



# SHIFTING SANDS



## Spiritual note

### What? Me...a Saint?

If you are a lifelong Catholic and especially if you went to a Catholic school, you have probably been asked to read a Papal document. Encyclicals (“circular letters”), have dealt with many matters of faith, the environment, the sacredness of life, economic issues, etc. They are usually long and –in my opinion– frequently dry and difficult reading, albeit always important. But recently, on March 19, an “Apostolic Exhortation,” more like a letter encouraging the faithful to some course of action, came from Pope Francis. It is, pure and simple, a call to holiness, but what impressed me is that the whole document brings holiness to the level of everyday living, to ordinary folks.

Let me quote: “I like to contemplate the holiness present in the patience of God’s people: in those parents who raise their children with immense love, in those men and women who work hard to support their families, in the sick.... Very often it is a holiness found in our next-door neighbors, those who, living in our midst, reflect God’s presence. We might call them ‘the middle class of holiness’.” (7)

Seven paragraphs later: “We are frequently tempted to think that holiness is only for those who can withdraw from ordinary affairs to spend much time in prayer. That is not the case. 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.... Are you married? Be holy by loving and caring for your husband or wife... Do you work for a living?

Be holy by laboring with integrity and skill in the service of your brothers and sisters. Are you a parent or grandparent? Be holy by patiently teaching the little ones how to follow Jesus. Are you in a position of authority? Be holy by working for the common good and renouncing personal gain.” (14)

The exhortation goes on to describe being holy as simply being “more alive, more human,” and touches on things that stand in the way of this, using *The Beatitudes* as a framework for deeper exploration of our common and universal vocation.

This document speaks directly to members of Porto Caravan and Porto Charities, it seems to me, because it puts our endeavors to raise up God’s Special People into the larger perspective of what the ultimate aim of our lives is, whether we are Catholic or not. I don’t think we do what we do in order to be called holy, but we do it because it’s the right thing to do. And if doing that is holiness, then we can be thankful that our common purpose puts us on the right — higher but ordinary– path.

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(If you are interested in reading the full Apostolic Exhortation *Rejoice and Be Glad*, you can find it at [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20180319\\_gaudete-et-exsultate.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudete-et-exsultate.html) or you can email me ([dill@trinitymissions.org](mailto:dill@trinitymissions.org)) and I’ll send you a copy.)