

Inquiry Session: Holiness

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA

Reflect on Your Experience

While it may be true that we often do only what we must do in order to get by, it is rare that we purposely strive to fail or to do our worst. And there are many instances in life—situations, projects, events—where we strive to shine, to do the absolute best that we can.

For Reflection . . .

What drives you to be or to achieve your best?

Hear the Good News About Holiness

Jesus encouraged his disciples to be examples of goodness and holiness. He also frequently challenged the religious hypocrisy of his day. His encouragement and challenge reverberates in our own day. Everyone is called to grow in holiness.

In some ways growing in holiness is similar to growing in maturity. We can't arrive at either overnight. We grow by fits and starts, and by learning from our mistakes. Both are a lifelong process. We have the good example of the saints, the assistance of the Church and her sacraments, and the grace of the Holy Spirit to guide us toward holiness.

The wholeness and fullness implied by the word *holiness* suggests that this state of being is not arrived at quickly or without cost. Growth in holiness is not relegated to one area of life but permeates every part of who we are and what we do. Growth in holiness can occur at various moments, places, and events: at the kitchen sink, in the marketplace, in marriage, in the single life, in spectacular ways, or in quiet, unobtrusive, and hidden ways.

Read the Word of God

Leviticus 11:44-45

(Our holiness stems from God.)

1 Peter 1:13-16

(We are called to holiness.)

Luke 6:27-36

(Be merciful as God is merciful.)

Respond Through Action

Two specific practices that help inform our understanding of holiness and help us grow on our journey toward holiness each day are an examination of conscience and spiritual direction.

For Reflection . . .

How often do you stop and evaluate your thoughts and behaviors (daily, weekly, never)? What keeps you from frequent self-examination? How open are you to the idea of having a spiritual director—someone who can help you look at the direction of your life? Why?

Witness to the Gospel

SAINT BENEDICT

480 – 550

Founder of Western monasticism, Benedict established a community of men and published his Rule, which promoted the organization and direction of living the Gospel life in community. The Rule guided the abbot and the monks to divide their time into two great pursuits: prayer and work. Benedict's monasteries came at just the right time in Western history. The Roman Empire had fallen to barbarians, civilization had "dimmed," and the monasteries— islands of peace and security in a more and more chaotic society—helped preserve knowledge in the Middle Ages. Saint Benedict's feast day is celebrated on July 11.