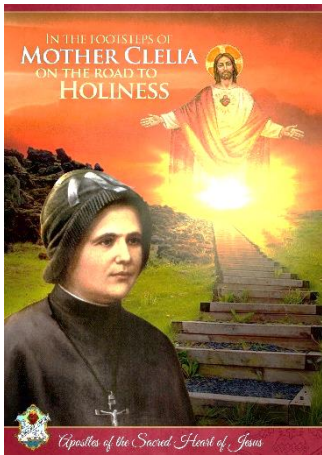




GFASC Reflection 1 –HOLINESS



Holiness is for everyone, even for you!

To be holy does not require being a bishop, a priest or a religious. We are frequently tempted to think that holiness is only for those who can withdraw from ordinary affairs to spend much time in prayer. That is not the case. 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.

Are you called to the consecrated life? Be holy by living out your commitment with joy. Are you married? Be holy by loving and caring for your husband or wife, as Christ does for the Church. Do you work for a living? Be holy by laboring with integrity and skill in the service of your brothers and sisters. Are you a parent or grandparent? Be holy by patiently teaching the little ones how to follow Jesus. Are you in a position of authority? Be holy by working for the common good and renouncing personal gain.

Let the grace of your baptism bear fruit in a path of holiness. 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 (cf. *Gal* 5:22-23). When you feel the temptation to dwell on your own weakness, raise your eyes to Christ crucified and say: “Lord, I am a poor sinner, but you can work the miracle of making me a little bit better”. In the Church, holy yet made up of sinners, you will find everything you need to grow towards holiness. The Lord has bestowed on the Church the gifts of scripture, the sacraments, holy places, living communities, the witness of the saints and a

multifaceted beauty that proceeds from God's love, "like a bride bedecked with jewels" (*Is* 61:10).

This holiness to which the Lord calls you will grow through small gestures. Here is an example: a woman goes shopping, she meets a neighbor and they begin to speak, and the gossip starts. But she says in her heart: "No, I will not speak badly of anyone". This is a step forward in holiness. Later, at home, one of her children wants to talk to her about his hopes and dreams, and even though she is tired, she sits down and listens with patience and love. That is another sacrifice that brings holiness. Later she experiences some anxiety, but recalling the love of the Virgin Mary, she takes her rosary and prays with faith. Yet another path of holiness. Later still, she goes out onto the street, encounters a poor person and stops to say a kind word to him. One more step.

(Pope Francis Apostolic Exhortation "Gaudete et exsultate" 14 - 16)

Genesis 18: 1-10 – Abraham's act of welcoming (a sign of holiness)



The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oak of Mamre, as he sat in the entrance of his tent, while the day was growing hot. Looking up, he saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to greet them; and bowing to the ground, he said: "Sir, if it please you, do not go on past your servant. Let some water be brought, that you may bathe your feet, and then rest under the tree. Now that you have come to your servant, let me bring you a little food, that you may refresh yourselves; and afterward you may go on your way." "Very well," they replied, "do as you have said." Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quick, three measures of bran flour! Knead it and make bread." He ran to the herd, picked out a tender, choice calf, and gave it to a servant, who quickly prepared it. Then he got some curds and milk, as well as the calf that

had been prepared, and set these before them, waiting on them under the tree while they ate.

“Where is your wife Sarah?” they asked him. “There in the tent,” he replied. One of them said, “I will return to you about this time next year, and Sarah will then have a son.” Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent, just behind him.

Mother Clelia and her journey of holiness

Mother Clelia was conscious of the presence of God in every person. Therefore, she tried to assume an attitude that was as close as possible to that of Jesus himself.

Mother Clelia taught the importance of mutual respect and love both with her words and her example. She wanted the spirit of charity to reign in her Congregation and she never tired of instilling it in young sisters and in all those she met.

Mother Clelia lived charity heroically. The highest expression of her charity was forgiveness. During her life she received many offenses, even from her own sisters. She always responded with charity, patience, and forgiveness. Thus, she not only imitated her Savior but also identified herself with the Heart of Jesus, betrayed and pierced, and she participated in His act of Redemption. Like Jesus, Mother Clelia poured the oil of charity on the offenses she received, and then transformed the wounds in the fountain of love that she poured out on all those who had made her suffer.

“If I loved God the way He wants me to, I would know how to master my passions, and my soul would be at peace because Jesus makes me see the will of God in all that happens. Then, isn’t it useless and ridiculous to get angry at circumstances? If I loved my neighbor a little more sincerely, that love would make me flexible and strong enough to bear the defects of others and be indulgent in forgiving them; with this virtue I would not let myself be overcome by anger. If I had true charity, I would not be suspicious. God himself forbids me to judge my

neighbor harshly, so as not to be judged by Him with the same severity with which I allow myself to judge others.” (Diary p. 222)

PLEDGE

When you welcome Life, however it might come to you, you are welcoming God and His blessing. God is hidden in the life that knocks on your door with something new.

- Have you thought that holiness is for you?
- What journey would you like to make? From where would you like to begin?

PRAYER of Mother Clelia – *I want to become a saint*

I will have to exercise extreme charity toward my neighbor, love him, bear with him, and not complain when he may be unjust toward me, but nevertheless I want to become a saint. Whatever I must do, I want to do as though God were present, watching me, and smiling at my efforts. ...

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I trust and hope in You!

