

## **Summer Reading for Honors Ecclesiology and Morality.**

**Students are required to read GAUDETE ET EXSULTATE (REJOICE AND BE GLAD)**

**This encyclical written by Pope Francis can be found at the following link.**

**[http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20180319\\_gaudete-et-exsultate.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudete-et-exsultate.html)**

**There are five chapters to this encyclical. Students will read one chapter a week, beginning in the first full week of July and answer all of the questions related to the chapter. The due dates are listed in **Red**. Students must complete the entire assignment to remain in honors. Work can be submitted early. Work that is more than one week late may result in removal from the honors section. The evaluation of student responses will be reflected in the student's grade for both Ecclesiology and Morality.**

Please answer each question in a full paragraph (At least 5-7 sentences). Please type your responses in google and share them with [bulgrinm@hoban.org](mailto:bulgrinm@hoban.org)..

### **INTRO & CHAPTER 1 The [Universal] Call to Holiness **Due July 8****

To begin this document. Pope Francis wants to indicate certain characteristics of the universal call to holiness. He begins by talking about the saints and moves from there into our everyday lives. This chapter is not too concrete in how to be holy but wants us all to know that although we are each called to holiness, there is not a uniform call to holiness.

### **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. What do you see in the introduction? What is the goal of the document? (1–2)
2. What does Francis mean by the saints “next door”? Is every Christian called to holiness? What are some ways normal people can be saints? (6–8)
3. How does Catholicism share holiness with other Christian traditions? (9)
4. Are we called to be holy in the same way? What are some differences you note between the holiness you personally are called to and that of some saints you admire? (11)
5. Can you think of examples in your life like the Pope gives in 16–18 (especially 16)? Do I face any special challenges like he mentions in 17? (16–18)
6. Is there a connection between our mission(our life's work) and our holiness? How does this relate to Jesus? (19–21, 23–24)
7. How can I spread Jesus' kingdom? Do paragraphs 26 and 27 give me any ideas? (Paragraph 29 clarifies 26.)
8. Does the intention or reasons behind our acts matter? What are some bad intentions Francis mentions? Do I see this in my life? (28—Francis uses “anxiety” in a non-medical sense. If you struggle with clinic anxiety issues, that isn't an obstacle to holiness but part of your path to holiness.)
9. How does our prayer affect our actions? Do we need prayer to be holy? What are some obstacles to prayer? (29–30)
10. Have I feared holiness? Have I feared being considered overly pious or weird because I was holy? What does Francis say about this fear? (32)

## **CHAPTER 2** Two Subtle Enemies of Holiness [Gnosticism and Pelagianism] **Due July 15**

In this chapter, Francis goes back to two errors that are present in different parts of the Church. You may not be tempted to either of these or know anyone who is— consider that a blessing and be ready to help anyone who needs help. To begin, here are extremely simplified definitions: Gnosticism is the idea that we are just souls trapped in bodies so the material world isn't good; and Pelagianism is the belief that man can be saved by his own work or that man is in some way in charge of his salvation, not God. Don't worry if this chapter seems a little negative, it is the darkest chapter and it gets sunnier quickly.

### **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. Why does Francis call these two beliefs narcissist? What does he mean? (35)
2. What does Francis mean by Gnosticism? What does he critique in it? Do you recognize signs of Gnosticism in our culture? Have you ever been tempted to Gnosticism? How would you now respond to it? (36–46)
3. In what way are Gnostics elitist? (37)
4. How do you understand “When somebody has an answer for every question, it is a sign that they are not on the right road”? Is Pope Francis condemning all knowledge or asking us to keep growing in knowledge? (41)
5. Is there anywhere we can say God is not? Why or why not? (42)
6. Why is this a greater temptation for the highly educated? (45)
7. What is Pelagianism? How does it misunderstand grace? Why does Francis refer to its focus on the will? What's the relationship between outright Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism? Are either acceptable? (47–51)
8. Are we justified by our own efforts or by God? Who takes the initiative? Can we grow spiritually of our own accord? Can we demand, merit or buy the gift of grace? Is grace a once-saved, always-saved reality? (52–56)
9. How can an obsession with the law lead to Pelagianism? Is the Church meant to be just a museum piece? (57–59)
10. Are all virtues of the same value? What are the greatest virtues? (Hint: remember Jesus' two great commandments.) How are love and the law related? (60 – 61)

## **CHAPTER 3** In the Light of the Master [the Beatitudes and Matthew 25] **Due July 22**

This chapter is the central chapter of this document. It consists of a small and a big meditation on Scripture applied to our lives. The first and larger meditation is based on the beatitudes, and the second shorter meditation is based on the final judgment in Matthew 25. Each of these tries to draw out the various lines of Jesus like “Blessed are those who mourn,” or “I was thirsty and you gave me to drink.”

### **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. Why does Francis say, “The Beatitudes are like a Christian’s identity card”? What does he mean? (63)
2. What truths does Francis draw out of “Blessed are the poor in spirit”? Where does he suggest security be put? How does he compare earthly wealth to God’s word? How does he relate “poor” and “poverty of spirit”? (67–70)
3. How does Francis approach the beatitude of “Blessed are the meek”? What tendencies does this beatitude counter? How does this relate to Jesus’ revelation that he is “gentle and humble of heart”? How does this relate to other Biblical concepts like the gifts of the Holy Spirit or the poor faithful remnant? (71–74)
4. What did Francis say about “blessed are those who mourn”? Does this relate to our entertainment driven culture? How? How does it lead us to the deeper meaning of life? (75–76)
5. When he goes over, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,” what does Francis teach? How does Jesus fulfill his promise “they shall be filled”? Is his justice the same as the justice of this world? What distinguishes his justice from human justice? How does justice relate to holiness? (77–79)
6. What did Francis say about, “blessed are the merciful”? What are the two aspects of mercy? How does this relate to the golden rule? How is mercy God’s perfection? Can we reproduce it? What degree of forgiveness does Jesus ask us? (80–82)
7. How does Francis treat, “Blessed are the pure in heart”? What is the “heart” in Biblical language? How does love relate to our actions? What can tarnish love? (83–86)
8. Analyzing, “Blessed are the peacemakers,” what does Francis focus on? How does gossip relate to being a peacemaker? Is peace a political or a personal reality? Or both? How can we sow peace around us? (87–89)
9. What does Francis say about “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake”? Are we called to go with the flow or against it? Is the Gospel path easy? What are some difficulties today? Can the cross be avoided in the Christian life? What does the cross do for the Christian? What are some modern persecutions? (90–94)
10. Which one of these beatitudes touched me the most? Which can I apply to my own life today? Which do I need to grow most in?
11. What does it mean to relativize the issues the Church deals with? Is every life sacred? Can we ignore the life of anyone? What are the people I have the most trouble defending? (101–103, note: this is the flipside of John Paul II who would emphasize that you can help the poor, sick, etc. without trying to end abortion—as Catholics, we are both-and)
12. What is the problem with hedonism and consumerism? How can they damage the Gospel? (108)

#### **CHAPTER 4** Signs of Holiness in Today’s World **Due July 29**

The signs of holiness dealt with in this chapter are virtues or qualities, not individual cases of holiness. Francis is summarizing characteristics that are all found when holiness is present: different types of holiness will be more exemplary in one or another sign but such is the beauty of holiness like a multifaceted diamond. He deals with virtues like patience, meekness,

boldness, passion, and prayfulness that cause holiness to be present, but he also covers the results of holiness such as community and true joy.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How does Francis frame the five signs in the first two paragraphs? How do the beatitudes relate to them? What are they contrary to? (110–111)
2. What is the basis of the first sign, perseverance? How are we called to treat evil? (112–113)
3. What should we cling to in the face of evil inclinations in our heart? What inclination do I struggle most with? How does God grant peace? (114, Note: “anxiety” in the passage is a reference to the anxieties of every day, some people have more clinical anxiety which may require therapy and medication, not just prayer.)
4. How does Francis refer to negative dialogue online? What is the dangerous dichotomy? What aspect of the 8th commandment does he see as missing? What fights against this verbal violence? How can I better communicate online? (115–116)
5. Are we judges over others? Should we try to see their good or their imperfections? What is needed for humility? How did the apostles treat humiliation? Is humiliation pleasant? Is it masochistic? (117–120)
6. What does accepting humility presuppose about our relationship with Jesus? What does his peace mean for the Christian life? For my personal life? (121)
7. How can we compare the joy of the Gospel and the superficial happiness of our world? Is joy focused on what we already have or what we want to acquire? Is it satisfied with what we have? (127–128)
8. What are some spiritual elements that increase our spiritual boldness? How does God’s newness affect that? Can we ask for such boldness? (135–136, 139)
9. What does complacency reveal? How can we overcome it? Who might inspire us: both who Francis lists and from our own experience? (137–138)
10. What does community bring to the Christian life? Is holiness a personal or communal quest? What are some examples of communal holiness? How should each Christian community show forth the Lord? Is my community living up to this ideal? If it isn’t, how can I change that? What does Jesus’ prayer “that they all may be one” (John 17:21) have to do with Christian community? (140–143)
11. How are prayer, silence and discernment linked? Can we decide well as a Christian without all three of these? (150)
12. How can we enter into prayer? Is prayer an escape from the world or entering it on a deeper level? How does prayer deal with history? What practices does the contemplation of our own history lead us to? (151–153)
13. How do the Scriptures nourish prayer? What about the Eucharist? (156–157)

In this final chapter, Francis wants to conclude with a brief treatment of several important things for the spiritual life. He wants to, on one hand, remind us that the spiritual life is a battle and, on the other, remind us that we need discernment to determine the right path on the spiritual life. This double-focus avoids the tendency to water down the spiritual life on one hand, and to be reckless or one-size-fits-all on the other side. He concludes by entrusting our holiness to Mary.

### **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. Is the Christian life a battle? What is our struggle against? Is the devil a real enemy? What standards do we need in order to see the devil? How does Francis respond to the idea that illness used to be seen as demonic? What is the problem of considering the devil a myth? (158–161)
2. What does holiness and spiritual peace require? What does it mean to fall into spiritual corruption? Can we deceive ourselves? (164–165)
3. Why is discernment needed? What contemporary realities make it more urgent? What are some times we might need it more? Is there something I need to discern? (167–168)
4. Do the other fields—like morals, psychology and the like—have any bearing on discernment? Can discernment just become a psychological exercise? What is the most key action to be able to discern? How does prayer help us discern? Does prayer require opening to the spirit? How can we be open and listen? (170–173)
5. How can we grow in understanding God's timetable? How is happiness a paradox? Are there limits in what should be open to God? Is discernment just introspection? (174–175)

### **FINAL DISCUSSION / REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. What have I learned about the path to holiness? How can I apply it to my spiritual growth? What ways is my holiness specific to me?
2. Where can I see signs of holiness? How can I promote signs of holiness?
3. Do I understand Christian spiritual combat? Do I understand discernment? Do I apply them in my life?
4. What is the top lesson or two I can take from reading this exhortation?

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