

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: Joy (paragraphs ¶122-128)

Pope Francis is reinforcing the message of Vatican II documents *Lumen Gentium* ("Light to the Nations") and *Gaudium et Spes* ("Joy and Hope") to help us re-identify what Church is and the part we play in bringing Joy and Hope to the world. In *Gaudete et Exsultate* he reminds us of the Universal Call to Holiness and asks us to follow it. Francis brings forth the cloud of witnesses, the martyrs, and the togetherness exhibited toward salvation through a life of faith and charity as the attractive face of the Church's holiness.

"At its core, holiness is experiencing, in union with Christ, the mysteries of his life" (¶20). One of those mysteries can be remaining joy-filled especially in the face of adversity. In Chapter 4 Francis helps us connect with the supernatural joy that "adapts and changes, but always endures" in the knowledge that we are infinitely loved. The infinite love of Christ to empty Himself becoming fully human is the beginning of the ultimate example of sacrifice for others that is punctuated with Jesus acquiescing to be brutally crucified. Yet amid all this, Jesus prays to the Father (John 17:13) that we may have His joy fulfilled in us. I find no irony in the joy and laughter found among the poor who are untroubled by the "individualistic consumerism that bloats the heart with passing pleasures" (¶128). True rejoicing is found among those reliant on a community where giving, receiving, and joyful sacrifice frequently occur.

—Mike Kristan