



Holiness

Pope Benedict's address to pupils, 17 September 2010



About this resource

In his speeches and homilies Pope Benedict XVI left the Church in England and Wales a legacy of reading material for ongoing reflection and prayer. From November 2011 - October 2012 one sheet will be offered monthly to assist deepening our shared appreciation and understanding of what he said.

*Home Mission,
Desk, Catholic
Bishops'
Conference of
England and
Wales*



‘I hope that among those of you listening to me today there are some of the future saints of the twenty-first century. What God wants most of all for each one of you is that you should become holy. He loves you much more than you could ever begin to imagine, and he wants the very best for you. And by far the best thing for you is to grow in holiness.

‘Perhaps some of you have never thought about this before. Perhaps some of you think being a saint is not for you. Let me explain what I mean. When we are young, we can usually think of people that we look up to, people we admire, people we want to be like. It could be someone we meet in our daily lives that we hold in great esteem. Or it could be someone

famous. We live in a celebrity culture, and young people are often encouraged to model themselves on figures from the world of sport or entertainment. My question for you is this: what are the qualities you see in others that you would most like to have yourselves? What kind of person would you really like to be? ... Happiness is something we all want, but one of the great tragedies in this world is that so many people never find it, because they look for it in the wrong places. The key to it is very simple – true happiness is to be found in God.’

Full text: <http://www.thepapalvisit.org.uk/Replay-the-Visit/Speeches/Speeches-17-September/Pope-Benedict-s-address-to-pupils>

FOR REFLECTION

‘The first thing to do in speaking about holiness is to free the word from the fear it inspires, due to some mistaken representations that we make of it. Holiness can entail extraordinary phenomena, but it is not identified with them. If all are called to holiness it is because, properly understood, it is within everyone's reach, it is part of the normality of the Christian life... Looking at the New Testament, we see profound changes. Holiness does not reside in the hands, but in the heart; it is not decided outside but within man,

and it is summarized in charity... "There is but one sadness in the world, and it is not to be saints," said Leon Bloy, and Mother Teresa was right when a journalist asked her point-blank how she felt being acclaimed as being holy around the world, and she answered: "Holiness is not a luxury; it is a necessity."

Fr Cantalamessa, Preacher to the Pontifical Household
<http://www.catholic.org/featured/headline.php?ID=3765>





UNIVERSAL CALL

‘First of all, I have no hesitation in saying that all pastoral initiatives must be set in relation to holiness. Was this not the ultimate meaning of the Jubilee indulgence, as a special grace offered by Christ so that the life of every baptized person could be purified and deeply renewed?’

‘It is a duty which concerns not only certain Christians: "All the Christian faithful, of whatever state or rank, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity".

‘At first glance, it might seem almost impractical to recall this elementary truth as the foundation of the pastoral planning in which we are involved at the start of the new millennium. Can holiness ever be "planned"? What might the word "holiness" mean in the context of a pastoral plan?’

‘...to place pastoral planning under the heading of holiness is a choice filled with consequences. It implies the conviction that, since Baptism is a true entry into the holiness of God through incorporation into Christ and the indwelling of his Spirit, it

would be a contradiction to settle for a life of mediocrity, marked by a minimalist ethic and a shallow religiosity. To ask catechumens:

"Do you wish to receive Baptism?" means at the same

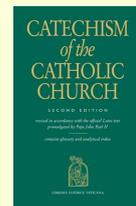
time to ask them: "Do you wish to become holy?" It means to set before them the radical nature of the Sermon on the Mount: "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:48).

‘As the Council itself explained, this ideal of perfection must not be misunderstood as if it involved some kind of extraordinary existence, possible only for a few "uncommon heroes" of holiness. The ways of holiness are many, according to the vocation of each individual. I thank the Lord that in these years he has enabled me to beatify and canonize a large number of Christians, and among them many lay people who attained holiness in the most ordinary circumstances of life. The time has come to re-propose wholeheartedly to everyone this high standard of ordinary Christian living: the whole life of the Christian community and of Christian families must lead in this direction. It is also clear however that the paths to holiness are personal and call for a genuine "training in holiness", adapted to people's needs. This training must integrate the resources offered to everyone with both the traditional forms of individual and group assistance, as well as the more recent forms of support offered in associations and movements recognized by the Church.’

NOVO MILLENNIO INEUNTE 30 - 31.
More: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20010106_novo-millennio-ineunte_en.html

Pause to re-read this extract and to reflect.

Christian Holiness



“All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life

and to the perfection of charity." All are called to holiness: "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2013

Blessed Mother Teresa

Mother Teresa of Calcutta, the tiny woman recognized throughout the world for her work among the poorest of the poor, was beatified October 19, 2003. Mother Teresa worked tirelessly on behalf of the poor. Her love knew no bounds. <http://www.americancatholic.org/features/saints/saint.aspx?id=1907>

Catholic Faith Exploration (CaFE)

CaFE has been producing a wide variety of modern and attractive DVD resources to support Catholics to respond to the call to holiness. A whole library of easy-to-run, TV-quality resources is available: <http://faithcafe.org/>

