

Archbishop Lori says papal call to holiness is ‘within reach’

Pope Francis reiterates the universal call to holiness at the heart of the Second Vatican Council’s teachings in his own endearing and practical style, said Archbishop William E. Lori after the publication of the pope’s latest apostolic exhortation, “Gaudete et Exsultate” (“Rejoice and Be Glad”).

“In a very practical way, (the pope) engages us. He engages our lives and he shows us how living in this world with all of our ups and downs, all of our concerns and worries, with all of our strengths and weaknesses, we can in fact attain holiness,” the archbishop said.

The archbishop called the exhortation a “practical manual. ... It’s eminently readable and it’s inspiring because as you read it you say to yourself, ‘I can do this. This is within reach.’ ” The archbishop called it “an Easter gift from the pope.”

The saints are not always on pedestals, the archbishop said, noting that the pope quotes some favorite saints but makes them accessible.

“Then he tells us two other things. One is to pay attention to the saints next door – people who are patiently bearing sufferings, hardships, challenges,” Archbishop Lori said. “And they’re doing it with a sense of closeness to God and trust. And not feeling sorry for themselves but loving others and reaching out to others in the midst of this. And we do know people like this.

“And that convinces you – it convinces me, certainly – that the Spirit of God is active in the world, leading people to Christ and making real disciples in the world today.”

Such a view of holiness in the here and now fits hand-in-glove with what Pope Francis has said and that Archbishop Lori has emphasized: the need for Catholics to be missionary disciples, sharing their faith and love of Christ with others.

“If the word is to get out, for the most part it will be because our pastoral leaders, both ordained and lay, will read this letter, make it their own, preach about it, talk

about it, incorporate it into their pastoral planning, incorporate it into their interactions within the parish and beyond," he said.

"I certainly plan to talk about (the exhortation), pray about it, preach about it and write about it," Archbishop Lori said.

Also see:

With new document, pope shows holiness is for everyone, speakers say