



HOLINESS IS _____.

A 30 DAY PRAYER JOURNAL

GAUDETE ET EXSULTATE

“REJOICE AND BE GLAD’ (Mt 5:12), Jesus tells those persecuted or humiliated for his sake. The Lord asks everything of us, and in return he offers us true life, the happiness for which we were created. He wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence. The call to holiness is present in various ways from the very first pages of the Bible. We see it expressed in the Lord’s words to Abraham: ‘Walk before me, and be blameless.’”

DAY 1 : BEGIN TODAY AS YOU ARE

HOLINESS IS LIVING OUR LIVES WITH LOVE.

“We are often tempted to think that holiness is only for those who can withdraw from ordinary affairs to spend much time in prayer. This is not true. We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves.”

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 14)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

Where do I find myself today? Do I believe holiness is possible for me here. today, as I am? How can I bring the love of Christ into this day?

DAY 2: BE NOT AFRAID

HOLINESS IS TURNING TO GOD.

“Let everything be open to God; turn to him in every situation. Do not be dismayed, for the power of the Holy Spirit enables you to do this, and holiness, in the end, is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life.”

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 15)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

Lord, I'm sometimes discouraged that I can be holy because _____

_____.

I turn to you today to ask for the power of the Holy Spirit and the fruit of _____

_____.

DAY 3: DAILY LIFE WITH GREAT LOVE

HOLINESS IS LIVING IN THE PRESENT MOMENT WITH LOVE.

“When Cardinal Francois - Xavier Nguyen van Thuan was imprisoned, he refused to waste time waiting for the day he would be free. Instead he chose to ‘live the present moment, filling it to the brim with love.’ He decided: ‘I will seize the occasions that present themselves every day; I will accomplish ordinary actions in an extraordinary way.’ ”

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 17)



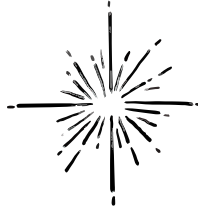
FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

Where do I see examples of people around me living ordinary life in an extraordinary way? What activity can I accomplish today with extraordinary love?

DAY 4: LIFE IN CHRIST

“Holiness is experiencing, in union with Christ, the mysteries of his life...his hidden life, his life in community, his closeness to the outcast, his poverty and other ways in which he showed his self-sacrificing love. The contemplation of these mysteries...leads us to incarnate them in our choices and attitudes.”

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 20)



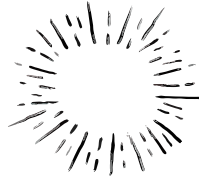
When I read the Gospel, what are some aspects of Christ's life, mission and way of loving that most attract me? How am I being led to incarnate his same choices and attitudes in my life?

DAY 5: BE TRANSFORMED

HOLINESS IS BEING TRANSFORMED BY GOD.

“May you come to realize what that word is, the message of Jesus that God wants to speak to the world by your life. Let yourself be transformed. Let yourself be renewed by the Spirit, so that this can happen, lest you fail in your precious mission. The Lord will bring it to fulfillment despite your mistakes and missteps, provided that you do not abandon the path of love but remain ever open to his supernatural grace, which purifies and enlightens.”

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 24)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

What particular words from Scripture continue to draw me, time and time again? Why might this be? Are these words connected to my own sense of mission?

DAY 6: FRUITFUL SILENCE

HOLINESS IS FINDING TIME TO DIALOGUE WITH GOD.

“ We are overwhelmed by words, by superficial pleasures and by an increasing din, filled not by joy but rather by the discontent of those whose lives have lost meaning. How can we fail to realize the need to stop this rat race and to recover the personal space needed to carry on a heartfelt dialogue with God? Finding that space may prove painful but it is always fruitful.”

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 29)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

Is silence hard for me? Where do I sense noise and superficiality have taken too strong a hold over me? Can I carve out 5 more minutes for silence today in my schedule?

DAY 7: HOLINESS MAKES US WHOLE

HOLINESS IS GIVING EVERY MOMENT TO JESUS.

“ We need a spirit of holiness capable of filling both our solitude and our service, our personal life and our evangelizing efforts, so that every moment can be an expression of self-sacrificing love in the Lord’s eyes. In this way, every minute of our lives can be a step along the path to growth in holiness. ”

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 31)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

Do I have a morning offering I can say everyday, giving part of my day and life to Jesus? Perhaps today I can find one or write my own.

DAY 8: FULLNESS OF LIFE

“Do not be afraid of holiness. It will take away none of your energy, vitality or joy. On the contrary, you will become what the Father had in mind when he created you, and you will be faithful to your deepest self.”

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 32)



As I reflect on my own faith journey, how have I changed over time? How has my relationship with Jesus brought me joy, peace and fulfillment?

DAY 9: YOU ARE CALLED HIGHER

HOLINESS IS HAVING OUR WEAKNESS TRANSFORMED.

“Do not be afraid to set your sights higher, to allow yourself to be loved and liberated by God. Do not be afraid to let yourself be guided by the Holy Spirit. Holiness does not make you less human, since it is an encounter between your weakness and the power of God’s grace. For in the words of León Bloy, when all is said and done, “the only great tragedy in life, is not to become a saint.”

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 34)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, as you call me higher, I need your love to liberate me in this way

_____.

One way I can trust in the power of God’s grace today is _____

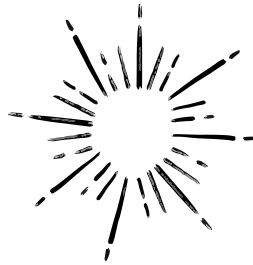
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DAY 10: LEARN SO AS TO LIVE

HOLINESS IS PUTTING KNOWLEDGE OF GOD INTO ACTION.

“What we think we know should always motivate us to respond more fully to God’s love. Indeed, you learn so as to live: theology and holiness are inseparable.”

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 45)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

Lord, how are you inviting me to learn more about my faith? Does the knowledge of my Catholic faith change the way I live?

DAY 11: LORD, YOU KNOW ME

HOLINESS IS WALKING WITH GOD.

“We need to walk in union with God, recognizing his constant love in our lives. We need to lose our fear before that presence which can only be for our good...once we accept him, and stop trying to live our lives without him, the anguish of loneliness will disappear.”

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 51)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

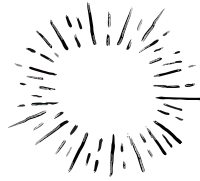
Read Psalm 139 slowly and meditatively. What phrases there move my heart? Do I believe these words apply to me? How can I become more aware of God's presence in my life?

DAY 12: WE DWELL IN HIM

HOLINESS IS DWELLING IN GOD .

“So often we say that God dwells in us, but it is better to say that we dwell in him, that he enables us to dwell in his light and love. He is our temple; we ask to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of our life.”

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 51)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

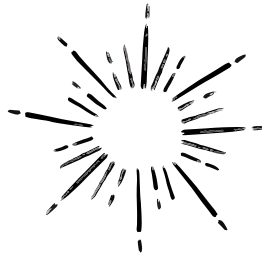
Read Psalm 27 slowly and make the words your own prayer to God the Father.

DAY 13: TOTALLY FREE GIFT

HOLINESS IS BEING GRATEFUL.

“Between us and God there is an immeasurable inequality. His friendship infinitely transcends us; we cannot buy it with our works, it can only be a gift born of his loving initiative. This invites us to live in joyful gratitude for this completely unmerited gift.”

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 54)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

Do I ever feel that I have to earn God's love?
When I come to pray today, how do I
imagine God is looking upon me? As judge,
critic, friend, father, Redeemer? Does
anything in my understanding of God need
to change?

DAY 14: YOUR LIFE IS A UNIQUE GIFT

HOLINESS IS CELEBRATING GOD'S GIFTS.

"We cannot celebrate this free gift of the Lord's friendship unless we realize that our earthly life and our natural abilities are His gift. We need 'to acknowledge jubilantly that our life is essentially a gift, and recognize that our freedom is a grace. This is not easy today, in a world that thinks it can keep something for itself, the fruits of its own creativity or freedom.'"

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 55)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

What are the gifts in my life that I feel called to celebrate the most today? Can I thank God for them?

DAY 15: BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT

HOLINESS IS LIVING SIMPLY.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.’ Once we think we are rich, we can become so self-satisfied that we leave no room for God’s word, for the love of our brothers and sisters, or for the enjoyment of the most important things in life. In this way, we miss out on the greatest treasure of all. That is why Jesus calls blessed those who are poor in spirit, those who have a poor heart, for there the Lord can enter with his perennial newness.”

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 68)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

Where can I welcome the simplicity and poverty Jesus lived in my own life?

DAY 16: BLESSED ARE THE MEEK

HOLINESS IS BEING PATIENT.

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.’ Christ says: ‘Learn from me; for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls’ (Mt 11:29). If we are constantly upset and impatient with others, we will end up drained and weary. But if we regard the faults and limitations of others with tenderness and meekness...we can actually help them and stop wasting our energy on useless complaining. Saint Thérèse of Lisieux tells us that ‘perfect charity consists in putting up with others’ mistakes, and not being scandalized by their faults.”

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 72)



Who do I know in my life that exemplifies meekness? Do I consider him/her to weak, or is there a deep strength in his/her meekness?

FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

DAY 17: BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN

HOLINESS IS SHARING IN THE SUFFERING OF OTHERS.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” The world tells us exactly the opposite: entertainment, pleasure, diversion and escape make for the good life... A person who sees things as they truly are and sympathizes with pain and sorrow is capable of touching life’s depths and finding authentic happiness. He or she is consoled, not by the world but by Jesus. Such persons are unafraid to share in the suffering of others. In this way they can embrace Saint Paul’s exhortation: “Weep with those who weep” (Rom 12:15).

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 76)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

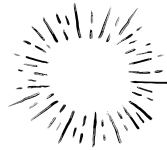
Do I allow Jesus (and others) to comfort me in the midst of painful situations?
Who in my life is in need of compassion?

DAY 18: BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER & THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

HOLINESS IS SEEKING JUSTICE.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.” True justice comes about in people’s lives when they themselves are just in their decisions; it is expressed in their pursuit of justice for the poor and the weak. If we give the word too general a meaning, we forget that it is shown especially in justice towards those who are most vulnerable: “Seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow” (Is 1:17).

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 79)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

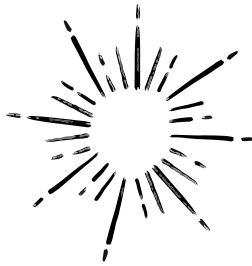
What specific people in my life are most vulnerable and in need of justice? How is the Lord calling me to respond?

DAY 19: BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL

HOLINESS IS SHOWING MERCY.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.” We need to think of ourselves as an army of the forgiven. All of us have been looked upon with divine compassion. If we approach the Lord with sincerity and listen carefully, there may well be times when we hear his reproach: “Should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?” (Mt 18:33).

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 82)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

How has the Lord shown me mercy in my life? How does the awareness of his compassion toward me shape the way I see others?

DAY 20: BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART

HOLINESS IS ALLOWING GOD TO SPEAK TO OUR HEARTS.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” A heart capable of love admits nothing that might harm, weaken or endanger that love. The Bible uses the heart to describe our real intentions, the things we truly seek and desire, apart from all appearances. “Man sees the appearance, but the Lord looks into the heart” (1Sam 16:7). God wants to speak to our hearts (cf. Hos 2:16); there he desires to write his law (cf. Jer 31:33). In a word, he wants to give us a new heart “ (cf. Ezek36:26).

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 83)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

Read 1 Corinthians 13. When I read the gospel and meditate on the life of Jesus, where do I see him live each of these aspects of love?

DAY 21: BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

HOLINESS IS MAKING PEACE WITH OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” This Beatitude makes us think of the many endless situations of war in our world. Yet we ourselves are often a cause of conflict or at least of misunderstanding. For example, I may hear something about someone and I go off and repeat it. I may even embellish it the second time around and keep spreading it... And the more harm it does, the more satisfaction I seem to derive from it. The world of gossip, inhabited by negative and destructive people, does not bring peace.”

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 87)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

Where do I encounter the “world of gossip” that Pope Francis warns against? Do I encourage and spread gossip? How might I invite the Lord to give me courage to challenge gossip and be an artisan of peace?

DAY 22: BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE

HOLINESS IS GOING AGAINST THE FLOW.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Jesus himself warns us that the path he proposes goes against the flow, even making us challenge society by the way we live and, as a result, becoming a nuisance. He reminds us how many people have been, and still are, persecuted simply because they struggle for justice, because they take seriously their commitment to God and to others. Unless we wish to sink into an obscure mediocrity, let us not long for an easy life, for “whoever would save his life will lose it” (Mt 16:25).

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 90)



Lord, how are you challenging me to rise above mediocrity in my faith? Am I afraid of what hardships might come if I “go against the flow?”

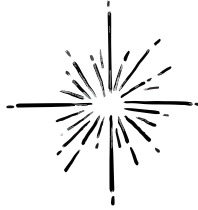
FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

DAY 23: PRAYER IS OUR ANCHOR

HOLINESS IS BEING ANCHORED IN PRAYER.

“When we feel overwhelmed, we can always cling to the anchor of prayer, which puts us back in God’s hands and the source of our peace.”

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 114)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

Lord, I feel overwhelmed today by _____

_____.

I believe that I am in your hands and that you are always with me.

DAY 24: SAINTS ARE JOYFUL

HOLINESS IS BEING JOYFUL.

Far from...putting on a dreary face, the saints are joyful and full of good humour. Though completely realistic, they radiate a positive and hopeful spirit. The Christian life is "joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom 14:17), for "the necessary result of the love of charity is joy; since every lover rejoices at being united to the beloved... the effect of charity is joy".

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 122)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

Where am I being challenged by Jesus to embrace a joy born from hope? Where do I struggle to live joyfully and where in my life does Christian joy come easily?

DAY 25: HOLINESS IS IN THE DETAILS

HOLINESS IS PAYING ATTENTION TO THE DETAILS.

“Let us not forget that Jesus asked his disciples to pay attention to details. The little detail that wine was running out at a party. The little detail that one sheep was missing. The little detail of noticing the widow who offered her two small coins. The little detail of having spare oil for the lamps, should the bridegroom delay. The little detail of asking the disciples how many loaves of bread they had. The little detail of having a fire burning and a fish cooking as he waited for the disciples at daybreak.”

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 144)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

Lord, where do I perceive you loving me in little ways, in the details? Where might I reflect your detailed love to others?

DAY 26: IN HIS PRESENCE

HOLINESS IS BEING IN THE LORD'S PRESENCE.

"Let me ask you: Are there moments when you place yourself quietly in the Lord's presence, when you calmly spend time with him, when you bask in his gaze? Do you let his fire inflame your heart? Unless you let him warm you more and more with his love and tenderness, you will not catch fire. How will you then be able to set the hearts of others on fire by your words and witness? If, gazing on the face of Christ, you feel unable to let yourself be healed and transformed, then enter into the Lord's heart, into his wounds, for that is the abode of divine mercy."

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 151)



Lord, today as I come to you in prayer,
let me spend just a few moments quietly
in your presence and under your loving
gaze. Lord, set my heart on fire
with your love!

FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

DAY 27: THE WORD OF GOD

HOLINESS IS READING THE WORD OF GOD.

“The prayerful reading of God’s word, which is “sweeter than honey” (Ps 119:103) yet a “two-edged sword” (Heb 4:12), enables us to pause and listen to the voice of the Master. It becomes a lamp for our steps and a light for our path (cf. Ps 119:105). Devotion to the word of God is not simply one of many devotions, beautiful but somewhat optional. It goes to the very heart and identity of Christian life. The word has the power to transform lives.”

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 156)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

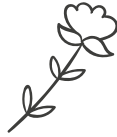
Look up the readings for daily Mass today and spend a few moments allowing the word to guide your life and shape your heart.

DAY 28: DISCERNMENT AS LISTENING

HOLINESS IS LISTENING TO THE LORD AND TO OTHERS.

“We must remember that prayerful discernment must be born of a readiness to listen: to the Lord and to others, and to reality itself, which always challenges us in new ways. Only if we are prepared to listen, do we have the freedom to set aside our own partial or insufficient ideas, our usual habits and ways of seeing things .”

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 17)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

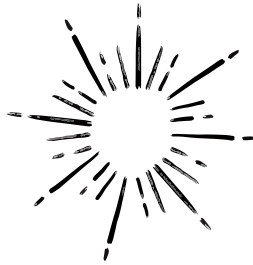
Are there any decisions I must make in my current situation that require spiritual discernment? Can I pause as I reflect over them to allow the Lord to speak to me and to challenge me to see things as He sees them?

DAY 29: WHAT IS DISCERNMENT?

HOLINESS IS MAKING SACRIFICES.

“Discernment is not about discovering what more we can get out of this life, but about recognizing how we can better accomplish the mission entrusted to us at our baptism. This entails a readiness to make sacrifices, even to sacrificing everything.”

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 174)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

Lord, help me to prayerfully reflect on my life in the context of the mission you entrusted to me at my baptism, to reflect your love in the world.

DAY 30: MARY SHOWS US THE WAY

HOLINESS IS IMITATING MARY.

“Mary is the saint among the saints, blessed above all others. She teaches us the way of holiness and she walks ever at our side. She does not let us remain fallen and at times she takes us into her arms without judging us. Our conversation with her consoles, frees and sanctifies us. Mary our Mother does not need a flood of words. She does not need us to tell her what is happening in our lives. All we need do is whisper, time and time again: “Hail Mary...”

- Pope Francis (*Gaudete Et Exsultate*, 176)



FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

Mary be with me today and always.
Comfort me when I'm in distress, give me
hope when I despair, walk by my side in
all that I do. “Hail Mary...”



Archdiocese of Washington
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