

Each week for the summer, a parishioner will reflect on a section of Pope Francis' Call to Holiness: his new Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate (Rejoice and Be Glad)*, which you can read at <http://w2.vatican.va>

Signs of Holiness (paragraphs 112-121)

In his letter recapitulating the Gospel's call to holiness, the Holy Father does well to hone in on perseverance, patience, and meekness — three Christ-like virtues that run very much against the grain of modern life. Everything around us urges us to pick up the pace, get things done, and fight for every drop of what we think we deserve out of life.

The thing is, when we get so caught up in the race to succeed— no matter how important these accomplishments may really be — we can lose sight of the people around us. People bring complexity, and sometimes they come with pain and suffering and all that messiness. In the modern mindset, these uncontrollable situations are obstacles. But with perseverance, patience, and meekness, we can experience undesired interruptions as opportunities, not obstacles. Because, ultimately, loving other people in these opportunities is central to the mission of holiness.

This isn't just a call to self-negation. Christian love is far more powerful and positive than that. Perseverance doesn't just endure difficult times out of laziness or boredom, but because of a belief that God never fails and neither do those who wait on His timing. Patience isn't just being passive whenever faced with bad results; it is having the resolve to see the good and continue pursuing it, no matter how bad things get. And meekness — so often misunderstood as weakness — is really about having the strength to be kind when anger would be justified.

The world will always tell us to hurry up, blow through anything or anyone in our way, and take what we can from life. But Christ, the model of holiness, steps aside from the hustle and bustle to love those who happen to get in His way. May we, too, learn not to ignore the opportunities for loving the ones around us, ones whom we can best serve with perseverance, patience, and meekness.

—Christopher Upham