President of U.s. Conference of Catholic Bishops Welcomes Pope Francis's Apostolic Exhortation on Holiness in the Contemporary World; Rejoice and Be Glad

Description

April 9, 2018 (WASHINGTON)—Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston and President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, is welcoming the release of Pope Francis's apostolic exhortation, "Gaudete et Exsultate" (Rejoice and Be Glad), subtitled "On the Call to Holiness in the Contemporary World." In his statement, Cardinal DiNardo expresses his deep gratitude to the Holy Father for the exhortation and the call for each Christian to "acknowledge and be open to what God wants them to be."
In the introduction to the exhortation, the Pope emphasizes that the goal of his exhortation is to "repropose the call to holiness in a practical way for our own time, with all its risks, challenges and opportunities." An apostolic exhortation is considered the second-highest form of papal teaching after an encyclical letter. Since his election, Pope Francis has issued two other exhortations: "Evangelii Gaudium" (Joy of the Gospel) in 2013 and "Amoris Laetitia" (The Joy of Love) in 2016. Cardinal DiNardo's full statement on "Gaudete et Exsultate" follows: "I want to personally express my deep gratitude to the Holy Father for his powerful, straightforward words in Gaudete et Exsultate. In this exhortation, Pope Francis is very clear – he is doing his duty as the Vicar of Christ, by strongly urging each and every Christian to freely, and without any qualifications, acknowledge and be open to what God wants them to be – that is 'to be holy, as He is holy' (1 Pet 1:15). The mission entrusted to each of us in the waters of baptism was simple – by God's grace and power, we are called to become saints. 'Do not be afraid of holiness (no. 32).' These words of the Holy Father jumped out at me when I first read them. In a way, each one of us has a fear of striving for holiness – a fear that we would be mocked, ignored, or even hated by others because we would stand out. Yet that is what the Lord has called each and every person to! Pope Francis calls us out: A Christian cannot think of his or her mission on earth without seeing it as a path of holiness, for 'this is the will of God, your sanctification (I Thess 4:3) (no. 19).' The Holy Father describes how holiness comes through the daily struggles each of us face. In the ordinary course of each day, the Pope reminds us, 'We need to recognize and combat our aggressive and selfish inclinations, and not let them take root' (no. 114). Yet, he says, this 'battle is sweet, for it allows us to rejoice each time the Lord triumphs in our lives' (no. 158). One paragraph in particular points out the continuing need we have for civility in all our interactions, especially in the media. 'Christians too,' the Holy Father writes, 'can be caught up in networks of verbal violence through the internet and the various forums of digital communication.' This can be true even in Catholic media (no. 115). Even in our heated disagreements with one another, we always need to remember that it is God who judges, not man (James 4:12).' In the light of Easter joy, as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, I encourage every Christian to rekindle their baptismal call to be holy by reading this wonderful exhortation by Pope Francis, especially the beautiful section on the Beatitudes. Through an exploration of the Beatitudes, and by offering examples of how to live out our call to holiness in everyday life, the Holy Father has given us a wonderful tool for renewing our love for God and for each other." The USCCB has made the exhortation available for order online at http://store.usccb.org/rejoice-and-be-glad-p/7-599.htm.

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The Vatican has also posted the exhortation online at http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudete-et-exsultate.html.

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