

God calls us all to perfect holiness and true happiness in the new life of Christ

We are all called to holiness and virtue in imitation of Christ, and as we grow in the life of the Holy Spirit, we begin to experience real happiness, the kind that does not disappear in struggle or become extinguished by difficulty.



ROME, ITALY - MARCH 26, 2015: The ceiling fresco by G. B. Ricci from 16. cent. in church Chiesa di Santa Maria in Traspontina and chapel of st. Peter and Paul with the Ascension as central motive.

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Deacon Keith Fournier Thu Oct 24, 2024

(LifeSiteNews) — The Apostle Paul instructs the Colossian Christians to **“Put on, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love.” (Col. 3:12-17)**

The Greek word rendered “put on” in the New American translation of this passage implies the act of clothing oneself. Some translations actually use the expression “clothe yourself.” We put on these virtues as a cloak of holiness as we grow in the character of Christ.

We then choose to live differently. We truly become “partakers of the Divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4) as we participate in the continuing work of grace. The Holy Spirit effects our ongoing conversion and transformation into a new creation in Christ. (2 Cor. 5:17) **In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus invites us to live differently.** Jesus says, “To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. Be merciful, just as also your Father is merciful. (Lk. 6:27-38)

In such readings, we see **there is a call to holiness and virtue. We cannot do this on our own, but nothing is impossible with God.** St. Paul expressed the process when he wrote to the Galatians “No longer do I live, but Christ lives in me, and the life I now live I live by faith in the Son of God.” (Gal. 2:20)

This is not an ideal; it is meant to become real in the life of every Christian – no matter what our state in life or specific vocational calling within the one call of discipleship. We are to cooperate with the grace of God and yield more and more to the Holy Spirit, in order to be made new.

The Holy Spirit brings about a transforming work within each of us, making us more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ – if we cooperate with grace. That entails developing a new way of life that is rooted in prayer and communion with God, fed through immersion in His Word and participation in the sacred mysteries, the sacraments, and expressed in love.

The New Testament and the writings of the early Church fathers emphasize this vocation to beatitude or happiness. **The path to happiness passes through the Cross and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. He has done for us what we could never do for ourselves.** Through the Holy Spirit, we are being set free from what St. Paul calls the law of sin and death. (Rom. 8:2)

We are not only set free from, we are set free for – a new way of life as a Christian, a follower of the Christ. One who makes the Risen Jesus Christ present in the stuff of daily life, for ourselves and for others. The process of conversion in the life of a follower of Jesus involves the exercise of human freedom through the capacity of human choice.

As we choose the Lord, as we grow in the life of the Holy Spirit, we begin to experience real happiness, the kind that does not disappear in struggle or become extinguished by difficulty. **His Image is restored in us, and we begin to grow into His Likeness.**

Such a robust moral vision calls us to growth in virtue. **The theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity are infused in us through Baptism.** The hinge or cardinal virtues are, in a proper sense, acquired through a lifestyle of living faith and participation in the sacramental life of the Church.

This vision of a dynamic Christian life also involves the development of what was called habitus in Latin, from which we derive the word habit. Let's call them **habits of holiness. They are powers to act with excellence that are formed within**

the Christian believer through our cooperation with grace.

The Holy Spirit bestows upon us the spiritual gifts and empowers us to enter into a lifestyle of conversion where we can cultivate the fruits of the Spirit, “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” (Gal. 5:22)

There is a call to happiness planted within every human person as a seed. Beatitude or happiness finds its perfect expression in the teaching of Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. It was lived and demonstrated in His Sacred humanity, which is a model for all human beings.

It is meant to be replicated in the life of each man and women who is baptized into His Church and learns to clothe themselves in virtue and live in beatitude, beginning now.