

The Church 40 years on No. 5

What does it mean to be
holy?
A Call and a Gift!

Chapter Five
The Dogmatic Constitution on the
Church
Second Vatican Council, 1965

A Small Group Reflection

Inside:

1. How to use this reflection.
2. Part One: Our life story
3. Part Two: What scripture teaches,
What the church teaches.

The Universal Call to Holiness
Lumen Gentium Chapter V

A. Our life

(20 minutes)

My grandmother Mary was my grandfather's second wife. She bore my grandfather two sons, and the younger son was my father. She was baptized in her mid forties.

At first she lived with her older son and his wife. She helped raise their six children. By the time my dad got married, my uncle's children were teenagers, so she moved in with my parents. She lived with us until she passed away at the age of ninety-seven.

She lived a very ordinary life – taking care of the children, doing housework, going on outings with us, chatting with my neighbours, praying the rosary at around seven p.m. daily and cooking the most delectable Peranakan dishes and *kueh*. She had great compassion for people and she would go out of her way to help anyone in need.

I remember thinking at her funeral; she loved much and was in very ordinary ways an extraordinary woman.

Questions for reflection:

1. Do you consider my grandmother Mary holy? Give reasons for your answer.
2. Is there someone you know that you think is holy? Describe that person. Does that person inspire you to be holy?

Supplement

Holiness is living your life for others.

Holiness is about aligning our lives to the Gospel.

Holiness is knowing and loving God in daily life.

Holiness is having regular contact with God through prayer and service.

Holiness is about loving people and creation in very real ways.

B. From Scripture and the Church

(40 minutes)

Holiness is a gift to us as individuals and to us as a Church.

Invite someone to read the following:

As individuals:

Baptism not only purifies from all sins, but also makes the neophyte (newly baptized) "a new creature," an adopted son or daughter of God, who has become a partaker of the divine nature," member of Christ and co-heir with him, and a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Taken from the Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraph 1265

As a Church:

- *Invite someone to read 1 Peter 1: 15-16.*

"...as he who called you is holy; be holy yourselves in all your conduct; since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

- *After the text has been read take a moment of silence and pray for the strength to live holy lives.*
- *Invite someone to read the following paragraphs:*

*It is in the Church, in communion with all the baptized, that the Christian fulfills his vocation. From the Church he receives the Word of God containing the teachings of "the law of Christ." From the Church he receives the sacraments that sustain him on the "way." From the Church he learns the example of holiness and recognizes its model and source in the all-holy Virgin Mary ...
catechism of the catholic Church paragraph 2030*

(The Church) is the choice vine, whose branches live and grow with the same

holy and life giving energies from Christ; she is the Mystical Body, whose

members share in the same life of holiness of the Head who is Christ...

The Spirit that sanctifies the human nature of Jesus is the same Spirit that is abiding and

working in the Church to communicate to her the holiness of the Son of God made man.

"Mission of the Lay faithful in the world and in the Church"
Christifidelis Laici, chapter 1 paragraph 16. (1988)

Questions for reflection:

- What does it mean to be holy?
- Are we already *perfected / sanctified / consecrated*, or are we called to become such?

Supplement

- Being holy means living from the life of the Holy Spirit.
- Being holy means being Christ centered and being aware of our belonging to him in one body with all the baptized.
- Being holy, perfect and consecrated comes from that union with Jesus and living a life of love, peace & joy. We are already holy if we live in union with Christ but we have a long way to reach perfection.

Conclusion

Sing and pray to end.

Let us pray:

'Lord you are holy, indeed the fountain of all holiness.'

Lord, we believe this and thank you for sharing your life and love with us every day in every way. Make us more and more aware of your presence in and around us and give us courage to live more and more holy and loving lives. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Homework

You may like to read and meditate on these texts during the coming weeks.

The Universal *Call* to Holiness

The call to holiness has been recorded in Christian hearts from the beginning. St Paul assured the Ephesians that "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him [in love] Eph.1:4. Israel had heard the same call; "Be holy, for I the LORD, your God, am holy." Leviticus 19:2

"Vatican II spent time on the subject of holiness, underscoring that it is a call. But a call from whom? It is a call from God. It is a call to share the life of the Father, Son and Spirit. It is call to be "perfect, just as

your heavenly Father is perfect" Matt 5:48. The Council describes God as the Author and Finisher of this holiness of life." And it is to that end that the Holy Spirit is sent: "To inspire us from within to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength. The call is "to the fullness of the Christian life and perfection of charity" (LG 39) Jesus is then described as the model of all perfection."

Extracted from 'The Challenge of Holiness – Housing Heaven's Fire' by John C. Haughhey, S.J.

Questions for reflection:

1. Who is this call to holiness from?
2. What can you do to grow in holiness of life?