



The Holy See

**LETTER OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS
FOR THE REMEMBRANCE IN THE PARTICULAR CHURCHES
OF THEIR OWN SAINTS, BLESSEDS, VENERABLES AND SERVANTS OF GOD**

With the Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate*, I wished to repropose to the faithful disciples of Christ of the contemporary world the universal calling to holiness. It is at the centre of the teaching of *Vatican Council II*, which recalled that “all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity” (*Lumen Gentium*, 40). Thus, we are all called to welcome God’s love which “has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit” (*Rm* 5:5). Indeed, holiness, rather than being the fruit of human effort, is making space for the action of God.

Everyone can recognize in many people they meet along the way witnesses of the Christian virtues, in particular faith, hope and charity: couples who have faithfully lived their love, opening themselves to life; men and women who, in their various occupations, have supported their families and cooperated in spreading the Kingdom of God; adolescents and young people who have followed Jesus with enthusiasm; pastors who, through their ministry, have poured out the gifts of grace on God’s holy people; men and women religious who, by living the counsels of the Gospel, have been a living image of Christ the Bridegroom. We cannot forget the poor, the sick, the suffering who in their weakness have found support in the divine Master. It is about that “everyday” holiness “next door”, in which the Church scattered throughout the world has always been rich.

We are called to allow ourselves to be inspired by these models of holiness, among whom stand out first of all the martyrs who shed their blood for Christ and those who have been beatified and canonized for being examples of Christian life and our intercessors. We then think of the Venerables, men and women whose heroic exercise of virtue has been recognized, of those who in singular circumstances have made of their lives an offering of love to the Lord and to their brothers and sisters, as well as the Servants of God whose Causes for beatification and canonization are underway. These processes show how much the witness of holiness is also

present in our time in which the great witnesses to the faith shine like stars (cf. *Phil 2:15*), who have marked the experience of the particular Churches and, at the same time, have been fruitful throughout history. They are all our friends, companions on the road, who help us realize our baptismal vocation to the full and show us the most beautiful face of the Church, which is holy and the mother of the Saints.

During the course of the liturgical year, the Church publicly honours the Saints and Blesseds, on pre-established dates and in predetermined ways. However, it seems important to me that all particular Churches commemorate the Saints and Blesseds on a single date, as well as the Venerables and Servants of God of their respective territories. It is not a matter of inserting a new memorial into the liturgical calendar, but of promoting with appropriate initiatives outside the liturgy, or of recalling within it, for example in the homily or at another time deemed appropriate, those figures who have characterized the local Christian path and spirituality. Therefore, I urge the particular Churches, starting from the coming Jubilee of 2025, to remember and honour these figures of holiness, every year on 9 November, the Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica.

This will enable the individual diocesan Communities to rediscover or perpetuate the memory of extraordinary disciples of Christ who have left a living mark of the presence of the Risen Lord and who are still sure guides today in the common path towards God, protecting us and supporting us. To this end, pastoral directions and guidelines will eventually be drawn up and proposed to the Episcopal Conferences.

May the Saints, in whom the wonders of divine manifold grace shine forth, urge us to a more intimate communion with God and inspire us to sing the praises of the Most High with them.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 9 November, Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica.

FRANCIS

Holy See Press Office Bulletin, 16 November 2024