



Provincialate : 4A Chestnut Drive, Singapore 679330. Tel: 67602461 website: www.chij-sisters.org

Through prayer and contemplation, we encounter and deepen our relationship with God, which transforms our way of looking at situations and impacts our response.

Our Growth Sessions are on the first Tuesdays of the month from 8-8.45 pm via Zoom
This year , we look at some of the Popes' writings!

On the other Tuesdays we reflect on the gospel of the following Sunday.
The prayers are found after the Growth sessions.

Zoom platform ID 2219523672 Password 2PdEdg

Come Join us!

Next growth Session 2 Jun 2026

IJ Growth Session 5 May 2026



Gathering in the Presence of the Infant Jesus

Let us bless ourselves. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: O God, come to our aid.

All: O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

: Study of the Encyclical Laborem Exercens written by Pope John Paul II

Theme: Human Work, Dignity, and the Call to Live Fully Today

Opening Prayer

God of life and creator of all, You have entrusted the world to human hands and hearts. You have called each person to share in your work of creation, not as a burden, but as a path of dignity and love. As we come together to reflect on the meaning of work, quiet our minds and open our hearts. Help us to listen deeply, not only with understanding, but with a desire to live what we hear. In a world that often measures worth by achievement, teach us to recognise the dignity that you have already given. In a time of change and uncertainty, root us in what does not pass. May this time of study draw us closer to you, to one another, and to the deeper truth of who we are. Amen.



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Introduction: A Synopsis of Hope

*The encyclical **Laborem Exercens** was written by Pope John Paul II and published on 14 September 1981. It was issued to mark the ninetieth anniversary of **Rerum Novarum**, the foundational document of Catholic social teaching. Its purpose was to return to the heart of the "social question" by reflecting deeply on human work itself.*

In a world marked by industrial change and economic inequality, the encyclical offers a renewed vision grounded in the dignity of the human person. It asks fundamental questions: What is work for? Who is the human person within the world of work? It reminds us that the value of work lies not in what is produced, but in the person who works. This vision resonates deeply with the spirituality of Nicolas Barré, who recognised the presence of God in the ordinary and the hidden.

Chapter One: Work at the Centre of the Human Question

Summary

The encyclical begins by placing work at the centre of the social question. Work is not simply one aspect of life among others; it touches the human person in a profound way because it is through work that people sustain themselves, contribute to society, and shape their own identity. The Church's concern for work arises from her concern for the human person. Every economic issue involves real people and real struggles. Work is the place where dignity is either affirmed or wounded.

Salient Quotations

1. "Human work is a key, probably the essential key, to the whole social question, if we really endeavour to see that question from the point of view of man's good." (LE 3)
2. "The Church is convinced that work is a fundamental dimension of man's existence on earth." (LE 4)
3. "Man has to subdue the earth and dominate it, because as the 'image of God' he is a person, that is to say, a subjective being capable of deciding about himself." (LE 6)

Reflection on Lived Reality

In our present world, work is often closely tied to identity. People are frequently defined by what they do, and there is a strong expectation to prove one's worth through visible achievements. Today, "what we do" often replaces "who we are." The pressure for "output" can make us feel like cogs in a machine. Furthermore, the emergence of artificial intelligence adds a layer of unease as people question if their contribution remains necessary. The encyclical brings us back to a deeper truth: the person exists before the work.

Reflection Questions

- **When stripped of professional titles and achievements, what core dignity remains?**
- **Do I treat others as "functions" to be used or as "subjects" with their own sacred stories?**
- **How can I foster a culture where people feel valued for their presence, not just their output?**



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Chapter Two: The Human Person, Image of God

Summary

This chapter develops the teaching that the human person is the "subject" of work. Work flows from being created in the image of God and is a participation in God's creative activity. The encyclical distinguishes between the objective dimension (what is produced) and the subjective dimension (the person who works). The subjective dimension is always primary. This levels the social hierarchy, asserting that humble service carries the same inherent dignity as the highest office.

Salient Quotations

1. *"The expression 'subdue the earth' has an immense range... through the conscious activity of man, resources can be discovered and used for his ends." (LE 4)*
2. *"In the first place, work is 'for man' and not man 'for work'." (LE 6)*
3. *"As a person he works... these actions must all serve to realise his humanity." (LE 6)*

Reflection on Lived Reality

Technology has made it possible to perform tasks more quickly, often without human involvement. While efficient, this raises questions about human value. Worth can seem tied to speed or results. There is also a tendency to overlook forms of work that do not produce visible products, such as care, listening, and presence. This chapter invites us to rediscover a more human vision where the dignity of the person is not diminished by the simplicity or hiddenness of their task.

Reflection Questions

- *How does knowing I am a "co-creator" change my attitude toward repetitive or mundane tasks?*
- *Do I secretly rank the "value" of people based on their job descriptions or social prestige?*
- *How can I better honour the "image of God" in those whose work often goes unrecognised?*

Chapter Three: The Relationship Between Labour and Capital

Summary

This chapter reflects on the tension between labour and capital. It affirms that labour has priority because it is the expression of the human person, while capital is merely a tool created to serve work. The encyclical identifies the error of reducing labour to a "commodity" to be used for economic purposes. The call is to transform economic systems so they serve the person, rooted in a moral vision of justice and solidarity.

Salient Quotations

1. *"Labour is always a primary efficient cause, while capital remains a mere instrument." (LE 12)*
2. *"The error of early capitalism can be repeated wherever man is treated on the same level as the material means of production." (LE 13)*
3. *"The worker desires to be able to know that in his work he is working 'for himself'."*



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(LE 15)

Reflection on Lived Reality

With the growth of technology, "capital" often looks like algorithms and data. People can feel disposable in a system that values outcomes over well-being. We must advocate for workplaces where every member of the human family feels a sense of belonging. Even within complex systems, there is always the possibility of acting with justice, respect, and solidarity.

Reflection Questions

- *Where do I see "systems" or "efficiency" being prioritised over the actual well-being of people?*
- *What act of solidarity can I perform for someone who feels like a "cog in the machine"?*
- *How can we ensure our institutions remain "human-centric" in an increasingly automated world?*

Chapter Four: Rights of Workers

Summary

The rights of workers - including fair wages, safe conditions, and social security - are essential expressions of dignity. A just wage is a key measure of justice, as work must allow a person to support a family. Crucially, the chapter highlights the "right to rest" as a fundamental necessity to nourish family and spiritual life.

Salient Quotations

1. *"A just wage is the concrete means of verifying the justice of the whole socio-economic system." (LE 19)*
2. *"The second point concerns the right to rest... at least Sunday, and also a longer period of rest, namely the holiday." (LE 19)*
3. *"All these rights gave rise to the right of association for the purpose of defending the vital interests of those employed." (LE 20)*

Reflection on Lived Reality

In a culture of constant availability via smartphones, reclaiming the "right to rest" is a spiritual necessity. Digital connectivity often blurs the boundary between service and exhaustion. Many experience a profound imbalance, where time for relationships and reflection is reduced, leading to a "deep fatigue" of the spirit. We must rediscover that work is meant to serve life, never the other way around. Authentic development requires that we protect the space needed for silence and contemplation.

Reflection Questions

- *Do I respect the boundaries and "right to rest" of those I work with, especially regarding out-of-hours communication?*
- *How can we cultivate a community culture that actively protects the sanctity of family time?*
- *Does our current way of working allow for a "sacred equilibrium" where work serves the growth of the spirit?*



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Chapter Five: The Spirituality of Work

Summary

The final chapter reveals that work is a sharing in God's creative activity. When united with Christ, work becomes a participation in redemption. Even work that is difficult, routine, or unnoticed becomes meaningful when lived with love. The daily effort and quiet fidelity of ordinary life are a path to holiness. Holiness is not separate from daily work; it is found within it.

Salient Quotations

1. "Man, created in the image of God, shares by his work in the activity of the Creator." (LE 25)
2. "The Christian finds in human work a small part of the Cross of Christ and accepts it in the same spirit of redemption." (LE 27)
3. "Uniting work with prayer, know the place that work has in the development of the Kingdom of God." (LE 27)

Reflection on Lived Reality

In a world seeking visible success, this chapter offers a quieter vision. Patience, generosity, and faithfulness are formed through the ordinary moments of daily life. Work is not a distraction from prayer; it is a form of prayer. To live this is to find God in the office, the home, or the classroom. This reflects the spirit of Nicolas Barré, who saw the presence of God in the simplest acts.

Reflection Questions

- *Can I see the "toil" or challenges in my current role as a way of sharing in the creative work of God?*
- *How can I transform my most difficult task today into a "quiet offering of love"?*
- *What would change in my daily motivation if I truly believed my work was building the Kingdom of God?*

A Call to Transformation: Personal Response

To respond to this encyclical, we must shift our mindset from seeing life as a series of tasks to seeing it as a journey of dignity.

1. *Protect the Sacred Space of Home: Set a firm "end" to your digital workday to honour your family's right to your full presence.*
2. *Choose "Enough" Over "More": Practise simplicity. By choosing to live with "enough" rather than excess, you free up resources to share with those in need.*
3. *Honour Your Gifts and Your Labour: Respect your own dignity by using your unique talents with integrity, seeing your work as a contribution to the common good.*
4. *Value the Person Over the Product: Start every interaction with a person, not a task. A person's inherent dignity is always more important than their professional utility.*
5. *Reclaim Your Interior Peace: Commit to fifteen minutes of silence daily. This reminds you that your value is defined by your "being," not your "doing."*



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Prayers of the Community

Response: Lord, graciously hear us.

- **For the Church: That we may be a prophetic voice for the dignity of every individual, following the tradition of justice and love. Lord, hear us.**
- **For World Leaders and Employers: That they may prioritise the human person over profit, creating systems of fair wages and safe conditions. Lord, hear us.**
- **For Workers: That they may be valued as persons, given respect and dignity. Lord, hear us.**
- **For the Overworked and Unemployed: That those burdened by exhaustion and those struggling to find a place in the economy. Lord, hear us.**
- **For our Families: That our homes may be sanctuaries of rest where we are loved for who we are, not just for what we achieve. Lord, hear us.**

Concluding Prayer: Gracious God, You have given us the gift of work to share in Your creative mission and the gift of rest to restore our souls. Help us to live out these truths. May our hands be diligent in service and our spirits be grounded in our true dignity. Transform our actions to build Your kingdom. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Blessing for the Journey (let us pray for one another)

May the Lord bless you and keep you as you walk the path of service and rest. May He grant you a discerning heart to know when to labour with passion and when to pause in holy stillness. May He give you clear eyes to see the inherent dignity in every person you encounter. As you return to your workplace, may your hands be instruments of peace. As you return to your home, may you find the joy of being truly "home." May you always remember that you are loved for who you are, not for what you produce. Go forth with courage, grounded in dignity and guided by love. Amen.

Dear participants, we are giving you the references to have direct access to these foundational texts, the official links from the Vatican and other key institutions.

Primary Vatican Documents

These are the official English translations on the Holy See website:

- **Laborem Exercens (On Human Work, 1981):** https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html
- **Rerum Novarum (On Capital and Labour, 1891):** https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html
- **Laudato Si' (On Care for Our Common Home, 2015):** https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html
- **Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church:** https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html



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April Growth session

Theme: Universal Fraternity and Social Friendship

Introduction: A Call to Radical Encounter

We enter this growth session as we stand in 2026, a time where the "unexpected eruption" of the global pandemic has moved from a recent memory to a permanent lesson: no one can face life in isolation. Fratelli Tutti is our prophetic roadmap for a world defined by "digital walls" and "hidden exiles." For the Nicolas Barré family, this is a call to move beyond professional management and toward a culture of encounter. We are challenged to recognise that every person is a true brother or sister, regardless of their status, origin, or belief.

Opening Prayer

Lord, Father of our human family, You created all human beings equal in dignity. Pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter and dialogue. Grant us the grace of a true metanoia, a change of mind and heart, so that we do not just see the stranger, but recognise the face of Christ within them. May this time move us to build bridges where there are walls, and to offer a love that is active, sacrificial, and deeply rooted in Your care for all. Amen.

I. Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship

Chapter 1: Dark Clouds over a Closed World

Reflection:

Pope Francis diagnoses a "shattered" world where concepts like democracy and freedom are manipulated for the sake of power. We see a "gap between personal well-being and the prosperity of the larger human family" that has stretched to the point of complete division. This chapter highlights the "culture of walls" and the "culture of waste" (n. 18-24), where the unborn, the poor, and the elderly are treated as disposable. For us, this "spiritual rot" manifests as a loss of historical consciousness and an indifference toward the common good.

- **Quote 1: "Kindness ought to be cultivated; it is no superficial bourgeois virtue... it facilitates the quest for consensus." (n. 224)**
- **Quote 2: "Digital connectivity is not enough to build bridges. It is not capable of uniting humanity." (n. 43)**
- **Quote 3: "The gap between concern for one's personal well-being and the prosperity of the larger human family seems to be stretching to the point of complete division." (n. 31)**

Reflection on Lived Reality:

In our CHIJ contexts, we are often overwhelmed by "digital aggression" and the pressure for efficiency. These quotes remind us that kindness is not a minor politeness but a moral choice that protects others from the "cruelty" of modern life. We are challenged to look at our "hidden exiles": staff, students, persons we work with who feel invisible and break the clouds of indifference with intentional, heart-to-heart dialogue.

Questions for Reflection:

- **In what specific ways have I allowed "digital noise" or "market logic" to replace real encounter with my colleagues?**
- **Who are the "disposable" people in my current professional environment that I have**



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failed to truly see or value?

Chapter 2: A Stranger on the Road

Reflection:

Using the Parable of the Good Samaritan as a "ray of light" (n. 56), the Pope argues that we are co-responsible for creating a society that includes and integrates the fallen. This is a call to become "neighbours" to others, overcoming prejudices and historical barriers. He warns against a society that is "illiterate in caring for the frail and vulnerable" (n. 64). We are reminded that we should not expect everything from those who govern; rather, we must personally stop for the "wounded" person on our own road.

- **Quote 1: "Each day we are offered a new opportunity... We should not expect everything from those who govern us." (n. 77)**
- **Quote 2: "The distinction between 'me' and 'other' is slowly disappearing... there is only 'us'." (n. 35)**
- **Quote 3: "Existence is a relationship... life is not simply time that passes; life is a time for encounter." (n. 66)**

Reflection on Lived Reality:

We often wait for "the system" or "the Board" to fix social issues. This chapter calls for personal responsibility. In the Nicolas Barré family, being a partner in mission means stopping for the one who is failing, even when it is inconvenient. We move from "managing" problems to "encountering" people, ensuring our mission is not an arena for power plays but a space for lifting up the fallen.

Questions for Reflection:

- **When I see a "wounded" situation in my school, workplace or community, is my first instinct to help or to find a justification for why it is not my responsibility?**
- **How can I turn my daily administrative tasks into "times for encounter" rather than just "time passing"?**

Chapter 3: Envisaging and Engendering an Open World

Reflection:

The Pope introduces "social friendship"—a love that seeks the best for others simply because of their inherent dignity. This movement toward solidarity celebrates the beauty of diversity rather than eliminating differences. Crucially, Pope Francis reiterates the "Common Destination of Created Goods" (n. 119): if one person lacks what is necessary for dignity, it is because another is detaining it. The right to private property is always secondary to the universal destination of the world's resources.

- **Quote 1: "Love also impels us towards universal communion." (n. 95)**
- **Quote 2: "The spiritual stature of a person's life is measured by love." (n. 92)**
- **Quote 3: "If one person lacks what is necessary to live with dignity, it is because another person is detaining it." (n. 119)**

Reflection on Lived Reality:

We live in a society that measures "stature" through titles, wealth, or key performance indicators (KPIs). This chapter corrects us: our stature is measured by our love. For the IJ family, our schools and centres, workplaces must be places where "real faces" are loved, moving beyond transactional relationships to a communal one where we recognise rights that are born of inalienable human dignity.



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Questions for Reflection:

- **Does my "spiritual stature" reflect the time I invest in the life of the "other," or is it focused on my personal success?**
- **How does the principle of the "universal destination of goods" change how I view the resources and budget I manage in my mission, in my family, school, workplaces?**

Chapter 4: A Heart Open to the Whole World

Reflection:

The Pope uses the plight of immigrants to illustrate the necessity of "gratuitousness", welcoming the stranger without expecting a tangible benefit (n. 139). This chapter addresses the tension between the "local" and the "universal" (n. 147), arguing that they are not opposites. To be truly local, one must be open to the universal fabric of humanity. He calls for "global governance" and long-term planning for migration that goes beyond single emergencies.

- Quote 1: "We are either all saved together or no one is saved." (n. 137)
- Quote 2: "Gratuitousness makes it possible for us to welcome the stranger, even though this brings us no immediate tangible benefit." (n. 139)
- Quote 3: "To be truly local, one must be open to the universal." (n. 147)

Reflection on Lived Reality:

In Singapore, we are a global hub, yet we can be protective of our local comforts. This chapter challenges our "merit-based" mindset. True service in the IJ mission is gratuitous, doing good even when it does not benefit our reputation. We discover our own beauty only when we discover we are part of a greater human family.

Questions for Reflection:

- **Do I serve others out of a spirit of gratuitousness, or because of what they can do for my community?**
- **How can I make my family, school or workplace more open to universal concerns and the needs of those far away?**

Chapter 5: A Better Kind of Politics

Reflection:

Pope Francis calls for "political charity", a leadership style that puts social love at the forefront rather than economics. He critiques "populism" that exploits the vulnerable for power and "neoliberalism" that treats the market as the solution to all problems. A better politics is one that promotes work as an essential dimension of social life and seeks "fruitfulness" over immediate "results" (n. 194). This includes a call to reform the UN and eliminate human trafficking and hunger.

- Quote 1: "Politics is something more noble than posturing, marketing and media spin." (n. 180)
- Quote 2: "It is truly noble to place our hope in the hidden power of the seeds of goodness we sow... whose fruits will be reaped by others." (n. 194-195)
- Quote 3: "The marketplace, by itself, cannot resolve every problem." (n. 168)

Reflection on Lived Reality:

For those in leadership or governance, this is a call to move away from "media spin" toward decisions that benefit the least among us. It means our "charity" must be built into our very structures and policies. We are invited to be "torrents of moral energy," initiating processes



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whose fruits we may never personally reap.

Questions for Reflection:

- **In my leadership decisions, am I more concerned with achieving quick "results" or with sowing "seeds of goodness"?**
- **How can I ensure that human dignity, rather than just financial speculation or efficiency, is the operating system of my work?**

Chapter 6: Dialogue and Friendship in Society

Reflection:

Dialogue is the "art of encounter" with everyone, including those at the peripheries. It involves the ability to respect another's point of view without falling into relativism. The Pope emphasises the "miracle of kindness"—an attitude to be recovered because it is a star "shining in the midst of darkness" (n. 222). Kindness frees us from the "frantic flurry of activity" and the anxiety that dominates the contemporary era.

- Quote 1: "Authentic social dialogue involves the ability to respect the other's point of view." (n. 203)
- Quote 2: "Kindness frees us from the cruelty... the anxiety... the frantic flurry of activity that prevail in the contemporary era." (n. 224)
- Quote 3: "Each of us can learn something from others. No one is useless and no one is expendable." (n. 215)

Reflection on Lived Reality:

Our reality is often a series of monologues. We talk at people rather than with them. This chapter calls us to the miracle of kindness in our meetings and classrooms. To listen deeply to a person we consider "difficult" is an act of social friendship. Using the image of the polyhedron, we see that each of us forms a side of a variegated unity.

Questions for Reflection:

- **Do I listen to understand the truth of the other person, or do I listen only to prepare my rebuttal?**
- **Where can I practise the "miracle of kindness" to soften a "cruel" or anxious situation in my workplace this week?**

Chapter 7: Paths of Renewed Encounter

Reflection:

Peace is an "art" that involves everyone. True reconciliation is not about "forgetting" but about renouncing the destructive power of evil and the desire for revenge (n. 251). The Pope provides an emphatic "No" to war, calling it a "stinging defeat before the forces of evil" (n. 261). He also declares the death penalty "inadmissible," emphasising the sacredness of life even for those who have committed great evils. We must cultivate a "penitential memory" that accepts the past without being enslaved by it.

- Quote 1: "There is no peace without justice, and no justice without forgiveness." (n. 252)
- Quote 2: "Forgiveness does not mean forgetting... it means choosing not to yield to the same destructive force." (n. 251)
- Quote 3: "Never again war!" (n. 258)

Reflection on Lived Reality:

Conflict is inevitable in any mission. This chapter tells us that being an "artisan of peace" is



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proactive work. For the Nicolas Barré family, this means resolving conflicts through "renewed encounter" rather than avoidance or silence. Loving an "oppressor" in a conflict means helping them to change, not allowing them to continue their behaviour.

Questions for Reflection:

- **Am I an "artisan of peace" in my community, or do I contribute to division through gossip or avoidance?**
- **Is there a past hurt in my professional life that requires a "penitential memory" and a step toward reconciliation?**

Chapter 8: Religions at the Service of Fraternity

Reflection:

Religions remind us of the existence of "transcendent truth," which is the source of human dignity. Religious formation fortifies consciences against individualism and materialism. The Pope asserts that terrorism is not due to religion but to erroneous interpretations and policies of injustice (n. 283). The Church does not "restrict her mission to the private sphere" but attends to the common good and integral human development.

- **Quote 1: "Faith leads a believer to see in the other a brother or sister to be supported and loved." (n. 285)**
- **Quote 2: "God does not look with his eyes, God looks with his heart." (n. 281)**
- **Quote 3: "We adopt dialogue as the way, common cooperation as conduct, and mutual knowledge as method and standard." (n. 285)**

Reflection on Lived Reality:

In our diverse institutions, be it families, schools, companies, we are a microcosm of the world. Our faith must never be a reason for exclusion. We are called to "look with the heart," seeing the goodness in everyone, regardless of their path. We commit, in the name of God, to a path of peace and dialogue.

Questions for Reflection:

- **Does my faith make me more "open" and cooperative, or more "closed" off in my own certainties?**
- **How can I "look with the heart" at someone I find difficult to relate to today?**

II. The Intentional Response

Leader: We must now move from reflection to an Intentional Response. This must be a deliberate choice that is evidenced in our daily lives. It must cost us something.

Community Commitment:

"I choose to no longer be a bystander, but an artisan of encounter. I choose to see every person as a brother or sister. Today, I intentionally choose to:

- 1. Adopt dialogue as my way, even when I disagree.**
- 2. Practise the miracle of kindness by slowing down my frantic activity for the sake of one person.**
- 3. Commit to a specific seed of goodness in my mission, letting go of the need for immediate results."**

The Final Blessing: Artisans of a New Encounter

Leader: As we depart from this growth session, let us not leave behind the "miracle of kindness" we have rediscovered. We go forth not as managers of tasks, but as artisans of



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peace and social friendship.

All: May we look with the heart, for that is how God sees.

Leader: May the Lord grant us the grace of a "penitential memory" that heals past hurts and the courage of "political love" that sows seeds for a future we may not see.

All: May our families, schools and workplaces be of light, where every face is recognised and no one is expendable.

Leader: May we be freed from the "frantic flurry of activity" and the "digital noise" that drown out the cry of the hidden exile. May our hands be open in gratuitousness, welcoming the stranger as a true brother or sister.

All: We choose the "art of encounter" over the "culture of walls."

Leader: Lord, move us out of our indifference and our "closed worlds." Let the love of God move us to do something that costs us to reach out. May the IJ Sisters and the entire Nicolas Barré family be a light of social friendship and a family of brothers and sisters. Amen.

And may the blessing of God the Father who created us equal in dignity, the Son who is the stranger on our road, and the Holy Spirit who impels us toward universal communion, rest upon us and the entire Nicolas Barré family, now and forever. All: Amen.

Leader: Go in peace to love and serve the human family.

All: Thanks be to God.

Fratelli Tutti

Here is the link for the full encyclical

[Fratelli tutti \(3 October 2020\)](#)

Fratelli tutti (All Brothers) is the third encyclical of Pope Francis, subtitled "on fraternity and social friendship"; it was released in 2020. In the document, Francis states that the way the COVID-19 pandemic was managed by world countries has shown a failure in global cooperation. The encyclical calls for more human fraternity and solidarity, and is a plea to reject wars.

The document was signed on 3 October 2020, on the occasion of Pope Francis's visit to the tomb of his namesake, Francis of Assisi, and was published the following day on the saint's feast day.

Background

Fratelli tutti is Pope Francis' third encyclical letter, after Lumen fidei and Laudato si'.^[1] The document was first announced on 5 September 2020.^[2]

The encyclical's title is taken from Francis of Assisi's Admonitions. St Francis of Assisi used to say: "All brothers and sisters". And so, men and women of every religious confession are uniting themselves today in prayer and penance to ask for the grace of healing from the pandemic.

Watch a video that summarises the Pope's message!

<https://youtu.be/C1xzOO3dzvk?si=qkMfWRbQESZV1cGp>

Here are the Previous Growth sessions on the pope's encyclicals, exhortations and apostolic letters.

March

Theme: Integral Ecology - Cry of the Earth and Cry of the Poor

Introduction: A Prophetic Call in a Wounded World



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This growth session invites the IJ Sisters, associates, collaborators, partners in mission, and friends to enter into the profound heart of Pope Francis's encyclical, Laudato Si'. As we stand in 2026, the message of this document has moved from a gentle warning to a critical emergency. We live in an era where the "rapidification" of life, climate instability, and widening social inequality are no longer distant news reports but realities felt in our own neighbourhoods and by the very people we serve. We situate this reflection in a world that is deeply wounded by indifference and a "throwaway culture" that treats both the resources of the earth and the lives of the marginalised as disposable.

It is vital that we delve deep into this message of the dual cry. We cannot claim to love the Creator if we have no regard for His creation. This session is not merely about environmental data; it is about a radical, integrated response from the heart. It provides a deep structure for reflection, moving us from the inertia of our comfortable lives toward a deliberate, intentional choice that costs us something for the sake of the common good. We are called to an interior conversion that manifests as outward sacrifice, ensuring our lives become living evidence of God's providence and care.

Opening Prayer

Loving God, God of compassion, we gather as a family with open hearts. We listen for Your voice speaking to us through the prophetic words of Pope Francis. We confess that our own busyness and the noise of the world often drown out the quiet weeping of the earth and the silent suffering of the poor.

Touch our hearts today. Let Your message break through our defences and unsettle our comfort. Grant us the grace of a true metanoia, a change of mind and heart, so that we do not just hear these words, but feel them. May this time of reflection move us to a love that is active, sacrificial, and deeply rooted in Your care for all that You have made. Amen.

I. Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home (Pope Francis)

Chapter 1: What is Happening to Our Common Home

Summary: Pope Francis begins by providing a sobering diagnostic of the physical health of our planet. He identifies that our sister, Mother Earth, is crying out because of the damage we have inflicted upon her through our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods God has placed in her. This chapter moves beyond scientific data to address the spiritual rot of a throwaway culture where everything is quickly reduced to rubbish.

The Pope highlights that the climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all. However, he notes that the most serious effects of environmental challenges are felt by the poorest people on the planet. This creates a moral crisis where the pursuit of industrial progress has left us disconnected from the natural world and the people who suffer most from its degradation.

Finally, the chapter challenges the global indifference that stems from a lack of vision. We are warned that we are losing our sense of beauty and our capacity for wonder. To address this, we must dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus discover what each of us can do about it.



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- Quote 1: "The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth." (n. 21)
- Quote 2: "The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all." (n. 23)
- Quote 3: "We have to realise that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach." (n. 49)

Reflection on Lived Reality: The interrelatedness of these quotes highlights that our environmental waste is not just a physical problem but a spiritual one. When the Pope speaks of the earth as a pile of filth, he is pointing to a heart that has lost the capacity to wonder. In our daily lives as members of the Nicolas Barré family, we often contribute to this filth through our reliance on convenience, plastic, and excess, forgetting that the climate we are degrading belongs to the poor children we serve.

In our current reality, we are challenged to see that our small wastes are actually acts of non-solidarity. We live in a society that encourages us to filter out the bad news to maintain our comfort. However, we are called to convert this global indifference into personal suffering. If we do not feel the pain of the earth, we will never find the motivation to change our consumption habits.

For the ordinary person, be they religious or lay, this chapter is a call to honesty. We often talk about care in our missions while our personal lifestyles remain tied to the very systems that destroy the planet. This chapter demands that we look at our rubbish bins and our energy usage not as logistics, but as moral choices that either help or hinder the common good.

Questions for Reflection:

1. In what specific ways has my desire for personal convenience blinded me to the pile of filth I am helping to create?
2. Do I truly believe that the climate belongs to the poor, or do I act as if my comfort is a right that affects seriously their survival?

Chapter 2: The Gospel of Creation

Summary: In this chapter, the Pope offers a theological re-reading of the Genesis accounts. He clarifies that the biblical command to have dominion over the earth is not an invitation to absolute mastery. Instead, it is a call to tilling and keeping the garden of the world, where tilling refers to cultivating and keeping refers to caring, protecting, and overseeing.

He argues that human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour, and with the earth itself. When one of these relationships is broken, the others are inevitably damaged. This chapter reminds us that every creature has its own value and purpose, and none is superfluous in the eyes of the God of compassion.

The natural environment is described as a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity. This means that we do not own the earth; we are its stewards. By recognising the message that God has written in the beauty of creation, we are invited to move away from a self-centred existence toward a life of gratitude and communal responsibility



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- Quote 1: "Human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself." (n. 66)
- Quote 2: "The natural environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity." (n. 95)
- Quote 3: "Every creature has its own purpose. None is superfluous." (n. 84)

Reflection on Lived Reality: The interrelatedness here establishes that a sin against nature is a sin against God and our neighbour. We cannot claim to be in a right relationship with Loving God if we are actively destroying the patrimony He left for everyone. This chapter calls us to a radical humility, recognising that even the smallest creature in our gardens or communities has a purpose independent of its usefulness to us. Today, we are challenged by a world that views everything, nature and people alike, as useful or useless. In the IJ mission, we might fall into the trap of valuing only what is productive.

This chapter reminds us that our homes and workplaces are part of a sacred web. When we neglect the earth, we are actually breaking our relationship with God because we are rejecting His handiwork.

To move beyond ourselves, we must reflect on the collective good. If we use more than our share of water or energy, we are essentially stealing from the patrimony of humanity. This challenges our lived reality of ownership. We are invited to move from the mindset of "This is mine" to "This is entrusted to me for the sake of all."

Questions for Reflection:

1. How does my treatment of the physical world around me reflect my actual relationship with God?
2. If every creature is not superfluous, how does this change the way I view the difficult or least productive people in my community?

Chapter 3: The Human Roots of the Ecological Crisis

Summary: This chapter provides a deep critique of the technocratic paradigm that dominates modern society. The Pope explains that we have become obsessed with a form of power that seeks to manipulate nature and people for the sake of profit. We act as if the earth has infinite resources, which leads to a ravenous consumption that disregards the limits of the planet.

The Pope warns that when technology becomes the primary way we relate to the world, we lose our capacity to make deliberate, moral choices. Our freedom is overshadowed by the drive to consume and the pressure of a market that values speed over depth. This paradigm tends to exclude those who are not productive, leading to a disregard for the inherent worth of the poor.

Ultimately, the chapter argues that the ecological crisis is a symptom of a deeper human crisis. We have lost a sense of our place in the world and have placed the human ego at the centre. Without a renewed anthropology that recognises our dependence on God and creation, we will continue to ignore both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor



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- Quote 1: "The technocratic paradigm also tends to dominate economic and political life." (n. 109)
- Quote 2: "Our capacity to make deliberate choices... is overshadowed by the drive to consume." (n. 203)
- Quote 3: "When we fail to acknowledge the worth of a poor person... it becomes difficult to hear the cry of nature." (n. 117)

Reflection on Lived Reality: These quotes are interrelated through the concept of power. When we let consumption drive us, we lose our capacity to make deliberate choices. We become slaves to the most efficient system, often at the cost of the human person. This is especially true in our professional environments where efficiency often trumps empathy.

The Choice for Human Connection

This chapter invites us to transcend the technocratic paradigm by rediscovering the primary value of the human person. It calls us to prioritise the depth of human contact over the speed of digital efficiency, and to find contentment in simplicity rather than the constant cycle of upgrading. For the Nicolas Barré family, this is an invitation to return to the heart of our founder's charism: recognising that our most transformative "tool" is not our technology or our sophisticated systems, but our radical abandonment to God and our unwavering trust in His providence.

Questions for Reflection:

1. **In my daily interactions, how can I ensure that my use of technology serves to bridge the gap between myself and others, rather than acting as a barrier to hearing their true needs?**
2. **Where in my life can I reclaim the freedom of simplicity, choosing an ethical path that honours the dignity of creation over the pressure to consume?**

Chapter 4: Integral Ecology

Summary: Pope Francis introduces the concept of integral ecology as a framework that acknowledges the interconnectedness of all things. He asserts that we are not faced with two separate crises, one environmental and one social, but rather one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Every aspect of our lives affects the health of the earth.

This chapter emphasises the importance of the common good and the principle of solidarity. It asks a haunting question: What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up? This intergenerational justice requires us to look beyond our own immediate needs and consider the legacy we are creating for the future.

Finally, the chapter discusses the need for cultural ecology, protecting the diverse cultures of the world. Every violation of solidarity or civic friendship is harmful to the environment. To be truly ecological, we must be deeply human and deeply connected to the communities in which we live and serve.

- Quote 1: "Analysis of environmental problems cannot be separated from the analysis of human, family, work related and urban contexts." (n. 141)
- Quote 2: "What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to



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children who are now growing up?" (n. 160)

- Quote 3: "Every violation of solidarity and civic friendship harms the environment." (n. 142)

Reflection on Lived Reality: The interrelatedness here is found in the concept of the common good. Integral ecology requires us to see that our family life, our work life, and our ecological footprint are all part of one story. When we harm our relationships, we harm the earth. When we harm the earth, we harm the family.

In our current reality, we often compartmentalise our lives. We might be kind at home but indifferent to the environment at work. We are challenged to live a life of integrity where our choices in one area support the others. This is a call to intergenerational justice, asking us to consider the children of the future in every decision we make today.

To reach beyond self, we must consider the solidarity mentioned by the Pope. Do we live as if we are part of a global family? This chapter challenges us to ensure our community life is a model of civic friendship that protects, rather than exploits, our shared environment.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What kind of world am I personally leaving for the children of the next generations through my daily habits today?
2. Is there a violation of solidarity in my life that is currently harming my relationship with creation?

Chapter 5: Lines of Approach and Action

Summary: This chapter calls for a new kind of dialogue at both global and local levels. Pope Francis argues that because we are interdependent, we are obliged to think of one world with a common plan. He critiques the current state of international politics for being too slow to respond to the urgency of the environmental crisis.

He insists that the environment is one of those goods that cannot be adequately safeguarded by market forces alone. We need politics that are transparent, honest, and capable of looking at the long term common good. Dialogue between religion and science is also highlighted as a vital path for finding solutions.

At the local level, the chapter encourages citizens to hold their leaders accountable and for organisations to practise rigorous care. This is a call for honesty in our business practices and a rejection of corruption. We are invited to be part of a dialogue based on the truth of our situation and the needs of the poor.

- Quote 1: "Interdependence obliges us to think of one world with a common plan." (n. 164)
- Quote 2: "The environment is one of those goods that cannot be adequately safeguarded... by market forces." (n. 190)
- Quote 3: "Honesty and rigour are needed in the care of our common home." (n. 185)

Reflection on Lived Reality: These quotes are interrelated through the need for global and



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local accountability. Because we are interdependent, my choices in Singapore affect the climate in the Pacific Islands. We must face the truth that the market cannot heal the wounds caused by human greed; only a rigorous, honest dialogue rooted in the common good can restore what is broken.

Our lived reality is frequently pressured by a culture that worships the bottom line of cost and convenience. We are challenged to bring a new level of integrity to our organisational and personal decisions. When we choose the cheapest, most convenient option, we must ask whose suffering we are subsidising. We are called to a "common plan" that restores the hierarchy of values, placing the protection of the planet and the dignity of the poor far above the pursuit of profit.

This chapter is a direct challenge to our spiritual inertia. It is easy to wait for global leaders or large corporations to lead the way, but the Pope insists that the dialogue must begin within our own hearts and homes. For the Nicolas Barré family, this means our transactions - how we buy, how we build, and how we invest - must be transparent and ethical. Our collective lifestyle must become a prophetic witness, proving that we value the common good more than our own ease.

Questions for Reflection:

- 1. When I choose "convenience" or "cost-savings," am I willing to look at the face of the person or the part of creation that pays the hidden price for my comfort?**
- 2. How does the reality of our interdependence change my understanding of "Total Abandonment" - can I let go of my own security to ensure the survival of my neighbour?**

Chapter 6: Ecological Education and Spirituality

Summary: In the final chapter, the Pope proposes a new lifestyle and a new spirituality. He calls for an ecological conversion that begins with a change of heart. Christian spirituality proposes an alternative understanding of the quality of life, encouraging a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle that finds joy in simple things.

He highlights the importance of sobriety and humility. These virtues allow us to stop and appreciate the small things, to be grateful, and to be present to one another. The concept that less is more is central here, suggesting that we find true freedom when we are no longer slaves to the need to possess and consume.

The chapter concludes with a vision of the world where every creature is a reflection of God's glory. Education must go beyond providing information; it must foster a new way of living. By celebrating the beauty of creation through prayer, we are strengthened to live out our ecological commitment with joy and peace

- Quote 1: "Christian spirituality proposes an alternative understanding of the quality of life... a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle." (n. 222)**
- Quote 2: "Sobriety and humility were not favourably regarded in the last century. And yet... they allow us to stop and appreciate the small things." (n. 224)**
- Quote 3: "Less is more." (n. 222)**



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Reflection on Lived Reality: These quotes are interrelated by the theme of spiritual joy. The Pope is not calling us to a life of misery, but to a better quality of life. By embracing sobriety and humility, we free ourselves from the obsession with consumption and find the space to appreciate our Loving God in the small things.

Our reality is a culture of more. We are challenged to believe that less is more. Can we be content with enough? This chapter challenges us to develop a contemplative gaze that sees the presence of God in a leaf or a poor person's face. This is the heart of our ecological spirituality.

To move beyond indifference, we must reflect on our own inner peace. A person who is not at peace with themselves cannot be at peace with the environment. We are called to an ecological conversion that changes not just our habits, but our very souls. This is the final step in our journey toward the common good.

Questions for Reflection:

- 1. Do I truly find joy in simple, non-material things, or is my happiness tied to what I possess?***
- 2. What would a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle look like for me in the coming year?***

II: Litany of Forgiveness

Response: Lord, forgive us and change our hearts.

- For the times we chose convenience over the health of Your earth... Response.***
- For the food we wasted while children in our own city go hungry... Response.***
- For our merit-based love that ignores the inherent dignity of the weak... Response.***
- For our silence in the face of the technocratic paradigm that crushes the poor... Response.***
- For the times we used Your name to justify our own comfort and inertia... Response.***

III: The Intentional Response

Leader: We must now move from reflection to an Intentional Response. This must be a deliberate choice that is evidenced in our daily lives. It must cost us something.

Community Commitment: "I choose to no longer be a consumer of the earth, but a steward. I choose to no longer be a manager of the poor, but a brother or sister. Today, I intentionally choose to [name a specific action, such as giving up a specific luxury and donating that cost, or eliminating all single use waste in my home, or spending one hour weekly in direct accompaniment of the marginalised]."

Closing Prayer: To Move Out of Indifference

Lord, we ask for the courage to sustain this response. Move us out of our indifference and our inertia for the common good. Let the love of God move us to do something that costs us to reach out. May the IJ Sisters and the entire Nicolas Barré family and friends be a light of costly love in a world of indifference. Amen.

Blessed Nicolas Barré, pray for us.



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Laudato si' (Praise Be to You) is the second encyclical of Pope Francis, subtitled "on care for our common home". In it, the Pope criticises consumerism and irresponsible economic development, laments environmental degradation and global warming, and calls all people of the world to take "swift and unified global action".

The encyclical, dated 24 May 2015, was officially published at noon on 18 June 2015, accompanied by a news conference,

You may wish to read the encyclical for deepening your understanding of Laudato Si and draw

inspiration from it.

It is on the Vatican website at the link below:

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

.9 Important Takeaways from "Laudato Si"

"LAUDATO SI', mi Signore" - "Praise be to you, my Lord." These are the words that open Pope Francis' encyclical on ecology and care for God's creation. These words, quoting St. Francis of Assisi's beautiful canticle, remind us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.

Pope Francis addresses Laudato Si', to "every person on the planet," for we all share a common home - the earth. He focuses on a number of important themes.

- 1. A Moral and Spiritual Challenge. The ecological crisis, Pope Francis writes, is a summons to profound interior conversion — to renew our relationships with God, one another, and the created world.**
- 2. Care for God's Creation. God created the world and entrusted it to us as a gift. Now we have the responsibility to care for and protect it and all people, who are part of creation. Protecting human dignity is strongly linked to care for creation.**
- 3. We are All Connected. We are connected to the rest of the human family, to the created world, and to those who will come after us in future generations.**
- 4. Impact on the Poor. People in poverty have contributed least to climate change, yet they are disproportionately impacted by it. As a result of excessive use of natural resources by wealthy nations, those who are poor experience pollution, lack of access to clean water, hunger, and more.**
- 5. Called to Solidarity. We are one human family and have a shared responsibility for others and for creation. Wealthy countries have a responsibility to reduce consumption and should help poorer nations develop in sustainable ways.**
- 6. Technological and economic development must serve human beings and enhance human dignity, instead of creating an economy of exclusion, so that all people have access to what is needed for authentic human development.**
- 7. Supporting Life, Protecting Creation. Concern for nature is incompatible with failure to protect vulnerable human beings, such as unborn children, people with disabilities, or victims of human trafficking.**
- 8. A Time to Act. Pope Francis calls for a change in lifestyle and consumption. We can make important changes as individuals, families, and communities, and as civil and political leaders.**



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9. **Hope and Joy.** "Injustice is not invincible" (no. 74) and we act knowing that we seek to live out God's vision of renewed relationships with God, ourselves, one another, and creation.

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Feb Growth session on "Gaudete et Exsultate":

A Journey Toward Everyday Holiness

We are exploring Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate* (Rejoice and Be Glad), a call to holiness in today's world. The central message is a joyful, everyday invitation for every person to live their lives with love and to bear witness in everything they do.

Opening Prayer: The Sacred in the Ordinary

(To be prayed slowly, perhaps with a moment of silence beforehand)

Loving God, sometimes we come to You feeling like we aren't "holy enough" to be here. We carry the weight of our busy schedules, our digital distractions, and the quiet worry that we are constantly falling short.

Today, we ask You to break the myth that holiness is only for the perfect or the silent. Touch our hearts with the truth that You are in the kitchen, in the office, in the traffic, and in the messy parts of our lives.

Help us to see that our "everydayness" is Your dwelling place. When we are tired, give us Your strength. When we are cynical, give us Your joy. When we are overwhelmed, give us the "disinterestedness" of Blessed Nicolas Barré - the grace to let go of the results and simply trust in Your love.

Open our eyes during this session to see the "saints next door" and, more importantly, to see the potential for holiness in ourselves. Let this time together be more than just a study; let it be a homecoming. We ask this with open hearts. Amen.

Chapter 1: The Call to Holiness

Synopsis

Pope Francis begins by reminding us that the Lord has chosen each of us to be holy and blameless. He speaks of the saints next door - those who live amongst us and reflect God's presence. You do not need to be a bishop or a hermit; you just need to live your ordinary moments with extraordinary love.

Key Texts

1. "To be holy does not require being a bishop, a priest or a religious... We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves." (GE 14)
 - o **Highlight:** Holiness is found in the everyday tasks of a parent, a worker, or a student.
2. "I like to contemplate the holiness present in the patience of God's people: in those



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parents who raise their children with immense love, in those men and women who work hard to support their families..." (GE 7)

- **Highlight:** This is the "middle class of holiness" that surrounds us.
- 3. "Let the grace of your baptism bear fruit in a path of holiness. Let everything be open to God; turn to him in every situation." (GE 15)
 - **Highlight:** Holiness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, starting from our baptism.

Relevance and Challenge

In our modern, fast paced world, we often think holiness is "too much work" or "not for me". The challenge is to see the sacred in the mundane - washing dishes, answering emails, or listening to a friend - and to stop comparing our spiritual journey to others.

Reflective Questions

- **Who are the "saints next door" in my life who have shown me God's love?**
- **In my current daily routine, what is one small action I can perform with more love?**

Pause for a moment to reflect on the questions

Prayer

Lord, thank You for calling me just as I am. Help me to see the opportunities for holiness in my home and my workplace today. Amen.

Chapter 2: Two Subtle Enemies of Holiness

Synopsis

The Pope warns against two ancient heresies that still haunt us: Gnosticism and Pelagianism. Gnosticism is the trap of thinking our intellect and knowledge make us superior. Pelagianism is the trap of thinking we can save ourselves through our own willpower and effort, forgetting that everything is a gift of grace.

Key Texts

1. "Gnosticism... seeks to domesticate the mystery... It conceives of a mind without God and without flesh." (GE 40)
 - **Highlight:** Faith is not just a cold logic; it must touch the heart and the suffering of others.
2. "Those who yield to this... Pelagian mindset... feel superior to others because they observe certain rules or remain intransigently faithful to a particular Catholic style." (GE 49)
 - **Highlight:** Our own "doing" can become an idol if we forget our need for God's mercy.
3. "The Church has repeatedly taught that we are justified not by our own works or efforts, but by the grace of the Lord, who always takes the initiative." (GE 52)
 - **Highlight:** Grace is the foundation of everything.

Relevance and Challenge

Modern society prizes "self-help" and "personal achievement". We often feel we must earn God's love. The challenge is to let go of our ego and our need to be "right" or "perfect" by our own strength.



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Reflective Questions

- Do I ever feel superior to others because of my religious knowledge or my "good" behaviour?
- How can I better rely on God's grace rather than my own list of achievements?

Pause for a moment to reflect on the questions

Prayer

Holy Spirit, humble my heart. Remind me that without You I can do nothing, and help me to trust in Your grace more than my own strength. Amen.

Chapter 3: In the Light of the Master

Synopsis

This chapter is the heart of the encyclical. To know what holiness looks like, we must look at Jesus. Pope Francis describes the Beatitudes as the Christian "identity card". He explains that "happy" and "holy" become synonymous because they describe a person who is faithful to God.

Here are the Beatitudes with a salient point from the Pope for each:

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven
 - The Pope's Point: Wealth offers no real security. True holiness involves a "holy indifference" to riches, allowing us to find our only security in God's love.
2. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth
 - The Pope's Point: In a world of pride and conflict, meekness is a sign of inner strength. It is the ability to react with gentleness even toward those who are difficult or unpleasant.
3. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted
 - The Pope's Point: A person who sees things as they truly are and is pierced by the suffering of others is able to touch the depths of life. This shared sorrow leads to true happiness.
4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled
 - The Pope's Point: This is about a deep desire for justice in our world. It means being uneasy with the suffering of the poor and working to ensure that every person is treated with dignity.
5. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy
 - The Pope's Point: Mercy has two aspects: helping others and forgiving them. If we want God to forgive us, we must first learn to overlook the faults of our neighbours.
6. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God
 - The Pope's Point: A pure heart is one that loves with sincerity and without hidden motives. It is a heart that is not cluttered by things that distract us from God.
7. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God
 - The Pope's Point: Peace is not just the absence of war but a deliberate effort to build



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bridges. It requires a heart that is constantly seeking to create harmony in daily relationships.

8. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven

- The Pope's Point: Living the Gospel can be uncomfortable and may lead to being mocked or excluded. True holiness means accepting this path rather than compromising our values to fit in

Key Texts

1. "The Beatitudes are like a Christian's identity card. So, if anyone asks: 'What must one do to be a good Christian?', the answer is clear." (GE 63)
 - **Highlight:** Jesus gives us the practical blueprint for holiness.
2. "Giving and forgiving means reproducing in our lives some small measure of God's perfection, which gives and forgives unstintingly." (GE 81)
 - **Highlight:** Mercy is the "beating heart of the Gospel".
3. "Seeing and acting with mercy: that is holiness." (GE 82)
 - **Highlight:** Holiness is inextricably linked to how we treat the vulnerable.

Relevance and Challenge

The world tells us to be rich, powerful, and self-indulgent. Jesus tells us to be poor in spirit, meek, and merciful. The challenge is to live these "upside down" values in a competitive society.

Reflective Questions

- Which Beatitude do I find the most difficult to live out in my daily life?
- How can I be a peacemaker in my family or community this week?

Pause for a moment to reflect on the questions

Prayer

Jesus, teach me Your way. Help me to be poor in spirit and pure in heart so that I may see You in everyone I meet. Amen.

Chapter 4: Signs of Holiness in Today's World

Synopsis

Pope Francis outlines five spiritual attitudes necessary for holiness today: Pope Francis offers us these five "weapons" to help us overcome the modern cultures of anxiety, isolation, and negativity. They are the hallmarks of a heart that belongs to Christ.

1. Perseverance, Patience, and Meekness

"The first of these great signs is solid grounding in the God who loves and sustains us. This source of inner strength enables us to persevere amid life's ups and downs, but also to endure hostility, betrayal and failings on the part of others." (GE 112) "It is a sign of the inner peace that comes from the faith filled certainty that we are loved by God and that he is always with us." (GE 112)

2. Joy and a Sense of Humour



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"Far from being timid, morose, acerbic or melancholy, or putting on a dreary face, the saints are joyful and full of good humour." (GE 122) "Though completely realistic, they radiate a positive and hopeful spirit." (GE 122)

3. Boldness and Passion

"Holiness is also parrhesía: it is boldness, an impulse to evangelise and to leave a mark in this world." (GE 129) "How often we are tempted to keep close to the shore! Yet the Lord calls us to put out into the deep and let down our nets." (GE 130)

4. Community

"Growth in holiness is a journey in community, side by side with others." (GE 141) "A community that cherishes the little details of love, whose members care for one another and create an open and evangelising environment, is a place where the risen Lord is present." (GE 145)

5. Constant Prayer

"Finally, though it may seem obvious, we should remember that holiness consists in a habitual openness to the transcendent, expressed in prayer and adoration." (GE 147) "The saint is a person with a spirit of prayer, who needs to communicate with God." (GE 147)

Key Texts

1. "We need to recognise and combat our aggressive and selfish inclinations, and not let them take root." (GE 114)
 - **Highlight:** Inner strength and patience are vital in a world of instant gratification.
2. "Ill humour is no sign of holiness... The saints are joyful and full of good humour." (GE 122)
 - **Highlight:** Christian joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, even in hard times.
3. "Growth in holiness is a journey in community, side by side with others." (GE 141)
 - **Highlight:** We are not meant to be "lonely rangers" in faith.

Relevance and Challenge

We live in an era of digital noise and "cancel culture". The challenge is to remain joyful, to avoid online vitriol, and to nurture deep, prayerful silence in a world that is always "on".

Reflective Questions

- Do I bring joy to those around me, or am I often complaining?
- In what ways can I make my prayer life more "constant" rather than just a Sunday duty?

Pause for a moment to reflect on the questions

Prayer

Lord, fill me with Your joy. Help me to be bold in sharing Your love and patient with those who test my spirit. Amen.

Chapter 5: Spiritual Combat, Vigilance and Discernment

Synopsis and Paraphrase



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The final chapter reminds us that the Christian life is a constant battle against evil. We need discernment to distinguish God's voice from the voices of the world or the "tempter". Discernment is not just for big decisions but for seeing God's timing in the small things.

Key Texts

1. "The Christian life is a constant battle. We need strength and courage to withstand the temptations of the devil and to proclaim the Gospel." (GE 158)
 - **Highlight:** We must be vigilant and not grow spiritually lukewarm.
2. "Discernment... is a gift which we must implore. If we ask with confidence that the Holy Spirit grant us this gift... we will surely grow in spiritual insight." (GE 166)
 - **Highlight:** Discernment is a grace, not just a skill.
3. "It is not a matter of applying rules or repeating what was done in the past... It is an interior empowerment." (GE 173)
 - **Highlight:** We must be open to the "newness" of the Spirit.

Relevance and Challenge

We are bombarded with choices and information. The challenge is to develop a "listening heart" that can hear God's whisper amidst the cacophony of modern media and personal desires.

Reflective Questions

- **When I make decisions, do I pause to ask the Holy Spirit for guidance?**
- **Am I aware of the "spiritual combat" in my life, or have I become indifferent?**

Pause for a moment to reflect on the questions

Prayer

Spirit of Truth, grant me the gift of discernment. Help me to choose what is good and to follow Your path with courage. Amen.

Linking to the Spirituality of Blessed Nicolas Barré

The spirituality of our Founder, Blessed Nicolas Barré, resonates deeply with *Gaudete et Exsultate*.

- **Abandonment to God:** Fr Barré's core teaching of "disinterestedness" and total trust in God's Providence mirrors the Pope's warning against Pelagianism. Both urge us to stop relying on our own strength and to let God lead.
- **The Peripheries:** Just as Pope Francis calls us to find holiness in the poor and marginalised, Fr Barré was moved by the "abandoned" children of Rouen. For both, holiness is found in service to those most in need.
- **The Ordinary Path:** Fr Barré's mission was not about grand cathedrals but about simple schools and everyday education. This aligns perfectly with the "saints next door"- finding God in the simple act of teaching and loving.

Living the Call: Your Personal Path to Holiness

"Holiness is nothing other than charity lived to the full." (GE 21)

In the rush of our modern lives, we often look for grand gestures or massive shifts. However, the Holy Spirit usually whispers in the small things. This week, we invite you to choose a practical way to bring the joy of *Gaudete et Exsultate* into your world.



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1. The Grace over Grit Check

Modern culture tells us to hustle and rely solely on our own willpower. This leads to burnout and a sense of isolation from God.

- The Action: Identify one specific area of your life where you feel stressed or exhausted.
- The Prayer: Instead of trying to "fix" it alone, pause and say: *"Lord, I give this situation to You. Work through my weakness."*

2. Digital Fasting and Real Presence

Pope Francis warns that digital connections can sometimes create a deceptive sense of community while leaving us feeling lonely.

- The Action: Choose one tech free hour this week. Put away your phone and be fully present with a family member, a friend, or simply sit in the silence of God's presence.
- The Goal: To truly see the "saint next door" in the person right in front of you.

3. The Ministry of the Smile

The Pope reminds us that "ill humour is no sign of holiness." True saints are joyful and full of good humour.

- The Action: When you face a frustrating moment this week - perhaps in a long queue, a traffic jam, or a difficult email thread - choose to respond with a smile or a gentle word.
- The Goal: To practise the "meekness" of the Beatitudes in the heat of the moment.

4. Abandonment in Action: Fr Barré Way

Our Founder, Blessed Nicolas Barré, taught us the beauty of being "ready for anything" by trusting in Divine Providence.

- The Action: When your plans are interrupted or things go wrong today, take a deep breath rather than react in anger.
- The Prayer: *"Whatever happens, I trust You are here."*

My Personal Response

Use this space to commit to one small step of love.

- **One ordinary moment I want to make holy this week:**
- **One person I can encourage with a simple act of mercy:**

A question to carry in my heart: *"Lord, what is the one small thing You are asking of me today?"*

Closing Blessing:

Leader: Our session concludes, but our journey toward holiness continues. Let us pray for God's blessing.

All: May the Lord bless us and keep us. May He fill our hearts with the joy of the Gospel. Inspired by the life of Blessed Nicolas Barré, may we walk with confidence, trusting that whatever happens, God's grace is sufficient for us.

Leader: May we go forth as "saints next door," bringing peace to every home we enter. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

A Prayer to Carry With You

Lord, help me to see that my "everydayness" is Your dwelling place. When I am tired, give me Your strength. When I am cynical, give me Your joy. Help me to be a "saint next door" today. Amen.

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For further reading and reflection on your own Pope Francis reminds us that holiness is not a "special achievement" for a few, but a "joyful call" for everyone. It is lived out in the small gestures of daily life—the "saints next door." To help you with the resource, here are the official references and access links for this document.

Official Title and Reference

- Full Title: *Gaudete et Exsultate* (Apostolic Exhortation on the Call to Holiness in Today's World)
- Author: Pope Francis
- Date of Publication: 19 March 2018
- Document Type: Apostolic Exhortation (Note: While often discussed in study groups alongside encyclicals, it is technically an "Apostolic Exhortation", which is a personal call from the Pope to the faithful to live out a specific aspect of Church teaching).

Online Access

You can read the full text for free on the official Vatican website. It is available in multiple languages including English, which is the version linked below:

- Official Vatican Link: [Gaudete et Exsultate \(Full Text\)](#)

A Note for the IJ Family: When reading the document, you will notice it is divided into numbered paragraphs (e.g., §14, §112). It is often more helpful to refer to these paragraph numbers rather than page numbers when discussing the text in a group, as the paragraph numbers remain the same across all printed and digital versions.

James Martin SJ *Gaudete et Exsultate*: Top 5 Takeaways from Pope Francis' New Apostolic Exhortation <https://youtu.be/JRweQno8PJA>

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Jan Growth session on Spe Salvi

Part 3: Treasures of the Church – Reflection on Spe Salvi

The Context of Hope: To understand our theme of Radical Trust, we look to a Treasure of the Church. In 2007, Pope Benedict XVI gave us Spe Salvi, which means Saved in Hope. The Pope wrote this because he noticed a problem in our modern world: we have many small hopes, such as hoping for a promotion, a successful school event, or better technology. These are good, but they are fragile. When they fail, we feel lost. Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that we need the Great Hope which is grounded in God's infinite love. This is the only hope that can carry the IJ Family through the arduous tasks we face in our mission.

The Four Schools of Hope The Pope identifies four places where we learn how to hope. Let us look at these through our IJ lens:

1. **Prayer as our First School:** Pope Benedict says when no one else listens, God still listens. In prayer, we move from our "small hopes" for specific results to the "Great Hope" which is God himself. For the IJ Family, prayer is where we find the strength to continue when the work feels heavy.
2. **Action as a School of Hope:** All upright human conduct is "hope in action." We work



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hard in our schools and missions, but hope gives us the freedom to serve without being obsessed with immediate results. We plant seeds today, trusting that God will bring the harvest.

3. **Suffering as a School of Hope:** We cannot fix every wound by our own power. However, when we suffer with Christ, our pain is transformed. Hope gives us the courage to "remain" with those in distress at the foot of their crosses, just as Mary did.
4. **The Judgment as a School of Hope:** This is not about fear. It is the firm conviction that injustice will not have the last word. For the IJ Family, this is the "ultimate justice" for the poor and the forgotten. It is the hope that every tear will eventually be wiped away.

Faith as Substance: "Faith is not merely a personal reaching out towards things to come that are still absent; it gives us something. It gives us even now something of the reality we are waiting for, and this present reality constitutes for us a 'proof' of the things still unseen" (Spe Salvi, n. 7).

What does this mean for us in 2026? It means hope is not a wish for the future. It is a reality we already possess. Because we know God has already won the victory, we can live differently today. For an IJ Sister, lay partner in the Nicolas Barre family or Friend, this substance is the peace we feel even when the path ahead is unclear. We are not walking towards an empty void this year; we are walking towards a reality that God has already prepared.

Part 4: The Bridge to Blessed Nicolas Barré

The Lived Response: This theological Hope is exactly what our Founder, Blessed Nicolas Barré, called Total Abandonment. Pope Benedict XVI gives us the theory, but Father Barré gives us the lived response. If we truly believe that Faith is Substance, then we can follow Blessed Nicolas Barré's advice in Letter 45: we do not need to see clearly. We simply hold the hand of the Infant Jesus and walk forward.

The Founder's Voice: "Abandon yourself to God. He will take care of you. Do not be like those who, always wanting to see clearly, are constantly worried. Trust in His goodness" (Blessed Nicolas Barré, Letter 45).

In the spirit of Blessed Nicolas Barré, Spe Salvi reminds us that our abandonment to God's will is only possible because we have a sure hope. When we repent and believe, we are letting go of the false hopes of the world to anchor ourselves in the only hope. Hope, for him, is the ability to walk in the dark while holding the hand of the Infant Jesus. For the Sisters and lay members, this means starting the year with a perfect trust that God will provide.

Prayer of Abandonment

We pray that we may grow in deeper trust in God as our founder, Blessed Nicolas Barre

Lord, I want nothing more. I desire nothing more, only to be ready to desire what You desire and as You desire it.

It is enough for me that You hold me in Your presence, that You take care of everything, and



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that nothing escapes Your adorable guidance. O Jesus! O Love!

You are my God and my all, centre and unfathomable depth of goodness and greatness! May Jesus live and His will be done!

Choose Lord, what You want of me. Order and arrange all things in the way that pleases You. I will try to make my desires and actions Yours.

Lord, I belong totally to You. No more measuring or portioning out, neither in life nor in death, in sorrow or in joy. My beloved is all mine and I am His forever. O Jesus! O Love!

Part 5: Scriptural Foundation – The Star of the Magi

Gospel Text: Matthew 2:1-2, 9-10 "In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' ... and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection on the Journey

The Magi represent the journey of every one of us: a long trek through unfamiliar territory, guided by a light that is sometimes clear and sometimes faint. Like us, they had to leave their comfort zones to find the Infant Jesus. Their journey required a radical hope. The joy they felt was the reward of a hope that stayed the course despite the darkness.

For the Nicolas Barré family, this reminds us that we are a pilgrim people. We do not always see the final destination of our efforts, but we trust the Star.

Sacred Silence and Pondering * The Star: What is the specific star or grace that God is using to lead me into 2026? Am I willing to follow it even if the path feels unfamiliar?

Part 6: Prayer Intentions and Closing Blessing

Response: Lord, hear our prayer

For our entire IJ Family worldwide: that Sisters and lay members alike may be renewed in the joy of our shared charism and be a source of hope to those in despair. We pray to the Lord

For the children and youth in our CHIJ schools: that they may discover the seed of God within them this year and grow in wisdom and grace. We pray to the Lord

For the CHIJ Sanctuary and all children in our care: that they may always feel safe, loved, and cherished as precious children of God. We pray to the Lord

For our own families and loved ones: that God may protect them, bless their homes with



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peace, and keep us all united in His love. We pray to the Lord

For those among us who are facing illness or loneliness: that they may experience the healing presence of the Infant Jesus and the support of our community. We pray to the Lord

For the leaders of our schools and missions: that they may be granted the discerning spirit of Blessed Nicolas Barré to lead with compassion and courage. We pray to the Lord

For our world, especially where there is conflict: that the members of the Nicolas Barre family may be instruments of peace and reconciliation in every place we are sent. We pray to the Lord

For our deceased members and benefactors: that they may enjoy the fullness of the Goal they hope for in eternal light. We pray to the Lord

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing. May the boldness of Blessed Nicolas Barré inspire you to walk into this new year with a light heart. May you look beyond your own needs to be a beacon of hope to every soul you encounter, knowing that you never walk alone.

You may wish to read the encyclical for deepening your understanding of Spe Salvi and draw inspiration from it.

The Treasures of the Church

Spe Salvi (Latin for "Saved in Hope") is the second encyclical letter issued by Pope Benedict XVI. It remains one of the most significant theological reflections on the virtue of hope in the modern era.

You can find the full official text of Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical, Spe Salvi (Saved in Hope), on the Vatican website at the link below:

[Spe Salvi - The Holy See](#)

This document is a beautiful meditation on Christian hope. In it, the Pope explores how "the one who has hope lives differently" because they have been granted the gift of a new life through Christ. It is a wonderful resource for the "Settings for learning and practising hope" which include prayer, action, and even suffering.

The Author

It was written by Pope Benedict XVI, known for his profound theological depth and his ability to engage with modern philosophy. While his first encyclical, Deus Caritas Est, focused on Love, Spe Salvi focuses on the second theological virtue: Hope.

The Timing

The encyclical was released on 30 November 2007, the Feast of St. Andrew. This was during the season of Advent, a liturgical time specifically dedicated to the theme of "expectation" and "hope" for the coming of Christ.

The Reason (The "Why")

Benedict XVI wrote it to address a "crisis of hope" in the contemporary world. He observed that:

- **People often confuse "hope" with mere optimism or "belief in progress."**



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- Modernity has replaced the hope for eternal life with a hope for a better world created solely through science, technology, and politics.
- The atrocities of the 20th century (wars, ideologies) showed that progress without God can lead to "the pit of hell."

Summary of Key Themes

The encyclical is divided into several sections that trace the development of hope from the early Christians to the present day.

1. Faith is Hope

Benedict begins with St. Paul's words: "In hope we were saved" (Romans 8:24). He argues that for Christians, "hope" is not just a vague desire; it is "performative." This means that knowing we have a future makes the present more liveable. Faith is the substance of things hoped for.

2. The Concept of Eternal Life

He addresses the common misconception that "eternal life" is an endless sequence of days (which might seem boring). Instead, he describes it as a "plunge into the ocean of infinite love," a moment where time no longer exists and we are simply satisfied by the fullness of being.

3. The Critique of Modernity

Benedict explores how hope shifted from God to "Reason" and "Freedom" during the Enlightenment.

- Francis Bacon: Argued that man would be redeemed by science.
- Karl Marx: Argued that man would be redeemed by politics and the revolution.
- Benedict warns that while these types of "hope" are necessary in their own sphere, they are not the ultimate hope. Only God can provide a hope that is "absolute."

4. The "Settings" for Learning and Practising Hope

The Pope identifies four places where we can "learn" how to hope:

- Prayer: When no one else listens to me, God still listens. Prayer purifies our desires.
- Action and Suffering: We must work to make the world better, but we must also accept that suffering is part of the human condition. A society that cannot accept suffering is a society that cannot love.
- The Judgement: Benedict reframes the Final Judgement as a "setting of hope." It is not a place of fear, but a place where justice is finally done. He discusses Purgatory as a "fire" that burns away our dross and prepares us for God's love.
- Mary, Star of Hope: He concludes by looking to Mary as the ultimate example of one who hoped in God's promise even at the foot of the Cross.

(Please join us on the first Tuesdays of the month as we explore more treasures.)

Here are the Encyclicals, Apostolic exhortations and Apostolic Letters that we will explore in the coming months!

IJ Family Growth Sessions 2026: Themes and Church Treasures



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Month	Theme	Church Treasure	Author	Year	Inspiring Synopsis for the IJ Family
Jan	Hope	<i>Spe Salvi</i>	Pope Benedict XVI	2007	Hope is a gift that transforms our present. It inspires us to live with the radical trust that was so central to the life of Nicolas Barré.
Feb	Holiness	<i>Gaudete et Exsultate</i>	Pope Francis	2018	A call to find holiness in the ordinary moments of life. It inspires us to see that simple acts of love are our greatest witness.
Mar	Care and Compassion	<i>Laudato Si'</i>	Pope Francis	2015	Pope Francis calls us to an integral ecology where we hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Together they call us to a conversion of heart and a response to the dual cry .
Apr	Fraternity	<i>Fratelli Tutti</i>	Pope Francis	2020	Following our care for the earth we focus on the human family. It inspires us to build social friendship and recognise every person as a brother or sister.
May	Work	<i>Laborem Exercens</i>	Pope John Paul II	1981	Work is a way to participate in God's creative action. It inspires us to find dignity and purpose in our daily tasks and service.
Jun	The Sacred Heart	<i>Dilexit Nos</i>	Pope Francis	2024	An invitation to return to the love of the Heart of Jesus. It inspires us to lead from the heart in a world that is often fragmented.
Jul	God is Love	<i>Deus Caritas Est</i>	Pope Benedict XVI	2005	Explores the depth of sacrificial love. It inspires us to ensure that all our charity is a true reflection of the love of God.
Aug	Joy	<i>Evangelii Gaudium</i>	Pope Francis	2013	The joy of the Gospel should fill our hearts and lives. It inspires us to be joyful messengers of God's mercy to everyone we encounter.
Sep	Education	<i>Gravissimum Educationis</i>	Vatican II	1965	Focuses on the sacred duty of formation. It inspires us to guide others toward truth and the growth of the whole person.
Oct	Mission	<i>Redemptoris Missio</i>	Pope John Paul	1990	Reaffirms that the Church is missionary by nature. It inspires us



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Month	Theme	Church Treasure	Author	Year	Inspiring Synopsis for the IJ Family
			II		to keep the missionary fire alive in our various roles and callings.
Nov	The Church	<i>Lumen Gentium</i>	Vatican II	1964	Reflects on the Church as a pilgrim people. It inspires us to walk together as a community united in a universal call to holiness.
Dec	The Nativity	<i>Admirabile Signum</i>	Pope Francis	2019	A reflection on the humility of the Incarnate Word. It inspires us to marvel at the simplicity of the crèche during the Advent season.

Our IJ Family Prayer

is on Tuesdays from 8-8.30 pm via zoom

Zoom platform ID 2219523672 password 2PdEdg

Next IJ Family Prayer 12 May 2026 Here's our most recent IJ Family Prayer on 28 Apr 2026

The family that prays together stays together.
The community that prays together stays together.

Let us come together to pray as a community. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O God, come to our aid. All: O Lord, make haste to help us.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

The Examen of Consciousness

We begin by giving thanks to God for all that we are and have. We thank God for faith, for the gift of life and for all the graces of this day. We go through the day, remembering where we have encountered God, in the people we have met and the events of the day. We stop to ask Him to bless all the persons in our life and help us to love them more. (spend a few minutes to recollect our day).

Let us begin our night prayer by remembering all the persons in our family and community and for any special person/s whom we wish to remember.



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The Theme of the General Chapter of the IJ Sisters

"If you only knew the gift of God...!" (John 4:10)

These words are a gentle whisper to each of us. They remind us that before we give, we must first receive.

The Gift: We carry a treasure of love and hope. In a world that often feels dry or lonely, we are called to offer the living water of dignity and kindness.

The Encounter: Just as Jesus waited at the well, we are called to wait and listen. We meet our brothers and sisters exactly where they are, in their joys and their struggles, without judgement.

The Thirst: We look around us to see the hidden thirst in our society. Whether it is the loneliness of a family member, a colleague, an older person or the pressures on our youth, we seek to bring the comfort of God's presence to those who feel empty.

Let us pray: A Prayer from the Heart

Lord Jesus, You are the Gift of God. Meet us at the well of our own lives and fill the empty spaces of our hearts.

Help us to leave our jars behind so that we may be free to follow you. Make us simple and humble pilgrims carrying your living water to all who thirst.

May we be the bridge of hope where your love meets the world. Amen.

Scripture Reflection

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Reflecting on the Gospel of the following Sunday

Gospel Reading: John 17:1-11

Jesus Prays to Be Glorified

17 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:



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“Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. ² For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³ Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴ I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

⁶ “I have revealed you^[a] to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. ⁸ For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. ⁹ I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰ All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. ¹¹ I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of^[b] your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Reflection

John 17:1-11 emphasizes the theme of unity and glorification in the Christian faith.

- Jesus prays for his disciples, asking them to be one in Christ, highlighting the importance of unity among believers.
- The prayer reflects Jesus' desire for the disciples to know God and each other, which is central to the concept of eternal life.
- The text serves as a model for Christian unity, encouraging believers to work towards harmony and mutual support within their communities.

It also addresses the challenges of maintaining unity in a diverse and often divided world, reminding us of the power of prayer and intercession for unity.

This passage is a powerful reminder of the call to live in unity and the significance of glorifying God through our actions and relationships with one another.

Prayers and Intercessions



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Introduction

As we reflect on Christ's prayer for his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane before his passion and death, we are humbled by his immense love and concern for them. May we too, like the disciples who remained strong through personal and communal prayers, similarly grow in our faith and support one another as a Christian community, as we pray:

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

1. For the Church, that she continues to preach and witness to the Good News and bring more people to salvation.

We pray to the Lord.

2. For leaders of nations, that they will always work together to try to avoid violence and war, and seek peaceful solutions to conflicts.

We pray to the Lord.

3. For all people, as we mark World Social Communications Sunday, that we heed the Pope's call to speak the truth with love and listen to the other point of view, so as to create conditions for empathy and resolve conflicts..

We pray to the Lord.

4. For ourselves, that the Holy Spirit may give us the grace to communicate with faith, hope and charity, so that our words and actions express God's compassion for all.

We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion



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Heavenly Father, as we approach the end of the Easter season, let us not forget the power and necessity of prayer and may we too give glory to you by making sacrifices in service of others and the way we live. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen

We thank and glorify God with Mary, our Mother in her Song The Magnificat

My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.

He looks on his servant in her lowliness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.

The almighty works marvels for me,

Holy his name

His mercy is from age to age,

On those who fear him.

He puts forth his arm in strength

and scatters the proud hearted.

He casts the mighty from their thrones
and raises the lowly.

He fills the starving with good things,
sends the rich away empty.

He protects Israel, his servant,

remembering his mercy,
the mercy promised to our fathers,

to Abraham and his children forever.

Glory be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.



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Prayer of Abandonment

We pray that we may grow in deeper trust in God as our founder, Blessed Nicolas Barre



LORD, I want nothing more, I desire nothing more, only to be ready to desire what you desire and as you desire it.

It is enough for me that you hold me in your presence, that you take care of everything, that you watch over all my concerns, all that happens to me and that nothing escapes your adorable guidance of my life. O Jesus! O Love!

You are my God and my all, centre and unfathomable depth of goodness and greatness! May Jesus live and His will be done! There is nothing left for me to desire.

Choose Lord, what you want of me. Order all things, plan and arrange all things in the way that pleases you, and I will try and make my desires and actions yours, to follow you in everything and everywhere, without reserve or limit.

Finally, Lord, I want to belong totally to you, no more measuring or portioning out, neither in life nor in death, in sorrow or in joy, on earth or in heaven. My beloved is all mine and I am His forever. O Jesus! O love!

Blessed Nicolas Barre, pray for us. Mother Mathilde and all our sisters and loved ones who have gone home to God, intercede for us.

Prayer to God through the intercession of Mary, our Mother



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Dear Mary, Immaculate Mother of God and our Mother, we ask you to be the Lady of our home and community. Guard it, dear Mother from any form of disaster and protect us from all evil.

Dear Mary, preserve each person in our family and community. Watch over their going out and their coming in. Pray for us that when the Lord calls us home, we may be in a state of grace.

Preserve dear Lady, all the sisters, lay members of the Nicolas Barre family and friends and bless the people they love and care for.

Bless too, all those in our community of prayer who cannot join us tonight, all those whom we have encountered today and those who have asked for our prayers This we ask of you, through your Son, Jesus. Amen

Let us pray for God's blessings

May God the Almighty Father, give us joy and peace. Amen

May God's beloved Son, Jesus, have mercy on us and help us in good and challenging times. Amen

May the Holy Spirit always fill our hearts with love. Amen

May the Lord keep us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

And may Almighty God bless us all, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen

May the Lord grant us a quiet and peaceful night. Amen