines. Such persons, he says, “block the working of the Spirit.” But “[we] are free, with the freedom of Christ,” (§168).

Discernment, the Pope writes, should be exercised in matters great and small. Followers of this papacy will note that he takes this occasion to smuggle in again his favourite phrase in a footnote: “Non coarctari a maximo, contineri tamen a minimo divinum est (“Not to be confined by the greatest, yet to be contained within the smallest, is truly divine”). Discernment is “more than intelligence or common sense. It is a gift” from the Holy Spirit (§166). Indeed, while “spiritual discernment does not exclude existential, psychological, sociological or moral insights ... it transcends them.” Further: Nor are the Church’s sound norms sufficient. We should always remember that discernment is a grace. Even though it includes reason and prudence, it goes beyond them, for it seeks a glimpse of that unique and mysterious plan that God has for each of us, which takes shape amid so many varied situations and limitations. (§170)

Here we again see the Holy Father in dialogue with those who think his teaching on discernment does not sufficiently heed the normative force of Church teaching. Moreover, it “is not about discovering what more we can get out of this life, but about recognizing how we can better accomplish the mission entrusted to us at our baptism,” (§174). Indeed, despite being mentioned explicitly only twice, baptism is a pervasive theme of this work: “Let the grace of your baptism bear fruit in a path of holiness,” (§15).

Conclusion (§§176-177) with Hail Mary

Pope Francis concludes by calling on Mary’s intercession to help all walk with Jesus toward holiness. Mary is a model for that holiness: “she lived the Beatitudes of Jesus as none other.” Her example is one of joy, discernment and suffering, and fidelity: “Mary is the saint among the saints, blessed above all others.” If we follow her example, Pope Francis urges, “we will share a happiness that the world will not be able to take from us.”

MONTH OF MAY

The month of May is filled with the colourful flowers which blossom to welcome the “Queen of May”. During this month we, both in Church and in the privacy of our houses, offer to Mary loving homage of prayer and veneration. In this month, the benefits of God’s mercy come down to us from her throne in greater abundance” (ENCYCLICAL OF POPE PAUL VI, *MENSE MAIO* on prayers during May for preservation of peace, NO. 1)

NEW APPOINTMENT

Rev. Fr Johnson Kochuparambil is appointed as the Vice Principal and Bursar of St Xavier’s College, Eranhilalam with effect from 1 May, 2018.

PRIESTS’ ANNUAL RETREAT

The Annual Retreat for our priests, both diocesan and religious priests working in the diocese, will be from Sunday, 29 July 2018 to Friday 03 August 2018 at Navajyothis Renewal Centre, Eranhilalam.

SEMINARIANS’ VILLA

Villa holidays for our Major Seminarians will be held at St Joseph’s Church Vythiri from 15 May to 31 May 2018. I invite all our priests to the Villa. It is an occasion to visit and to stay with our Brothers at the villa.

SCHOLARSHIPS DISTRIBUTED

Bp. Aldo Maria Patroni and Bp. Joseph Kalathiparambil memorial scholarship were distributed to the students from various parishes of the diocese of Calicut on 25 March 2018 at St. Joseph’s Church, Calicut. Australian Scholarship of Taree and Wingham parishes were distributed to 15 students from different parishes of the diocese on 2 May 2018 at Bishop’s House.

BIRTHDAYS - MAY 2018

- 8 Fr Victor Mendonza
- 9 Fr Ouseppachan

12 Fr Alexander Kalarickal
 16 Fr Joseph Thayyil S.J.
 20 Fr Jiju Palliparambil
 21 Fr George Anthicad
 25 Fr Johnson Kochuparambil
 25 Fr Benedict Kodiyampurayidam OSB
 28 Fr Sebastian Karukaparambil
 30 Fr Johnson Avarave

We join you dear Fathers in thanking the Lord for the gift of life and wish you a very happy birthday and God's blessings. **"Ad Multos Annos"**

SEMINARY FORMATION FUND

Holy Cross Church, Poomala.....	15,000.00
Sacred Heart Church, Cheruvannur.....	15,000.00
Mother of God Cathedral	25,000.00
St Joseph's Church.....	30,200.00

Total 85,200.00

BISHOP'S DIARY - MAY 2018

May 01	09:30am	: Confirmation, St Joseph's Church, Calicut
May 02	03:30pm	: Taree & Wingham Scholarship Distribution, Bishop's House
May 03		: Bishop's House
May 04	05:30pm	: Karshaka Vimochana Yathra, Thiruvambadi
May 05	08:45am	: Inauguration, Saroj Diagnostic Laboratory, Malaparamba
	05:00pm	: Feast Mass, Sacred Heart Church, Payyoli
May 06		: Confirmation, St Michael's Church, Westhill
May 07		: Death anniversary of my Father, Mala
May 08		: Feast Mass, Chettikad
May 10	10:30am	: Marriage, Mullenkolly
May 11	10:30am	: Meeting of Pastoral Ministry Members
	03:00pm	: Meeting of Laity Commission Members
May 12	10:00am	: Catechism H.M.s' Meeting, Navajyothis
	05:00pm	: Feast Mass, Perpetual Succour Church, Panamaram
May 13		: Chakkalalakal Trust, Mala
May 14		: Thrissur
May 15	11:00am	: KCBC Women's Commission Meeting
May 16	04:00pm	: Priests' Ongoing Formation, Bishop's House
May 17		: Priests' Ongoing Formation, Bishop's House
May 18	10:30am	: Seminarians Selection, Bishop's House
May 19	10.00am	: Legion of Mary Annual Day, Cathedral
	11:00am	: Chavara Cultural Centre, Calicut
May 20	08:30am	: Confirmation, St Antony's Church, Pakkam
May 21		: Villa, Vythiri
May 22		: Villa, Vythiri
May 23		: Kanichar, Kottiyoor
May 24		: KRLCBC Meeting, Kottayam
May 25	06:00pm	: Bethany Provincial House, Chevayur
May 26	10:30am	: Thuruthur
May 27	11.00am	: Sambaloor
May 28	10:30am	: College Governing Council Meeting
May 29	10:30am	: Jubilee Mass, Sellere
May 31		: Vythiri