

The famous French writer Leon Bloy eloquently said, “The only real sadness, the only real failure, the only great tragedy in life, is not to become a saint.” Brothers and sisters, anyone who reads the news can tell that the world is *so hungry* for saints—the world is *yearning* for *heroic, authentic* disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ whose lives radiate holiness! The world is *so desperate* for courageous champions of truth, goodness, beauty, and reason—humble instruments of peace, love, and mercy. In its suffering and brokenness, our fallen world is frantically crying out for saints because it’s crying for *Christ our Savior*, whom the saints joyfully make present with their very lives!

*All of us*, regardless of our vocation and state in life, are called *personally* by our Lord Jesus to become saints—to bear the great fruit of holiness. This is what the Second Vatican Council proclaimed as “The Universal Call to Holiness.” Our Lord Jesus calls each of us as sinners *by name* to become saints. And so our Lord does *indeed* want a Church that is *full of saints*—full of faithful witnesses who radiate holiness!

Now we shouldn’t fall into the trap of thinking that the saints were these totally perfect people who never sinned, never suffered, and never

struggled in their lives. Nothing could be more false! In fact, in many cases the saints suffered and struggled more than we can imagine! The saints knew they were sinners who were in great need of the saving grace and mercy of Christ. In fact, St. Josemaria Escriva famously defined a saint as a “sinner who keeps on trying.” In other words a person who’s actively striving for holiness and is willing to fight against sin and evil in their own life is already manifesting sanctity.

Now what is “holiness”? “Holiness” may simply be defined as “enjoying an intimate relationship with Christ that is manifested by a life of love and virtue.” Holiness is being so intimately united with Christ that we *allow Him to live and to love through us*, thereby making *Him* present in the world through our very lives. To make Christ Himself present in this world through holiness is the greatest fruit we could ever bear as His disciples.

Brothers and sisters, one of the most fundamental truths about God is that He never commands us to do the impossible! Rather, out of His infinite goodness and love, He always gives us the grace to do what He asks of us. Therefore, if we were to wrongfully judge that holiness was

impossible given our own sinfulness and weak nature, then we would be attacking God Himself and declaring that His saving grace, poured out to us through Christ and His Church, is somehow not enough! And we know that's not true because God himself lovingly reassures us that "My grace is sufficient for you."

Simply put, we cannot become saints and live a vibrant life of holiness without staying close to our Lord Jesus through prayer and the sacraments, most especially the Holy Eucharist, which is the most important sacrament because it *is our Lord Jesus Christ Himself: Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity!* And if the Eucharist is indeed Christ Himself, then the Eucharist is Holiness incarnate.

Since the Most Holy Eucharist is Christ Himself, then this most sublime Sacrament of Charity is truly the "food of holiness." Just as Christ said, "Without me you can do nothing," then logically, without the Eucharist, holiness would indeed be impossible. Just as the physical body cannot survive without food and water, so also the soul cannot survive without the grace-filled nourishment of the Eucharist.

Therefore, in order to become holy—in order to become saints—we

should make prayer and adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, as well as frequent reception of the Holy Eucharist, a top priority in our lives since the Eucharist *is Jesus Himself*, our victorious Redeemer Who is the Source of all grace and Heavenly blessing.

The saints understood this truth deeply. Their lives were centered on our Eucharistic Lord. Ordinary men and women were able to do extraordinary things for Christ throughout the centuries because of their love for Him in the Eucharist! The saints were able to change the course of history and transform nations, governments, and cultures because of the grace that flowed into their hearts from the Eucharist! The Eucharist is and always has been the “sustenance of the saints”!

St. Augustine beautifully said that, “every saint has a past and every sinner has a future.” In saying this, St. Augustine is capturing the purpose of our Catholic faith, which is transformation—transformation in Christ. Our merciful Savior seeks to transform us by His grace so that we can become saints and truly share in His holiness. Our Savior seeks to transform us by giving us Himself in the Most Holy Eucharist. The 5th century Pope, St. Leo the Great, powerfully stated, “Our sharing in

the Body and Blood of Christ has no other purpose than to transform us into that which we receive.”

So as we worship and receive our Lord Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Eucharist, may He transform us into heroic saints whose lives radiate holiness—whose lives make Him present in the world today. And as our Savior continues to transform us, may we always depend on His grace and have the divine courage and missionary zeal to transform our world and local community into a place where faith, hope, and love reign victorious.