

PASTORAL ADDRESS
2018 SYNOD

DIOCESE OF THE WEST



“HOLINESS OF LIFE IN THE CHURCH OF GOD”

Delivered by

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At the

Sixth Annual Synod
The Missionary Diocese of CANA West

June 7-9, 2018
El Paso, Texas

Article XII, Of Good Works

Albeit that Good Works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's Judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith; insomuch that by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit.

PREAMBLE

“Deceive not yourselves therefore, thinking that you have faith in God, or that you love God, or do trust in Him, or do fear Him, when you live in sin; for then your ungodly and sinful life declareth the contrary, whatsoever you say or think ... Thy deeds and works must be an open testimonial of thy faith; otherwise thy faith, being without good works, is but the devil’s faith, the faith of the wicked, a fantasy of faith, and not a true Christian faith. Therefore, as you profess the name of Christ, good Christian people, let no such fantasy and imagination of faith at any time beguile you; be sure of your faith: try it (test it) by your living.” Archbishop Thomas Cranmer

Let us pray.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who by the Holy Spirit presided in the Council of the blessed Apostles, and has promised, through your Son Jesus Christ, to be with your Church to the end of the world; we beseech you to be with the Council of your Church assembled here in your Name and Presence. Save us from all error, ignorance, pride, and prejudice; and of your great mercy vouchsafe, we beseech You, so to direct, sanctify, and govern us in our work, by the mighty power of the Holy Ghost, so that the comforting Gospel of Christ may be truly preached, truly received, and truly followed, in all places, to the breaking down of the kingdom of sin, Satan, and death; till all of Your dispersed sheep, being gathered into one fold, shall become partakers of everlasting life; through the merits and death of Your Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, *even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.* In love He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, Who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory.” Ephesians 1:2-14

The Lord has been gracious to us. He has blessed us with “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” It is only by His grace and mercy that we are Christians, and able to gather together for this Sixth Annual Synod of the Missionary Diocese of CANA West. To Him be the glory forever! *Amen.*

My sincere gratitude goes to the Primate of the Church of Nigeria, The Most Rev'd Dr. Nicholas Dikeriehi Okoh, and the Primate of the Anglican Church in North America, The Most Rev'd Dr. Foley Beach, for their support, prayers, and encouragement. I am grateful to everyone who has made this Synod a success. I commend my Diocesan Staff and Officers (and especially my Chancellor, Mr. Christopher Milner) for their selfless service. Special thanks go to my family for their patience with me. I also want to express my appreciation to the parishes that have been consistent in their financial support for the Diocese. You are indeed true partners in the Gospel (Philippians 1:3-11).

Here is Paul expressing his joy and affection for the believers in Philippi for their support of him. I refer to this text because that is the way I feel about these churches:

“I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel. For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.” Philippians 1:3-11

In Chapter 4, beginning with the 14th verse, he explains the nature of their support and partnership: “Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.” Philippians 4:14-20

I believe that in addition to proclaiming and defending the Apostolic Gospel, this is part of what it means to be in Apostolic Succession – following the Apostolic pattern of supporting and partnering with the Bishop and the Diocese, and the Bishop expressing gratitude for said support and partnership. Once again, thank you for sharing with me in the ministry of the Gospel through proclamation of the Gospel, defense of the Gospel, prayers for me and for our Diocese, and in giving of your finances for our shared Kingdom work. May the Lord reward you richly in Jesus’s name! *Amen.*

It is my pleasure to welcome our guest speaker, Rev’d Daniel Adkinson, and his wife, Holly. Today is their wedding anniversary. On behalf of the Diocese, I congratulate them both, praying that the Lord will bless their relationship with increasing measure. Rev’d Daniel Adkinson will speak to us on the topic of Church planting. He will be giving three talks: 1) how to recruit people and form a launch team; 2) how to develop ministries other than worship (*i.e.*, small groups, nursery, children, etc.) in a church planting context, and 3) the importance of self/family care in a church-planting context. Rev’d Adkinson is no mere theoretician – he is an actual church planter, and I believe we have much to learn from him. It is also my pleasure to welcome our visitors, supporters, and friends, especially The Most Rev’d Dr. Mark Seitz, the Roman Catholic Bishop of El Paso, Texas, the Honorable Donald R. Margo, Mayor of the City of El Paso, Texas, and representatives from the El Paso, Texas, office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Your presence helps us to stand strong in Christ as we carry out the ministry of God’s Gospel.

I am delighted to welcome all the Clergy and Laity of the Diocese to this our Sixth Annual Diocesan Synod. Thank you for your sacrifice and faithfulness.

The State of these United States – Our Christian Response

We live in a wonderful country – a country that has been extraordinarily blessed by God. For that, we must give thanks to God and to those who continue to make this possible, and especially our military, law enforcement, and first responder families.

Unfortunately, we have come to the point in this country where God is no longer at the center of our common life. The Christian values that once held us together have become conversation stoppers subject to frequent ridicule in the public square. The consequences of this are all too obvious – we see moral decadence at every level of government and social life, abortion on demand, polarizing political infighting, racism, tribalism, inability to communicate across political and ideological divides, criminal activity, use of superficially religious and evangelical language devoid of moral integrity and spiritual substance, and lack of compassion and CHRISTIAN hospitality to strangers and the helpless.

What should we do as Christians in light of this discouraging reality? As Christians, we are called to be salt and light. As salt, we preserve the moral life of our country by condemning evil and living as examples of godliness. As light, we spread the Gospel of grace, telling everyone that Jesus Christ is our ONLY Savior and Lord; we proclaim the Word of God without fear or partisanship; and we shine like stars in our dark world as we live out the graciousness of the Gospel in the contexts of personal holiness, social holiness, and hospitality toward the stranger, the disenfranchised, and the most vulnerable. We must protect life, and especially the life of the unborn. We must secure our borders, but not at the expense of Christian charity and the protection of the most vulnerable and most needy. We are first called to be Christians – not Republicans, Democrats, or Libertarians.

As Christians, I ask you to respect and defend orphans, widows, immigrants, and the victimized. As Christians, I implore you to protect our borders from criminals, but not from the needy – those men, women, and helpless children who, like us, were created in God’s image. We must not build walls to protect ourselves from those in desperate need of our help. Most of us were immigrants who, at some point in our families’ histories, needed help and protection, and we received it! Don’t forget that! Our skin color, hair, and genetic markers are proof that we did! And finally, I exhort you to pray fervently and strive diligently for the godliness and well-being of these United States of America.

I also implore you to pray for the Dominion of Canada, for the Federal Republic of Nigeria, for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and for Cameroon, that God would restrain the forces of evil, and both restore and uphold His righteousness in these countries.

New Clergy and Parishes

Today we officially welcome our new clergy and congregations:

1. Rev’d Michael DeShane Hinton and his parish, Christ Anglican Church, Lubbock, Texas;
2. Rev’d Canon Dr. Godson Egbujor and his parish, Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Bronx, New York;
3. Rev’d Dr. Earnest Oramasionwu and Venerable Ndukaku Okereke and their parish, All Saints Anglican Church, Dallas/Rowlett, Texas;
4. Rev’d Dr. Obidi Edward Onyekachukwu and his parish, All Saints Anglican Church Queens, New York;

5. Rev'd Michael Smith, new Rector of St. Peter's Anglican Church, Cheyenne, Wyoming;
6. Venerable Okwunna Nwogu, planting a new church, St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Long Island, New York;
7. Rev'd Eze Akoma and his parish, St. John's Anglican Church, Houston, Texas;
8. Sir Dr. Izu Nwachukwu and Sir Samuel Ihekwoaba (Catechist) and their parish, Savior Anglican Church, Calgary, Alberta, Canada;
9. Valerie Eke-Eronini, Amaka Ajaero, and their parish, Christ the King, Las Vegas, Nevada, supervised by Ven. Chukwuma Ubadinobi;
10. St. John's Bay Area, California, supervised by Venerable Aaron Ajoku; and
11. Rev'd Canon Cyprian O. Okere, Rev'd Bart Horner, and their parish, St. George's Anglican Chapel, Lawton, Oklahoma.

Future Church Plants

1. St. Benedict Anglican Church, San Antonio, Texas, by Rev'd Barry Kowald (under the auspices of All Saints Anglican Church, San Antonio); and
2. St. Anthony Anglican Church, San Antonio, Texas, by Rev'd Marcus Tinajero (under the auspices of All Saints Anglican Church, San Antonio, as a Spanish speaking congregation).

It is my hope and prayer that we will be able to plant more Spanish-speaking congregations, especially in cities with a high percentage of Spanish-speaking population. Trinity at the Marketplace in Albuquerque, New Mexico, has planted Ascension Anglican Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico, led by Rev'd Rene Palacios. And we are currently praying for the Lord's provision to establish a Spanish worship service here at the Cathedral Church of St. Francis in El Paso, Texas.

Diocesan Bishop's Customary

By the grace of God, I have been able to author our first Diocesan Bishop's Customary. The Customary is binding on all Clergy and congregations of the Diocese, except for a few of its provisions which apply to Nigerian parishes that

engage in Churching of Women, Thanksgiving gifts, Women's Guild, and Mother's Union. While these ministries are not required for non-Nigerian parishes, all parishes are free to practice them. The rest of the Customary's provisions apply to all Diocesan parishes, so I ask that you read them carefully and ask for guidance in any area you do not understand. As stated in the Customary's introductory letter, the Customary is subject to future revision, and if and when it is revised, you will be notified promptly via e-mail of that fact. It is your responsibility to read and share with your congregations all Diocesan communications, whether e-mailed to you or posted on the Diocesan website (including, but not limited to, all Diocesan Policies, Procedures, Protocols, Constitution & Canons, and the Bishop's Customary). I am tremendously grateful to my Chancellor, Mr. Christopher Milner, for his editing and counsel in the process of assembling this document.

Diocesan Mission & Priorities

Our diocese is comprised of forty-seven (47) parishes in the U.S. States of Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, Tennessee, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. We also have parishes in the Canadian provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario. The largest concentration of Diocesan parishes is found in the State of Texas.

Currently, we have thirteen Regional Archdeacons and Archdeaconries. They are as follows:

Ven. Aaron Ajoku – Northern California;
Rev'd Canon Chinedu Ugwuegbu – Southern California;
Ven. Don Armstrong – Colorado;
Ven. Celestine Ironna – Atlanta, Georgia;
Ven. Dr. Chris Ozodi – Midwest;
Ven. Michael Kelshaw – New Mexico;
Ven. Chukwuma Ubadinobi – Northeast;
Ven. Dr. Daniel Patrick Francis Rice – Northwest;
Ven. Goodluck Elei – Austin, Texas;
Ven. Barry Montgomery – Dallas, Texas;
Ven. Dr. Godson Paul-Nzeh – Houston, Texas;
Ven. Dr. Cleo Kukeya – San Antonio, Texas; and
Rev'd Canon Dr. Barnabas Emenogu – Canada.

Please pray for them to be missional, wise, and faithful to the Gospel in their leadership capacities.

This year I have been emphasizing the need to remain focused on our Diocesan Mission and priorities, which are:

- 1) Making and maturing disciples – here is our Mission Statement:

“We are a fellowship of Christian believers whose mission is to make disciples of all nations by preaching the Biblical Gospel, teaching God’s Word faithfully, and supporting one another in this mission and ministry of the Church to the glory of God alone.”

- 2) Strengthening marriages and families;
- 3) Ministering to Youth and Young Adults at the parish, Archdeaconry, and Diocesan levels;
- 4) Encouraging and enabling Clergy and Lay leadership education, professional development, character formation, accountability, and discipline; and
- 5) Committing to unity and partnership in our Gospel ministry via monthly financial giving and in godly brotherly love that rejects all forms of racism and tribalism in the Diocese. Diocesan parishes will no longer be permitted to retain or use tribal names, as such are contrary to the multicultural and multiethnic nature of the Great Commission given by our Lord Jesus Christ, and contrary to the policy of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion).

I again ask you to prayerfully and practically commit yourselves to these priorities: Mission (making disciples), Marriage, Youth, Young Adults, Clergy and Lay leadership development, and practical partnership in ministry in a manner that is worthy of the Gospel. Several of you are already working hard at these areas in your respective parishes. I am pleased that four of our parishes have changed their previous tribal church names to more inclusive church names, and I commend their humility and godliness in following my direction. These actions were necessary to conform with and strengthen the missionary commitment of our Diocese and the Christian Gospel. I am very grateful for what they have done.

And once again, I commend you all for your perseverance and sacrifice in the work of the Gospel. You make my service as your bishop a joyful endeavor. May the Lord make your ministries prosperous and grant you good success for His name’s sake.
Amen.

HOLINESS OF LIFE IN THE CHURCH OF GOD

A. Introduction

“There was a time when all Christians laid great emphasis on God’s call to holiness. But how different it is today! To listen to our sermons and to read the books we write, and then to watch the zany, worldly, quarrelsome way we behave, you would never imagine that once the highway of holiness was clearly marked out for Bible-believers.” Dr. J. I. Packer

At our Synod last year, I spoke on the subject of the absolute necessity of grace in salvation – that is, we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone to the glory of God alone. I reminded you that when, by the effectual work of God’s grace we believe the Gospel, we are saved from God’s eternal wrath in hell, rescued from the powers of sin and death, and delivered from the kingdom and oppression of Satan. In addition, we are given the gifts of righteousness, eternal life, the Holy Spirit, and what Dr. Packer calls the greatest gift of redemption – adoption into the family of God, making us sons and daughters of the living God forever! All of these blessings are guaranteed to us on the basis of God’s grace alone and received by faith alone, apart from works of the Law. Theologians refer to these things as the *indicatives* of the Gospel.

This year, I want to speak to you concerning what I believe to be the primary *imperative* of the Gospel, that is, God’s call on us (His children) to live lives of holiness in the Church and in the world. It is important to address this subject in our contemporary world and Church because of the glaring lack of holiness in the Church today among Clergy and Laity. The church is riddled with sin ranging from slander, hypocrisy, alcohol abuse, power-mongering, position-seeking, pornography, and sexual immorality, to pride, lying, deceit, anger, clamor, unforgiving hearts, etc. This is unfortunate because in chapters 1 and 2 of the Book of Ephesians, Paul notes that God’s purpose of electing us in eternity and redeeming us in time includes *holiness of life and the practice of good works*. That’s what the Apostle Paul meant by walking “worthy of the Gospel” which we believe. The clergy I have disciplined were not disciplined for failure to believe the Gospel – all of them did. They were disciplined because they did not follow the Bible’s command in Ephesians 4:1ff and Philippians 2:27-29 to “walk worthy of the Gospel” that they claimed to believe. You can believe the Gospel and yet disqualify yourself for ministry and dishonor God because of your ungodly life. The saddest reality in our postmodern church is that many people think “unholiness” is the new normal because our God is a gracious God. Ancillary to this abuse of God’s grace and hospitality and the nonchalant attitude toward holiness of life is the abysmal lack of teaching and preaching concerning our need to be holy before God. You find this posture in Liberal congregations, Prosperity-centered

congregations, as well as in some Reformed congregations. Liberal preachers don't want to preach holiness because it is too restrictive of their rights and options for sinful expression in their lives. Prosperity and Dominion preachers are self-centered, indulgent, and far too greedy for money, spiritual authority, and personal happiness to consider pleasing God a matter of importance. We now have a perverted theology of personal glory, realized eschatology, and cross-less triumphalism taking center stage and running unchecked in the Church. In some places today church planters consider themselves *heroes and hero-makers!* A recent church planting conference held in Florida in February of this year (2018) was dubbed "Hero-maker," with the subtitle "Move from Hero to Hero-maker." One priest reacted with revulsion, "I can see value in church-planting lessons but the name 'hero-makers' and the slogan 'moving from hero to hero-making' pretty much encapsulates the American theology of glory. Pastors (whether we plant churches or not) aren't 'heroes' or 'hero-makers' or 'world-changers' or 'world-changer-makers,' or anything of the sort. We are slaves – and dying slaves at that. Christ is the One who does everything. Whatever change or transformation takes place as the result of our ministry is entirely due to His work, His word, and, therefore, His is the glory. Jesus was crucified and then rose again. He gives His servant a cross, not a cape." Some Reformed Clergy and preachers don't want to preach holiness (and their congregations don't want to hear it) because they think that to preach obedience and holiness is preaching "works-righteousness." These are blatant denials of apostolic teaching and the Catholic tradition of the historic church. This new phenomenon is most unfortunate because all these theological aberrations of the modern church could be avoided if Christians would only heed Holy Scripture, 2000 years of Christian tradition, and more than 500 years of Reformed teaching. You couldn't read the apostolic writers of the first century like St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John, or Church fathers like St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, or Continental Reformers like John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli, or Anglican Reformers like Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, or Anglican Divines like George Herbert and Jeremy Taylor, or even contemporary Reformed theologians like Dr. R.C. Sproul, Dr. J.I. Packer, Dr. John Stott, Dr. Sinclair Ferguson, or several others who have written books on holiness in response to the penchant of Christians towards Antinomianism, and come away with the idea that calling the Church to holy living is unscriptural, unnecessary, and/or a surrender to legalistic works-righteousness.

Dr. John Stott has noted that, "Some critics always thought this (that believers remain passive and inert in salvation) and supposed that Paul's doctrine of salvation by grace alone actually encourages us to continue in sin. They are entirely mistaken. Good works are indispensable to salvation – not as its ground or means, however, but as its consequence and evidence." Even a cursory reading of Romans chapters 6, 8, and 12 will bear testimony to John Stott's clarity and correct stance on this position. Several

centuries earlier the Reformer, John Calvin, made a similar point, “It is faith alone that justifies, but the faith that justifies can never be alone. I acknowledge that Jesus Christ not only justifies us by covering all our faults and sins but also sanctifies us by His Spirit, so that the two things – the free forgiveness of sins and reformation to a holy life – cannot be dissevered and separated from each other.”

Dr. J.I. Packer in his book, Rediscovering Holiness, lamented that “There was a time when all Christians laid great emphasis on God’s call to holiness. But how different it is today! To listen to our sermons and to read the books we write, and then to watch the zany, worldly, quarrelsome way we behave, you would never imagine that once the highway of holiness was clearly marked out for Bible-believers.”

Here is the exhortation of the Apostle Paul to first-century Christians who were tempted to abuse God’s grace: “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works. Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.” Titus 2:11-15 (*cf.* Colossians 3:1-17)

Jude raised an alarm regarding this problem as well: “Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ ... These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.

It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage. But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, ‘In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.’ It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the

Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.” Jude 1: 14-21

Despite clear Biblical teaching that we are elected and called by God to holy living, antinomianism continues to plague the Church and cripple our effectiveness in ministry and Mission. Unfortunately, many evangelical and conservative Christians seem to be fine with it. This phenomenon is not new at all.

In his book, Articles in the Fatherland, 19th century Danish Philosopher Soren Kierkegaard complained bitterly about the rapidly growing worldly version of Christianity that had become popular and quite acceptable in his time. He said, “Verily there is that which is more contrary to Christianity, and to the very nature of Christianity, than any heresy, any schism, more contrary than all heresies and schisms combined, and that is to play Christianity.” What did Kierkegaard mean by the expression “to play Christianity”? Here is his answer, “In ‘Christendom’ we are all Christians. In this meaningless sense they have got all men made into Christians, and got everything Christian – and then (under the name of Christianity) we live a life of paganism. They have not ventured defiantly, openly, to revolt against Christianity; no, hypocritically and knavishly they have done away with it by falsifying the definition of what it is to be a Christian. It is of this I say that it is playing Christianity, taking God for a fool.” This was what Paul meant when he complained of certain Christians “having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people ...” (2 Timothy 3:5). Concerning such persons Paul also noted, “They profess to know God, but they deny Him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work ...” (Titus 1:16). Their Christianity is an empty and unfruitful faith.

So, according to Kierkegaard, “to play Christianity” is to claim to be Christian and yet live like a pagan and a worldling. I wonder what he would say if he saw the flagrant and outrageous display of sin in the 21st century Church.

In summary, the Lord does not want us to play Christianity. Rather, He wants us to practice true Christianity. That is the Christianity that not only calls us to faith in Christ for forgiveness of sin, but also embraces transformation and holiness of life in Christ. We must live holy lives. And why?

B. Reasons for Holy Living

There are several reasons “why,” but let me begin with three reasons to live holy before God in the world.

1. God commands us (and expects us) to be holy.

If that is true – and it *is* true – then holiness is not an option for Christians. “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’” 1 Peter 1:14-16

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12:1-2

“The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.” 2 Timothy 2:18-19

“Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.” 2 Corinthians 7:1

In Ephesians 2:10, Paul wrote: “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. He created us, redeemed us and is at work us in order for us to do the good works of holy living.”

“What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:1-4

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you

once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.” Romans 6:12-19

“Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God.”

1 Thessalonians 4:1-5

Many are confused about God’s will for them. Here it is: He wants and commands us to do good works and to be holy. As John Stott put it, “Jesus never concealed the fact that His religion included a demand as well as an offer. Indeed, the demand was as total as the offer was free. If He offered men His salvation, He also demanded their submission. He gave no encouragement whatever to thoughtless applicants for discipleship. He brought no pressure to bear on any inquirer. He sent irresponsible enthusiasts away empty.”

In an essay titled, “Called to Holiness: Holiness in Modern Church Teaching,” Arthur David Canales writes: “The call to holiness is not a new idea. The Book of Leviticus encourages the People of God to be holy: ‘Be holy, for I, the LORD, your God, am holy’ (Leviticus 19:2). In another ecclesial document – Ecclesia in America – Pope John Paul II addresses the fundamental and universal call to holiness for every baptized Christian. The Pope noted: ‘To be holy is to be like God and to glorify His name in the works which we accomplish in our lives (cf. Matthew 5:16). On the path of holiness, Jesus Christ is the point of reference and the model to be imitated: He is ‘the Holy One of God,’ and was recognized as such (cf. Mark 1:24). It is [Jesus] who teaches us that the heart of holiness is love, which leads even to giving our lives for others (cf. John 15:13). Therefore, to imitate the holiness of God, as it was made manifest in Jesus Christ His Son, ‘is nothing other than to extend in history His love, especially towards the poor, the sick, and the needy (cf. Luke 10:25).’” To become holy is to live as Jesus lived: for others, for the Church, and for God. It is Jesus the Christ who points the way to holiness.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) also exhorted Catholics to pursue the universal call to holiness. The fifth chapter of Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium, 1964) is entitled “The Call to Holiness.” The call to holiness as described in Church is not a simple suggestion nor is it merely ornamental, but it is in fact a constitutive element of living an authentic Catholic life. The document states, “Holiness of the Church is constantly shown forth in the fruits of grace which the

Spirit produces in the [lay] faithful ... it is quite clear that all Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love, and by this holiness a more human manner of life is fostered also in earthly society.” The document equates perfection with holiness, hence, Catholics are called to the way of perfection, which is modeled by Jesus of Nazareth who preached and practiced holiness. Whatever state of life or vocation a person is called to – married, chaste single, ordained, or religious life – the call to holiness is not an abstract “pie in the sky” mandate, but a reality that Catholics are called to strive toward, and when we stumble and fall, we are called to get up, dust ourselves off, and continue to embark upon our lifelong pilgrimage to perfection. Everyone, every day, is called to vigorously and righteously pursue holiness, as it is not the domain of an elect or cultic group, but is required of every person.

The U.S. Catholic Bishops’ document, *Economic Justice for All*, challenges Catholics to lead a life of holiness that not only is private but also reaches out and serves society. The document reads: “Holiness is not limited to the sanctuary or to moments of private prayer; it is a call to direct our whole heart and life toward God and according to God’s plan for this world. For the laity, holiness is achieved in the midst of the world, in family, in community, in friendships, in work, in leisure, in citizenship. Through their competency and by their activity, lay men and women have the vocation to bring the light of the Gospel to economic affairs, ‘so that the world may be filled with the Spirit of Christ and may more effectively attain its destiny in justice, in love, and in peace.’ Living everyday holiness takes on many forms: prophetic witness, giving to charities, serving at a soup kitchen, tutoring children, celebrating Sunday Eucharist, praying for others, even curbing waste and living frugally.”

2. Holiness or obedience to God is the evidence that we know and love Him.

“And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. Whoever says ‘I know Him’ but does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps His word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in Him; whoever says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked.” 1 John 2:3-6

“This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.” 1 John 1:5-7

“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not

know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like him, because we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure. Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that He appeared in order to take away sins, and in Him there is no sin. No one who abides in Him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen Him or known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as He is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother." 1 John 3:1-10

John Calvin noted, "Those who are justified by true faith prove their justification by obedience and good works, not by a bare and imaginary semblance of faith. In one word, he (James 2) is not discussing the mode of justification, but requiring that the justification of believers shall be operative. And as Paul contends that men are justified without the aid of works, so James will not allow any to be regarded as justified who are destitute of good works."

Scottish Reformed theologian John Murray stated: "Faith alone justifies but a justified person with faith alone would be a monstrosity which never exists in the kingdom of grace. Faith works itself out through love (Galatians 5:6). And faith without works is dead (James 2:17-20)."

According to Dr. R.C. Sproul, "The relationship of faith and good works is one that may be distinguished but never separated ... if good works do not follow from our profession of faith, it is a clear indication that we do not possess justifying faith. The Reformed formula is, 'We are justified by faith alone but not by a faith that is alone.' At issue, here is the question of genuine faith. True faith is never alone. It always manifests itself in works. Works that flow out of faith, however, are in no way the ground of our justification. They contribute nothing of merit before God. The only ground or basis of our justification is the merit of Christ. Nor is faith itself a meritorious work or the ground of our justification. Faith is a gift of God's grace, so it possesses no merit of its own. Like James, Luther opposed Antinomianism. Saving faith is not dead. It is a vital or living faith (*fides viva*). Live faith produces real works. If no works follow from our profession of faith, this proves that our faith is not alive, but is what Calvin called an 'imaginary semblance.'"

Obedience is the evidence of our love for Jesus. “Jesus answered him, ‘If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and We will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love Me does not keep My words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent Me.’”

John 14:22-24

Holiness, that is, obedience to God, is not an optional way of life for Christians or for superior Saints, and neither is it simply necessary because it bears witness to the reality of our salvation – it prepares us for the happiness of heaven. The fact is that if we do not desire holiness here out of love for Christ, how will we be able to enjoy a heaven that is perfect holiness? Kevin DeYoung warns that: “If ungodliness is your delight here on earth, what will please you in heaven, where all is clean and pure? You would not be happy there if you are not holy here. Or as Spurgeon put it, “Sooner could a fish live upon a tree than the wicked in Paradise.”

3. Holiness is necessary for effectiveness in Ministry.

The indomitable C. S. Lewis reminded the moribund establishment-driven Christian world that: “The Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons ... are simply a waste of time.”

That is true – and it is why at this Synod our focus is on planting and pastoring new churches. But we cannot plant and sustain new God-honoring churches if we do not honestly address the issues of holiness in our personal lives and in the church. We must come face-to-face with the sins of arrogance, racism, ethnic bigotry, sexual immorality, lying, deception, impenitence, gossip, power-mongering, and selfishness, among other vices in the Church. Otherwise, our ministry of discipleship and church planting will be in extreme jeopardy. The 19th century Anglican Bishop of Liverpool, Bishop J.C. Ryle, tells the story of a trader who was disillusioned by crafty Christians: “I cannot see the use of so much religion,” said the unbelieving trader; “I observe that some of my customers are always talking about the Gospel, and faith, and election, and the blessed promises and so forth; and yet these very people think nothing of cheating me of pence and half-pence, when they have an opportunity. Now, if religious persons can do such things, I do not see what good there is in religion.”

As Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones put it: “When the church is absolutely different from the world, she invariably attracts it. It is then that the world is made to listen to her message, though it may hate it at first.” You will ruin your church-planting initiatives by your lifestyle, no matter how much fervor and effort you manage to muster. Arrogance, lying, sexual sin, refusal to avoid things that have an appearance of evil, stealing, and dishonest, unreliable character will bring dishonor to God. Sin has

ruined many ministers and it will ruin your ministry if you don't pay attention to your words and conduct. Paul, writing to Timothy, gives this vital instruction, "Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers." 1 Timothy 4:16

Let me give you a word of exhortation to our Clergy, Catechists, and Lay ministers (which is all of you). Holiness of life is what confirms your claim to be a follower of Christ and is essential to fruitfulness in Christian ministry. Michael Taylor writes, "This is the sense of 1 Peter 2:12, which says 'keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.'" And Bishop J.C. Ryle expressed the importance of such holiness well when he wrote: "I believe that far more is done for Christ's kingdom by the holy living of believers than we are at all aware of. There is a reality about such living which makes men feel, and obliges them to think. It carries a weight and influence with it that nothing else can give. It makes religion beautiful, and draws men to consider it, like a lighthouse seen afar off ... Your life is an argument that none can escape ... I believe there is far more harm done by unholy and inconsistent Christians than we are aware of. Such men are among Satan's best allies. They pull down by their lives what ministers build with their lips. They cause the chariot wheels of the Gospel to drive heavily. They supply the children of this world with a never-ending excuse for remaining as they are ... Let us take heed lest the blood of souls should be required at our hands. From murder of souls by inconsistency and loose walking, good Lord, deliver us! Oh, for the sake of others, if for no other reason, let us strive to be holy!"

William Bates (1625-1699), writing about the Christian pastor said, "And as they must teach what they learn from the Gospel so they must live as they teach. If they are sensual and worldly, how can their prayers ascend with an acceptance to God, and descend with a blessing to the people? ... So if the tenor of their lives be not correspondent to the sermons, it will destroy the force of the most inflaming eloquence, and teach the doctrines of the greatest purity without efficacy." He compares evangelical pastors to "the luminaries of heaven, that by their light, heat, influences, are so beneficial to the lower world."

This view is also reflected by Derek Tidball in his commentary on Martin Bucer's perspective on pastoral ministry: "The aim of elders (by elders Bucer meant shepherd-teachers), who had taken over the pastoral ministry from the apostles, was to ensure the continuing discipleship of those within the church and to enable them to grow in holiness and to reach adulthood in Christ. This was to be done through supplying any lack they had in their understanding of life through teaching, warning, punishment (disciplinary action), comfort and pardon."

Similarly, Gregory of Nazanzius highlights the importance of priests being good moral examples to the church: “A man must himself be cleansed, before cleansing others: himself become wise, that he may make others wise; become light, and then give light: draw near to God, and so bring others near; be hallowed, then hallow them; be possessed of hands to lead others by the hand, of wisdom to give advice ... A priest, in order to rule, needs to be free from evil. But more than that, says Gregory, he must be eminent in goodness. He must live by a higher standard so that he can draw people by the influence of persuasion with gentleness, not by oppression and force.”

Gregory insists that a pastor “must carefully consider how necessary it is for him to maintain a life of rectitude. It is necessary, therefore, that he should be pure in thought, exemplary in conduct, discreet in keeping silence, profitable in speech, in sympathy a near neighbour to everyone, in contemplation exalted above all others, a humble companion to those who lead good lives, erect in his zeal for righteousness against the vices of sinners.” In other words, the conduct of a pastor should be above average in excellence of character, and in doing good.

The Church father, Basil, offered a list of virtues necessary to Christian leaders ‘guiding’ people who are ‘making their way toward God.’ He has to be a person with good character, bearing witness by his own deeds to his love for God, familiar with the Holy Scripture, recollected, free from avarice, good, quiet man, tranquil, pleasing to God, a lover of the poor, mild, forgiving, laboring hard for the spiritual growth of disciples, without vainglory or arrogance, impervious to flattery, not given to vacillation and preferring God to everything else.”

Gregory the Great adds to the list of virtues. “It is necessary, therefore, that he should be pure in thought, exemplary in conduct, discreet in keeping silence, profitable in speech, in sympathy a near neighbour to everyone, in contemplation exalted above all others, a humble companion to those who lead good lives, erect in his zeal for righteousness against the vices of sinners. He must not be remiss in his care for the inner life by pre-occupation with the external; nor must he in his solicitude for what is internal, fail to give attention to the external.”

Bishop Gilbert Burnet is practical and direct in his comments. “Therefore a priest must not only abstain from gross scandals, but keep at the furthest distance from them. He must not only not be drunk, but he must not fit a tippling, nor go to taverns or ale houses, except some urgent occasion demands it. He must not only abstain from acts of lawlessness, but from all indecent behaviour and unbecoming raillery.”

George Herbert gave similar advice to clergy in The Country Parson. “The priest must free himself from the love of the world, from the vanities and disorders of the world; from hypocrisy and cowardice; from haughtiness, impatient and insolent temper, and from peevishness of spirit. There are other virtues that clergy need to develop. They include gentleness, meekness, humility, charitableness, compassionate temper, singularity of mind and simplicity.”

Jeremy Taylor was practical and direct, too. He advised clergy to remember that: “it is your great duty, and tied on you by many obligations, that you be exemplary in your lives, and be patterns and precedents to your flocks; lest it be said unto you, ‘Why takest thou My law into thy mouth seeing thou hatest to be reformed thereby?’ He that lives an idle life, may preach with truth and reason, or as did the Pharisees; but not as Christ, or as one having authority.”

His (Jeremy Taylor’s) advice becomes intensely practical as he advises clergy not to be servants of passion, be it anger, desire, or pride. They must avoid covetousness, reproachful behaviour, greed, litigiousness, exaction of offerings or customary wages and worldliness. Ministers must learn to preserve Christian simplicity and ingenuity. They must observe the Golden Rule. They are to be fearless, loving their congregations and avoiding what is today known as ‘sheep stealing.’ “Entertain no persons into your assemblies from other parishes unless upon great occasion, or in the destitution of a ministry, or by contingency and seldom (occasional) visits or with leave (permission from the home pastor); lest the labour of thy brother be discouraged, and thyself be thought to preach Christ out of envy, and not of goodwill,” he noted.

Likewise, George Herbert waxes eloquent, “The Country Parson is exceedingly exact in his life, being holy, just, prudent, temperate, bold, grave in all his ways.” Herbert identified three major areas the parson must take heed: “Patience in regard to afflictions; mortification in regard to lusts and affections and the stupefying and deadening of all the clamorous powers of the soul; and thirdly in keeping his word as an honest man.” He adds, “the parson’s yea is yea and nay, nay; and his apparel plain but reverend, and clean, without spots, or dust or smell; the purity of his mind breaking out, and dilating itself even to his body, clothes and habitation.”

The priests’ moral behavior is not a matter *adiaphora* (a matter of indifference) as far as Scripture, the Ordinals, the society, the Church, and eternity are concerned. The Anglican Church of Canada in Canon XVIII, Part 3, on Discipline, lists ecclesiastical offenses of clergy as: a.) Conviction of an indictable offense; b.) Immorality; c.) Disobedience to the bishop to whom such person has sworn canonical obedience; d.) Violation of any lawful constitution or Canon of the Church, whether of a diocese, province or the General Synod by which the person is bound; e.) Willful or habitual

neglect of the exercise of the ministry of the person without cause; g.) Teaching or advocating doctrines contrary to those accepted by the Anglican Church of Canada; and h.) Contemptuous or disrespectful conduct towards the bishop of the diocese in matters pertaining to the administration of the affairs of the diocese or a parish.

When it has been determined that a presbyter or other person has committed an ecclesiastical offense, Part 4 of the same canon lists four penalties that may be imposed. They are: “a.) admonition; b.) suspension from the exercise of ministry or office; c.) deprivation of office or ministry; and d.) deposition from the exercise of ministry if the person is ordained.” Anglican clergy are therefore expected to take the lead in the moral life by living lives that are free from criminal behavior, sexual harassment, immorality (which, of necessity, includes homosexual practices), disobedience, and disrespect to the diocesan bishop. They are expected to uphold the virtue of promise-keeping with respect to their Ordination vows, etc.

Holiness is a necessary quality that equips a minister to make disciples for Christ – disciples who sit at his feet to learn as they follow him daily rather than heroes who blaze their own way to victories of their own. Our pride index goes up because we are just too good to be disciples who learn to follow the master daily. Is it time to move on from being disciples to become heroes and masters?! No, Jesus commissioned the Church to make disciples who serve the Master. We are called to make disciples who follow Christ in the obedience of faith, not to make heroes and hero-makers who are independent trailblazers searching for personal glory.

We should live holy lives because the absence of holiness is a sign of sinful rebellion, reflects our non-conformity to the image of Christ, hinders and obfuscates the Gospel message, and can eventually destroy the effectiveness of our witness and ministries.

C. The Meaning of Holiness

What then is holiness? According to Bishop J.C. Ryle, “Holiness is the habit of being of one mind with God, according as we find his mind described in Scripture. It is the habit of agreeing in God’s judgment, hating what He hates, loving what He loves, and measuring everything in this world by the standard of his word.”

“The root word of holiness stems from the Old English word *halignes* which means “without blemish” or “without injury”; therefore, the English word “holy” is an English equivalent for the Hebrew word *qds* and the Greek word *hagios*, with both the Hebrew and Greek terms having added a sense of separation or consecration. God is pure, unadulterated holiness, and for Christians, Jesus the Christ is the personal fulfillment of God’s holiness on earth and the paradigmatic figure for Christian holiness. Holiness is the primary characteristic and fundamental quality of God.

Holiness is God's primordial essence and eternal being. Consequently, by extension, those people who earnestly search after God or seek God's goodness are extended the quality of holiness by proxy from God.

Holiness derives solely from God because God is the author, creator, and disseminator of holiness. Holiness is a divine attribute that is bestowed upon God's followers and those who desire to share in God's gratuitous gift of holiness: "But as He who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in every aspect of your conduct, for it is written, 'Be holy because I [am] holy'" (1 Peter 1:15–16). In other words, Christians are called to be holy." Arthur David Canales

"Sanctification is a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives." Dr. Wayne Grudem

Let me expand on those definitions.

1. Holiness is the result of a divine act at our conversion by which God sets us apart from the world to Himself.

This is called Positional Sanctification – our position as saints before God. In Colossians 3:12, Christians are referred to as "... God's chosen ones, holy and beloved." Peter writes, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." 1 Peter 2:9.

Throughout the New Testament, Christians are addressed as 'saints' set apart for God. What a privilege! He separates us from the world and consecrates us to Himself. When you turned to Christ, God set you apart for himself to use as He sees fit. You don't belong to the world anymore, or even to yourself. You are holy unto the Lord, His temple in which He dwells. He puts his stamp of ownership over you.

It must be understood that His sanctification is real and not a legal fiction. Here is how Dr. R.C. Sproul explains it: "Our sanctification begins the moment we have faith and are justified. We must remember that a justified person is a changed person. One who has real faith is regenerate and indwelled by the Holy Spirit. The effect of this change is not only necessary and inevitable, but immediate. If no fruit follows, then no faith is present. If no faith is present, then there is no justification." If, eventually, there is no fruit of good works, then there is no sanctification, either.

Arminians believe that justification is the result of faith plus works. As Dr. R.C. Sproul further noted, "In Reformed Theology, justification is the result of faith alone, a faith that always produces works. Antinomianism teaches justification by faith minus works." Reformed Theology rejects both the Arminian and the Antinomian

views. At justification, God sets apart unto Himself – He sanctifies us and begins the process of making us holy, in practice conforming us to His moral image.

2. *Holiness is progressive conformity to the moral character and purposes of God through faith and obedience to his Word in the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Paul, writing to Christians, exhorts us to "... be imitators of God, as beloved children." Ephesians 5:1. This holy imitation of God implies that holy living is synergistic – a synergy of divine power and human effort in which we strive, by His power, to bear and grow in the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is a reflection of the moral character of God to which we conform by the power of the Holy Spirit himself: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." Galatians 5:22-23

The Holy Spirit produces this fruit by empowering us, guiding us, and prompting us. As we cooperate and obey His Word and His prompting in our hearts these fruits of divine character are born in us in increasing measure. Our Lord Jesus noted this in his Upper Room Discourse in John 15: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing." John 15:4-5. We must be in, and abide in Christ to bear fruit. Self-reliance and self-effort are insufficient and always lead to frustration. We must work with God. Peter (the Apostle) explains this synergy:

"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 1:3-8

Theologians use two words to describe our obedience:

- a. The first word is *Mortification*:

This is the negative aspect of holiness – the “DON”Ts.” It means to put to death, avoid, and separate oneself from sins and the temptations that lead to sin. It is “putting off” of sinful habits and its various manifestations. Sin manifests itself in thoughts, desires, motivations, attitudes, actions, and *in*-actions. “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.” Colossians 3:5-11 (Ephesians 4:17-5:7; Galatians 5:19-21; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1)

The Lord wants us to abandon sin, including drunkenness, gossip, racism, tribalism, abusive behavior, hypocrisy, unforgiveness, pride, power-mongering, position seeking, pornography, adultery, fornication, homosexual sin, etc. This is really the Lord’s call to daily repentance and self-denial. What is repentance? J.I. Packer explains: “Repentance is more than just sorrow for the past; repentance is a change of mind and heart, a new life of denying self and serving the Savior as King in self’s place ... More than once, Christ deliberately called attention to the radical break with the past that repentance involves. ‘If any man will come after Me, let him DENY HIMSELF, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me ...’ ‘Whosoever will LOSE HIS LIFE FOR MY SAKE, the same (but only he) shall save it.’ [Luke 9:23-24, cf. Luke 14:27, 33] ... The repentance that Christ requires of His people consists in a settled refusal to set any limit to the claims which He may make on their lives.”

b. The second word is *Vivification*:

This is the positive aspect of holiness- the “DOs.” It refers to the process of awakening, putting on, and practicing the virtues of the faith – in other words, actively clothing ourselves with holy and godly habits (Colossians 3:12-17; 2 Peter 1:3-13). Dr. J.I. Packer wrote, “this positive side of holiness is maintaining of loyalty to God and the living of a life which shows forth to others qualities of faithfulness, gentleness, goodwill, kindness, forbearance, and uprightness on the model of God’s own display of these qualities in His gracious dealings with us.” In

Colossians 3:12-17, the apostle Paul writes, “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

In the sanctification process the Holy Spirit leads and enables us to bear the fruit of the Spirit as we cooperate with Him. It is worth repeating: “... the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” Galatians 5:22-24 (*cf.*: John 15:1-17; Ephesians 2:10; Ephesians 4:1-6, 24)

It is important to remind ourselves that holiness is both an internal and external way of being and living. It is not external behavioral modification therapy. God changes us from the heart. God’s holiness is transformation that effects change from the inside to the outside. Knowing this protects us from an external, showy, and pharisaic holiness that focuses on a narrow outward conformity with one’s favorite religious and theological clan, which, in the end, leads to pure and unvarnished hypocrisy.

3. Holiness involves doing good works: practical good for the benefit of others both in private and in public.

Christian tradition speaks of the Seven Corporal Works of Mercy:

To feed the hungry,
To give drink to the thirsty,
To clothe the naked,
To shelter the homeless,
To care for the sick,
To visit the imprisoned, and
To bury the dead.

These all involve helping people in need: the alien, the underprivileged, the displaced, widows, orphans, and the destitute, etc. As John Wesley said, there is nothing more unchristian than a solitary Christian who ignores those around him or her. We need to reach out to help people, our preferred political parties and ideologies notwithstanding. We are first and foremost Christians, and we should act accordingly (Matthew 25:31-46; Acts 11:27-30; James 2:14-17; 1Peter 2:12,15; 1John 3:16-19). Jesus healed the sick, cleansed lepers, fed the hungry, etc. He commands us to help people in need. Here is Jesus describing the Day of Reckoning, “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed Me, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you visited Me, I was in prison and you came to Me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? And when did we see You a stranger and welcome You, or naked and clothe You? And when did we see You sick or in prison and visit You?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these My brothers, you did it to Me.’” Matthew 25:34-40

4. Holiness is a daily offering (consecration) of oneself to God.

A Christian who desires to live holy will soon realize that he has to make a decision to surrender to God every single day! As the Bible says in Romans 12:1-2, we must present ourselves as a living sacrifice to God: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12:1-2. You say to God every day, “I’m here to do your bidding. Use me Lord!” Consecration is a daily surrender, oblation, and laying down of our lives and plans on the altar of God. It is opening all the doors into our lives for Him to come in and do what He wants to do with us and in us.

Richard Baxter said it well: holiness is “Nothing else but the habitual and predominant devotion and dedication of soul, and body, and life, and all that we have to God; and esteeming, and loving, and serving, and seeking Him, before all the pleasures and prosperity of the flesh.”

Bishop J.C. Ryle of Liverpool gives us a succinct profile of a holy person:

- A holy man will strive to be like our Lord Jesus Christ.

- A holy man will endeavour to shun every known sin, and to keep every known commandment.
- A holy man will follow after meekness, long-suffering, gentleness, patience, kind tempers, government of his tongue. He will bear much, forbear much, overlook much, and be slow to talk of standing on his rights.
- A holy man will follow after temperance and self-denial. He will labour to mortify the desires of his body – to crucify his flesh with his affections and lusts – to curb his passions – to restrain his carnal inclinations, lest at any time they break loose.
- A holy man will follow after charity and brotherly kindness. He will endeavour to observe the golden rule of doing as he would have men do to him, and speaking as he would have men speak to him. He will be full of affection towards his brethren – towards their bodies, their property, their characters, their feelings, their souls.
- A holy man will follow after a spirit of mercy and benevolence towards others. He will not stand all the day idle. He will not be content with doing no harm – he will try to do good.
- A holy man will follow after purity of heart. He will dread all filthiness and uncleanness of spirit, and seek to avoid all things that might draw him into it.
- A holy man will follow after the fear of God.
- A holy man will follow after humility. He will desire, in lowliness of mind, to esteem all others better than himself.
- A holy man will follow after faithfulness in all the duties and relations in life.
- A holy man will follow after spiritual mindedness. He will endeavour to set his affections entirely on things above, and to hold things on earth with a very loose hand.
- Holiness is the habit of being of one mind with God.

It is encouraging to hear this from an Anglican Bishop! I hope (and trust) that we will follow his example.

There should be no doubt in anyone’s mind that living a holy life is difficult in our modern world. We are bombarded by cultural messages in both church and society telling us that we are wonderful, and that we have no need to change anything in our lives because such thinking would put a dent on our much-cherished self-esteem! In his book, *Road to Character* (Random Press: 2015), David Brooks writes, “We have seen a broad shift from a culture of humility to the culture of what you might call the Big Me, from a culture that encouraged people to think humbly of themselves to a

culture that encouraged people to see themselves as the center of the universe.” He observes, “In 1950, the Gallup Organization asked high school seniors if they considered themselves to be a very important person. At that point, 12 percent said yes. The same question was asked in 2005, and this time, it was 80 percent.”

Brooks comments, “As I looked around the popular culture I kept finding the same messages everywhere: You are special. Trust yourself. Be true to yourself ... This is the Gospel of self-trust.” It is a self-centered, self-congratulating, and plain, unvarnished Gospel of conceit. We must reject it.

D. Growth in Holiness

The Christian on the highway of holiness must be moving toward perfection – “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Matthew 5:48. A healthy Christian cannot be spiritually static. Instead, he or she is growing and maturing into the full stature of Christ. The apostle Paul exhorts Christians, “You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.” 2 Peter 3:17-18. As Dr. Sinclair Ferguson reminds us: “The Christian life is like riding a bicycle; if you don’t keep peddling you will eventually fall off.”

So how should and how can the Christian believer “pedal” the bicycle of faith in order to grow in holiness?

1. *First, recognize and accept the fact that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone to the glory of God alone (Ephesians 2:1-9)*

We must not lose sight of this truth on the pathway of holiness. Let me quickly explain the Biblical way of salvation with this series of theological formulas that capture the theological differences regarding Salvation (or Justification) in today’s Christian church:

- a. Faith in Christ + Good Works = Justification (Arminianism)
- b. Faith in Christ = Justification – Good Works (Antinomianism)
- c. Faith in Christ = Justification + Good Works (Biblical & Reformed Theology).

The third of these formulas is the correct view of Justification and Sanctification from the Bible. God’s Grace alone through Faith alone in Christ alone leads to Justification and the good works of holy living!

This is how we must understand the call to holiness from the very beginning. If you do not do so you will rely on your own efforts, inevitably sliding back into legalism, self-hate, or “easy-believism” (Antinomianism).

My point here is that on the highway of holiness there is always mercy and forgiveness for the sinner, because it is by grace alone that we make it to heaven. Remember in Ephesians 2:1-10, the apostle Paul explains our spiritual biography – what we were before we met Christ, or rather, before Christ rescued us; how we became Christians, and what we are now because of Christ. In vv. 1-3, he tells us that our lives before we knew Christ were characterized by deadness in sin and bondage to Satan, and, consequently, were subject to the wrath of God. Then in vv. 4-9 he goes on to describe how God, instead of giving us what we deserve – eternal punishment in hell – decided in His gracious mercy to save us from our slavery to sin, Satan, and eternal wrath! He drew us to Christ, he forgave us, and he seated us with Christ in the heavenly places. We’ve been saved by grace through faith, not by works. Totally underserved! Alexander Whyte put it well: “Love may exist between equals, or it may rise to those above us, or flow down to those in any way beneath us. But Grace, from its nature, has only one direction it can take. GRACE ALWAYS FLOWS DOWN. Grace is love indeed, but it is love to creatures humbling itself. A king’s love to his equals, or to his own royal house, is love; but his love to his subjects is called grace.”

Mercy is NOT RECEIVING what we deserve, and grace is RECEIVING what we DO NOT deserve. A Christian who finds himself relying on himself instead of on the forgiving mercy and empowering grace of God has lost his way. Always depend on God’s grace!

2. Second, regularly and honestly examine yourself.

“Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine. Test yourselves. Surely you know that Jesus Christ is among you; if not, you have failed the test of genuine faith.”

2 Corinthians 13:5

Do not excuse yourself or rationalize your sin. Julian Fellowes captured it well when he wrote, “We live in this great excuse generation, where nothing is ever your own fault and everything is always because someone was terrible to you.”

Take responsibility for who you are and what you do! Hell is not always other people! Be honest with yourself and repent of your sins. Almost all the clergy and laity with whom I’ve had a difficult time share a single fatal trait – not their sinful behavior, but their lack of humility to admit their sin and turn to God. Conceit, pride and self-delusion are dangerous. When we live like that, we only play at Christianity.

The apostle John's warning must be taken seriously by anyone who wishes to be holy: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." 1 John 1:8, 10

3. Third, pray for forgiveness, accept His forgiveness, and ask for strength to do His will by the power of the Holy Spirit.

"My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John 2:1-2

God has shown us amazing grace in Christ! Christ is our ONLY Savior and Mediator because he made an atoning sacrifice that was a "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world"! He has paid the penalty for our sins. He paid our sin debt IN FULL! We do not need to finish paying any remainder of our penalty anywhere in this world or the world to come. Holiness is not atonement for sin or a way of earning God's love and acceptance. You are already loved, accepted, forgiven, and adopted into God's family because Jesus paid it all on the cross! We have full atonement in Christ! Jesus told us that it (our sins and debt) is FINISHED! If we do not grasp this message of God's grace, we will fall into theological confusion, and we may, eventually, sink into spiritual despair, opening the door for Satan to undermine our confidence in the assurance of salvation, etc. Stand your ground on, by, and through the grace of God through Christ for us.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

"It is only by God's grace that we can remain holy in our witness, so we need to keep praying for one another to have 'a clear conscience, desiring to act honourably in all things' (Hebrews 13:18), that we might 'put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness' (Ephesians 4:24, 5:3)." Michael Taylor

4. Fourth, if you fail morally, get back up, accept His grace of forgiveness in Christ, and move forward.

Satan loves it when you bathe in a spirit of defeat, remain downcast, and wallow in self-pity, spiritual pride, and hopelessness. As Peter reminds us "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world." 1 Peter 5:8-9

Holy living is spiritual warfare with Satan, your mind and flesh, and the world. We can win this war only because Jesus is on our side – the Captain, Author, and Finisher of our faith. As our Captain, he wants us to put on the whole armor of God, stand firm, and fight the battle: “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the Gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints ...” Ephesians 6:10-18. In this war, we must accept God’s word of promise of forgiveness and hope (which Satan doesn’t want us to accept). Here is that promise: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9. “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.” 1 John 2:1-2

5. Fifth, be vigilant, and avoid those circumstances, people, and things that lead you to sin.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.” Matthew 5:27-30

“Abstain from every appearance or form of evil.” 1 Thessalonians 5:22

Holiness requires reinforcement by frequent repetition. The late Jerry Bridges exhorts us “to never let an exception occur.” He explains: “When we allow exceptions we are reinforcing old habits, or else failing to reinforce the new one. At this point we must watch the ‘just this once’ type of thinking, which is a subtle, dangerous trap. Because we are unwilling to pay the price of saying no to our desires, we tell ourselves we will

indulge only once more and tomorrow will be different. Deep inside we know that tomorrow it will be even more difficult to say no, but we don't dwell on this fact ... We may feel that a particular habit 'isn't too bad,' but continually giving in to that habit weakens our wills against the onslaughts of temptation from other directions."

6. Sixth, we need to spend time in the Word of God privately and prayerfully; and commit to fellowship with others at public worship and outside of public worship.

These means of grace – prayer, Bible study, meditation, solitude, silence, fasting, service, etc. – are gifts from God to help us walk with Him. Use them liberally!

7. Seventh, we need to intentionally plan to do what is right trusting Jesus and the Holy Spirit to enable us.

Holiness is not just about avoiding "jeans, jazz, jokes," and other trivial matters, as Dr. J.I. Packer used to say. It is not just about abandoning sin as the Bible defines sin, it is living to honor God and love others in practical ways.

8. Finally, sometimes God uses suffering, chastisement, and secular as well as ecclesiastical discipline to help us grow in holiness.

Here is an example of the divine use of suffering to help his people grow in holiness, as the apostle Paul testifies: "So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong." 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Sometimes the Lord must afflict us to warn and wean us from sinfulness.

"Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word." Psalms 119:67.

Charles Spurgeon once noted, "The Word of God is often the knife with which the great husbandman prunes the vine; and brothers and sisters if we were more willing to feel the edge of the Word, and to let it cut away even something that may be very dear to us we should not need so much the pruning by affliction and suffering."

It is important to understand the difference between punishment and chastisement. God does not punish his children as He does sinners. Rather He chastises them for their spiritual profit. Here is Charles Spurgeon again: "God's people can never by any possibility be punished for their sins. God has punished them already in the person

of Christ, Christ, their substitute, has endured the full penalty for all their guilt, and neither the justice nor the love of God can ever exact again that which Christ has paid. Punishment can never happen to a child of God in the judicial sense, he can never be brought before God as his Judge, as charged with guilt, because that guilt was long ago transferred to the shoulders of Christ, and the punishment was exacted at the hands of his surety. But yet, while the sin cannot be punished, while the Christian cannot be condemned, he can be chastised, while he shall never be arraigned before God's bar as a criminal, and punished for his guilt, yet he now stands in a new relationship – that of a child to his parent: and as a son he may be chastised on account of sin. Folly is bound up in the heart of all God's children, and the rod of the Father must bring that folly out of them. It is essential to observe the distinction between punishment and chastisement. Punishment and chastisement may agree as to the nature of the suffering: the one suffering may be as great as the other, the sinner who, while here is punished for his guilt, may suffer no more in this life than the Christian who is only chastised by his parent. They do not differ as to the nature of the punishment, but they differ in the mind of the punisher and in the relationship of the person who is punished. God punishes the sinner on His own account, because He is angry with the sinner, and His justice must be avenged, His law must be honored, and His commands must have their dignity maintained. But He does not punish the believer on His own account, it is on the Christian's account, to do him good, He afflicts him for his profit, he lays on the rod for His child's advantage; He has a good design towards the person who receives the chastisement. While in punishment the design is simply with God for God's glory, in chastisement, it is with the person chastised for his good, for his spiritual profit and benefit. Besides, punishment is laid on a man in anger. God strikes him in wrath, but when He afflicts His child, chastisement is applied in love, His strokes are, all of them, put there by the hand of love." Our heavenly Father uses chastisement to warn us, to deter us from sin, and to spur us on to holiness of life.

"And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? 'My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by Him. For the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and chastises every son whom He receives.' It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." Hebrews 12:5-11

Sometimes God chastens us through the ministry of Church discipline both for our holiness and for that of the Church, because God's church MUST be holy. “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I among them.” Matthew 18:15-20

“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people – not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler – not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. ‘Purge the evil person from among you.’” 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

If holiness is not important in the Christian church because “we are saved by God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone plus nothing,” as the Antinomians falsely claim, why would Paul be laboring over the issue of holiness and discipline in his epistles to the churches? Holiness and discipline are essential parts of the Christian life.

This is probably why some of the Continental Reformers believed that Church Discipline should be one of the marks of the church along with “One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic” marks. They believed, and rightly so, that without church discipline it is almost impossible to uphold holiness in the Church. This is partly why we have disciplinary procedures to address canonical offenses in the Anglican Communion, as reflected in all Provincial and Diocesan Constitutions and Canons. To understand what constitutes a canonical (ecclesiastical) offense, we look to the ACNA (Provincial) Constitution and Canons, and to our own Diocesan Constitution and Canons.

Title IV, Canon 2 of the ACNA Canons provides:

Canon 2 – Of Charges against Bishops, Presbyters, or Deacons.

The following are the charges or accusations on which the Archbishop, a Bishop, a Presbyter, or a Deacon in this Church may be presented:

1. Apostasy from the Christian Faith;
2. Heresy, false doctrine, or schism;
3. Violation of ordination vows;
4. Conduct giving just cause for scandal or offense, including the abuse of ecclesiastical power;
5. A conviction by a court of competent jurisdiction for felony or other serious offenses;
6. Sexual immorality;
7. Acceptance of membership in a religious jurisdiction with purpose contrary to that of this Church;
8. Violation of any provision of the Constitution of this Church;
9. Disobedience, or willful contravention of the Canons of this Church or of the constitution or canons of the Diocese in which he holds office;
10. Habitual neglect of the duties of his Office;
11. Habitual neglect of public worship, and the Holy Communion, according to the order and use of this Church; and
12. Willful refusal to follow a lawful Godly Admonition.

And Title I, Canon 1, Section 2 of our Diocesan Canons states:

The Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese shall be vested in the Bishop and, in the absence of the Bishop, the Standing Committee of this Diocese and, if appointed, in the Missionary Bishop of CANA. Clergy and lay members of the Diocese are expected to honor the Bishop and submit to his leadership in all things lawful and in accordance with holy scripture and Anglican tradition.

Almost all canonical (ecclesiastical) offenses involve violation of one or more of the above-referenced Provincial and/or Diocesan Canons. So, as you can plainly see, it is extremely difficult to “accidentally” commit a canonical offense.

There can be no meaningful peace without order, and no order without effective discipline.

E. Conclusion

As I approach the conclusion of this Pastoral Address, here is the pressing question for each of us: “What should we do as individuals, as churches, and as a Diocese?”

1. We must Strive not only for holiness, but for growth in holiness.

We must strive because growth in holiness requires work – hard work. Paul wrote to the church, “Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.” Hebrews 12:14

There is no single step, easy, user-friendly, “holy hop” spiritual mechanism to instantaneously achieve “complete and entire sanctification.” Such types of popular “holiness training” techniques are nothing more than false advertising, spiritual laziness, and dangerous triumphalism. And that’s why Paul appeals to us to strive: “Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no ‘root of bitterness’ springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.” Hebrews 12:14-17

Peter the apostle tells us to make every effort to be holy: “For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 1:5-11

We must consciously decide to strive, to make every effort to walk in step with the Holy Spirit's call to holiness. This is not an easy thing to do, which is why Paul states that it is a 'sacrifice': "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." Romans 12:1-2

2. We must strive in the power that God gives with utter dependence on Him.

We must be involved because growth in holiness is synergistic, not monergistic. This means we cannot do it alone and God cannot do it alone for us. There is no "let go and let God" in the path of holiness. We MUST work WITH Him by His power and His wisdom through His Spirit – "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12-13). "Working out our own salvation" is tough. Living a holy life can be gut-wrenchingly difficult as we deny ourselves the things we want.

Working "out our salvation" will be tough. As Dr. David Platt reminds us, "In a world where everything revolves around yourself – protect yourself, promote yourself, comfort yourself, and take care of yourself – Jesus says, 'Crucify yourself.' Put aside all self-preservation in order to live for God's glorification, no matter what that means for you in the culture around you."

I encourage you to strive for holiness because God has called us to be holy. It brings joy to the heart of God. He is glorified and he blesses us in turn. The Apostle Paul reminds us that living for God is like shining like stars in a dark world: "Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain" (Philippians 2:14-16). As difficult as it is to do, so let us be determined to pursue holiness because through it God gives us influence – we shine like stars in this dark world for His glory! As Blaise Pascal put it: "The serene, silent beauty of a holy life is the most powerful influence in the world, next to the might of the Spirit of God."

What's in it for us? Our Lord Jesus speaks authoritatively that there is blessing for those who follow Him and suffer in the process: "And Jesus said to his disciples, 'Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of

heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.’ When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, ‘Who then can be saved?’ But Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’ Then Peter said in reply, ‘See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for My name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.’” Matthew 19:23-30

If we persevere in holy living, steadfast in the pursuit of holiness, by the grace He freely gives us, we will in this world and in the world to come, receive much blessing.

F. Application

In conclusion, let me ask you two questions:

1. Have you given your life to Jesus?

If you have not, you cannot live a holy life. There are no holy people outside of Christ. If you have not given your life to Christ, here is what to do:

Repent of your sin;
Believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior; and
Commit to follow Him in obedience as your Lord!

2. If you are a professing Christian, I want to ask you this question: “Do you want to live a holy life?”

At some point in your life you must make a decision as to what kind of Christian you want to be: a holy, sincere, committed, productive and effective Christian, or a nominal, hypocritical, unholy, unproductive and ineffective Christian. Every parish has to make the same decision – to be a “Sapphira and Ananias” kind of parish or a “John and Barnabas” kind of parish. The choice is yours! So, what will it be, and what is it?

If you want to be a committed, holy, and effective Christian or church, this is the time to cry out to God in repentance for mercy and power. We ALL need serious improvement in our Christian lives, so stop looking at your neighbors. The problem isn’t with them, it is with the man (or the woman, or the child, or the church) in the mirror! It is time to ask God to help us by the power of his

Holy Spirit to deal with the besetting sins in our lives. It is now time to pray for the Lord to purify our hearts and cleanse our consciences with His Word and with the blood of Jesus!

Let us confess our sins in silence.

Prayer of Confession

All: *Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against Thy holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare thou those who confess their faults, restore thou those who are penitent, according to Thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for His sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of Thy holy Name. Amen.*

Absolution

Bishop: *The Almighty and merciful Lord grant you absolution and remission of all your sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Benediction

Bishop: *Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.*

Jude 1:24-25

Go forth into the world in peace. Be of good courage. Hold fast that which is good. Render to no man evil for evil. Strengthen the fainthearted. Support the weak. Help the afflicted. Honor all men. Love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit! And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you forever. Amen, Amen, Amen!

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ADDENDA

“Jesus never concealed the fact that His religion included a demand as well as an offer. Indeed, the demand was as total as the offer was free. If He offered men His salvation, He also demanded their submission. He gave no encouragement whatever to thoughtless applicants for discipleship. He brought no pressure to bear on any inquirer. He sent irresponsible enthusiasts away empty. Luke tells of three men who either volunteered, or were invited, to follow Jesus; but no one passed the Lord’s test. The rich young ruler, too, moral, earnest and attractive, who wanted eternal life on his own terms, went away sorrowful, with his riches intact but with neither life nor Christ as his possession ... The Christian landscape is strewn with the wreckage of derelict, half-built towers – the ruins of those who began to build and were unable to finish. For thousands of people still ignore Christ’s warning and undertake to follow Him without first pausing to reflect on the cost of doing so. The result is the great scandal of Christendom today, so called “nominal Christianity.” In countries to which Christian civilization has spread, large numbers of people have covered themselves with a decent, but thin, veneer of Christianity. They have allowed themselves to become somewhat involved, enough to be respectable but not enough to be uncomfortable. Their religion is a great, soft cushion. It protects them from the hard unpleasantness of life, while changing its place and shape to suit their convenience. No wonder the cynics speak of hypocrites in the church and dismiss religion as escapism ... The message of Jesus was very different. He never lowered His standards or modified his conditions to make His call more readily acceptable. He asked His first disciples, and He has asked every disciple since, to give Him their thoughtful and total commitment. Nothing less than this will do.” Dr. John Stott

“Being a citizen of Christ’s kingdom is not a matter of just “living a kingdom life” or “following Jesus’ example” or “living like Jesus lived.” The fact is, a person can be a self-professed “Jesus-follower” or “kingdom-life liver” and still be outside the kingdom. You can live like Jesus lived all you want, but unless you’ve come to the crucified King in repentance and faith, relying on him alone as the perfect sacrifice for your sin and your only hope for salvation, you’re neither a Christian nor a citizen of his kingdom. The way to be included in Christ’s kingdom is to come to the King, not just hailing him as a great example who shows us a better way to live, but humbly trusting him as the crucified and risen Lord who alone can release you from the sentence of death. At the end of the day, the only way into the kingdom is through the blood of the King.” Greg Gilbert

“Repenting of sin doesn’t necessarily mean that you stop sinning – certainly not altogether, and often not in particular areas, either. Christians are still fallen sinners

even after God gives us new spiritual life, and we will continue to struggle with sin until we are glorified with Jesus (see, *e.g.*, Galatians 5:17; 1 John 2:1). But even if repentance doesn't mean an immediate end to our sinning, it does mean that we will no longer live at peace with our sin. We will declare mortal war against it and dedicate ourselves to resisting it by God's power on every front in our lives. Many Christians struggle hard with this idea of repentance because they somehow expect that if they genuinely repent, sin will go away and temptation will stop. When that doesn't happen, they fall into despair, questioning whether their faith in Jesus is real. It's true that when God regenerates us, he gives us power to fight against and overcome sin (1 Corinthians 10:13). But because we will continue to struggle with sin until we are glorified, we have to remember that genuine repentance is more fundamentally a matter of the heart's attitude toward sin than it is a mere change of behavior. Do we hate sin and war against it, or do we cherish it and defend it? One writer put this truth beautifully: The difference between an unconverted and a converted man is not that the one has sins and the other has none; but that the one takes part with his cherished sins against a dreaded God, and the other takes part with a reconciled God against his hated sins. So whose side do you take – your sin's or your God's?

Greg Gilbert

When a person genuinely repents and believes in Christ, the Bible says that he is given new spiritual life. "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins," Paul says. "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions" (Ephesians 2:1, 4-5 NIV). When that happens, our life changes – not immediately, not quickly, not even necessarily steadily. But it does change. We begin to bear fruit. The Bible says that Christians are to be marked by the same kind of love, compassion, and goodness that characterized Jesus himself. True Christians will perform "deeds in keeping with their repentance," Paul says (Acts 26:20). "Each tree is known by its own fruit," Jesus said. "For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush" (Luke 6:44). In other words, when people are given new spiritual life, they begin to do the kinds of things that Jesus did. They begin to live like Jesus lived and bear good fruit. One thing we must be constantly on guard against is any thought that those fruits are the cause of our salvation. There is always a danger that when we begin to see fruit in our lives, we'll subtly begin to rely on that fruit for our salvation, instead of on Christ. Guard against that temptation, Christian. Realize that the fruit you bear is merely that – the fruit of a tree already made good by God's grace in Christ. To rely on your own Christian fruit to secure God's favor is ultimately to shift your faith from Jesus to yourself. And that is no salvation at all." Greg Gilbert

"Where Will You Point? When you stand before God at the judgment, I wonder what you plan to do or say in order to convince him to count you righteous and admit

you to all the blessings of his kingdom? What good deed or godly attitude will you pull out of your pocket to impress him? Will you pull out your church attendance? Your family life? Your spotless thought life? The fact that you haven't done anything really heinous in your own eyes? I wonder what you'll hold up before him while saying, "God, on account of this, justify me!" I'll tell you what every Christian whose faith is in Christ alone will do, by God's grace. They will simply and quietly point to Jesus. And this will be their plea: "O God, do not look for any righteousness in my own life. Look at your Son. Count me righteous not because of anything I've done or anything I am, but because of him. He lived the life I should have lived. He died the death that I deserve. I have renounced all other trusts, and my plea is him alone. Justify me, O God, because of Jesus." Greg Gilbert

The Blessings of Belonging to Christ

"There's no doubt that becoming a Christian is a costly thing (Luke 14:28). But it's also true that the rewards of being a Christian are inexpressibly awesome. Forgiveness of sins, adoption as God's children, relationship with Jesus, the gift of the Holy Spirit, freedom from sin's tyranny, the fellowship of the church, the final resurrection and glorification of the body, inclusion in God's kingdom, the new heavens and new earth, eternity in God's presence, seeing his face – all these are the promises God makes to us in Christ. No wonder Paul quoted Isaiah, saying, 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him' (1 Corinthians 2:9 NIV). The Christian life is not just about making sure you avoid God's wrath. Far from it! It's about being in a right relationship with God, and ultimately enjoying him forever. That is to say, it's about gaining what we cannot lose – becoming a citizen of his eternal kingdom." Greg Gilbert

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APPENDIX

CLERGY CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE MISSIONARY DIOCESE OF CANA WEST *(June 11, 2015)*

“Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ.”
-- Philippians 1:27

Clergy misconduct (including, without limitation, sexual exploitation, disrespect of the Bishop or disregard for his directives, abuse of authority or power, financial malfeasance, disregard for diocesan canons, etc.) causes many serious problems. The moral failures of church leaders, and especially members of the clergy (who are expected to be trustworthy), also seriously compromises the church’s primary mission to “make disciples.”

In large part, it was the failure of The Episcopal Church to call sin “sin,” and to discipline church leaders who call “evil good and good evil” (Isaiah 5:20), that led to its downfall. This is true for all churches (in all generations) that discount the church’s role to transform secular culture through lives lived according to Godly standards.

The very fact that Holy Scripture singles out bishops, presbyters, and deacons for special treatment with regard to conduct demonstrates that their personal behavior is important to God and to the health of His Church. 1 Peter 5:1-4; 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 4:16; 2 Timothy 2:24-25, 4:2,5; Titus 1:7-9, 2:1,7-8.

For these reasons it is imperative that members of the clergy of the Convocation of Anglicans in North America (CANA) adhere to the highest of moral standards as they model Godly behavior for the church and witness to an unbelieving world concerning the concept of Biblical holiness.

Therefore, all members of CANA’s clergy are exhorted to pursue integrity in matters of personal character. They should be humble, truthful, and hardworking. They should avoid – and when necessary, report – conflicts of interest, and seek counsel before acting in a manner others might regard as questionable. They should speak the truth in love.

CANA West clergy are to communicate truthfully and sensitively in all matters, demonstrating a commitment to the well-being of the entirety of their congregations, and exercising their influence humbly (and appropriately) as servants of the Lord.

CANA West clergy are to seek purity in their personal lives, avoid sinful sexual behavior, and whenever possible, remove themselves from situations in which they are tempted to sin. They should resist temptation, scrupulously avoid every hint of impropriety, and, similarly, make every provision to protect the children and youth of their parishes. Our clergy should study the Bible regularly, carefully, and prayerfully, and permit it to shape their thinking and world-view. The misconduct of other clergy should be reported promptly to proper authorities.

CANA West clergy are to embrace accountability in matters of finance. They should ensure that church funds are used for their intended ministry purposes only, insist on and adhere to accepted accounting practices, use systems of checks-and-balances, and regularly audit all parish financial accounts.

CANA West clergy are to be fair, consistently encouraging and affirming their staff through team-building, training, evaluations, and the use of mutual feedback. They should build God's Kingdom through cooperation – not competition – with other local ministries, and should not recruit parishioners from other churches (the harvest is plentiful!).

CANA West clergy are to obey our Lord Jesus Christ in all things (He is Head of the Church!), giving heed to the written Word of God and respecting the authority of the Diocesan Bishop as vowed during their processes of ordination and licensure.

All clergy in the Diocese hold their licenses at the pleasure of the Bishop for the sake of the Gospel. Behaviors and attitudes that hinder the work of the Gospel or undermine the leadership of the Bishop Ordinary may serve as cause for disciplinary action, and could result in the removal of clergy licenses. +