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FROM THE DESK OF FATHER JONATHAN

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This past Monday, the Feast of the Annunciation, Pope Francis published an "Apostolic Exhortation", that is, a pastoral letter from the pope to all Catholics and to all people of good will. The letter is titled "Rejoice and be Glad" and it treats the topic of "holiness". The Holy Father uses the letter to remind us that all of us are called to be holy, not just those rare cases of holy men and women who are canonized by the church.

Do you remember when Mother Teresa was asked what she thought about people calling her a "living saint"? She responded that it didn't bother her because all of us, yes, all of us, are called to be saints.

Below are two paragraphs from the Apostolic Exhortation that I found particularly inspiring.

### ***THE SAINTS "NEXT DOOR"***

*6. Nor need we think only of those already beatified and canonized. The Holy Spirit bestows holiness in abundance among God's holy and faithful people, for "it has pleased God to make men and women holy and to save them, not as individuals without any bond between them, but rather as a people who might acknowledge him in truth and serve him in holiness".<sup>[3]</sup> In salvation history, the Lord saved one people. We are never completely ourselves unless we belong to a people. That is why no one is saved alone, as an isolated individual. Rather, God draws us to himself, taking into account the complex fabric of interpersonal relationships present in a human community. God wanted to enter into the life and history of a people.*

*7. I like to contemplate the holiness present in the patience of God's people: in those parents who raise their children with immense love, in those men and women who work hard to support their families, in the sick, in elderly religious who never lose their smile. In their daily perseverance I see the holiness of the Church militant. Very often it is a holiness found in our next-door neighbours, those who, living in our midst, reflect God's presence. We might call them "the middle class of holiness".<sup>[4]</sup>*

The Holy Father has a way of using simple language to remind us of deep truths. May ever statue and every sacred image in our beautiful church be a reminder to us that we are called to be "the saints next door", that all of us are called to be holy.

*God bless, Fr. Jonathan*