



CHURCH

THE MISSIONARY COMMUNITY

10

LESSON 14

BE SAINTS, BE MISSIONARIES





Moses, feeding the lamb, reached Mount Horeb. There, in the midst of a burning bush, the angel of the Lord appeared to him. He stared at it. The bush was burning. Yet, it did not turn into ashes. Then Moses went to see this closer. From the burning bush God called Moses 'Moses, Moses'. He listened to the call God said, Come, no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet for the place on which you are standing is holy ground (Exo. 3:1-5).

God is holy and we see, many passages in the Bible, dealing with God's holiness. Since God is holy, we, His children are also obliged to live holy "For, I am the Lord your God; Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. For I am the Lord who brought you up from the land of Egypt, to be your God, you shall be holy, for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44-45). This is the exhortation God gave to Israel who were chosen as His own people.

The children of the Church who become the people of God through baptism are also given the same exhortation. In the opinion of St. Paul, all Christians are called to be saints. He addresses the Church community at Corinth like this - 'Saints in Christ and are called to be saints' (1 Cor. 1:2, Rom. 1:7, Eph. 2:19). All those who received baptism and became the members of the Church are called to holiness. Hence the Church, the community of the faithful, is holy and called to holiness.

Activity -1 Read the life of any Saint whom you like and prepare a write up on it.



THE SOURCE AND NATURE OF HOLINESS

Christian life is life in the Trinity - the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. God is holy and is the source of holiness; Every Christian who received baptism in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit participates in His holiness. St. John testifies that God is love (1 Jn 4:8). Since God is the fullness of love, God is holy. God who is love. Himself desires that His children also should be holy like Him. Hence all men should love God and fellow - beings and grow to holiness - the fullness of loving God and man.

When man stands before the holy God, he realises his own sinfulness and defects. This realisation creates in him a salutary fear of God. This fear of God persuades him to avoid sin to trust fully in God and to attain holiness. Moses who approached the burning bush (Exo. 3:1-3), and Isaiah who saw God's glory (Is. 6:17) had this experience. Hence in the presence of God's holiness, man should become humble and repentant.

The noble form of love is compassion. The greatest quality of God's holiness is His compassion. God is one who showers blessings on men, not taking into consideration whether he is good or evil and let the sun shine and rain pour down on the just and the wicked alike. God who shows mercy to His devotees through generations (Lk 1:50) and showed it to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their successive generations, pours out His mercy on each and every sinner today (Is. 54:7; Lk. 15:1-2, 11-24).

BE WITH JESUS



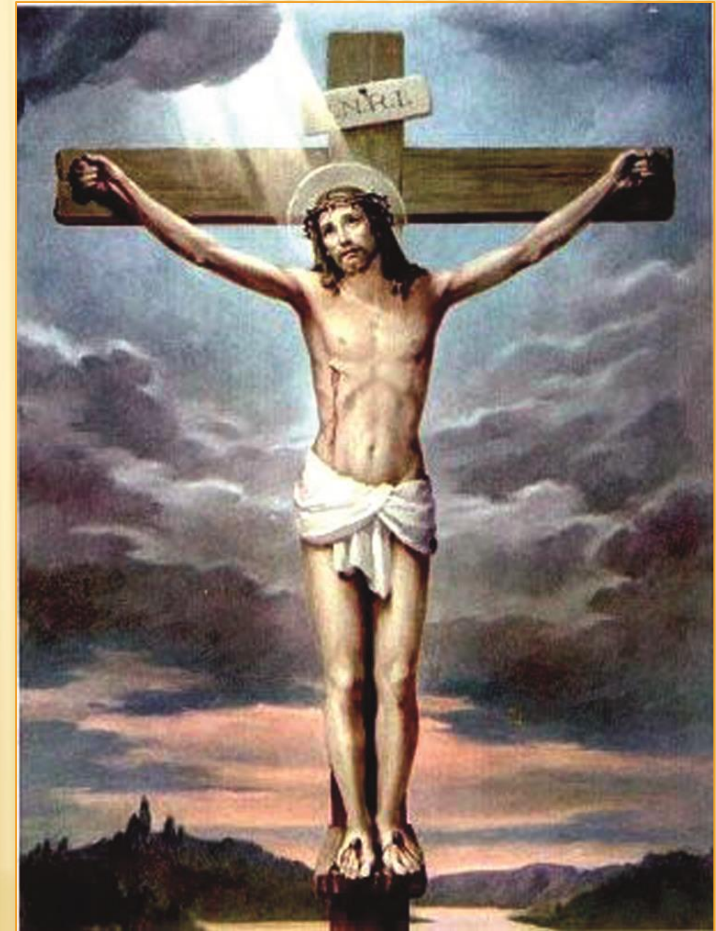
We experience God's utmost holiness in Jesus. The first means to holiness is to be with Jesus. When we stand close to something holy, we become holy. Just as the branch that is united to the vine grows strong and produces fruit (Jn. 15:40) a life that is united to Jesus will produce the fruit of holiness.

This liveliness is very clear in those who are united to Jesus. They will participate in the parish activities in a lively manner. They will be interested in participating in the daily Mass and sacramental life and will co-operate in the community activities. They will say family prayers and help their relatives and friends. They will share the joys and sorrows and needs of others. It is the conviction that when they eat, sleep and work, they are with Jesus, that helped the saints to grow in holiness. We are able to be united to Jesus today through the word of God, sacraments and a life of virtue based on the word of God.

Activity -2 'When I participate in the Holy Mass, I am growing in holiness' -
Make this clear through discussion.

LOVE: THE TOUCHSTONE OF HOLINESS

Being with Jesus means obeying His commandments. His commandment is love. Hence we must practice love to grow in holiness. The measuring rod of one's holiness is love: Charity, which is the link of perfection and fullness of commandments, will rule, enliven and lead to the end all means to attain holiness. Hence Vatican II teaches that the sign of a true Christian disciple is love for God and man. (L.G. 42).



Jesus loved us, shedding the last drop of His blood. Jesus who taught us that there is no greater love than to give up one's own life for the loved ones, showed it through His own life. (Jn. 15:13). Love that is ready to do any sacrifice for the loved ones is true love. St. Paul also teaches that love is above everything else. (1 Cor. 13:13).

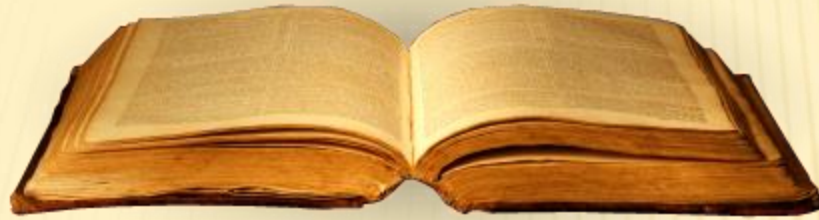
When we are ready to share our talents, knowledge, health, time and goodness with others, we grow in love and holiness. We must share this without distinction of friend or foe "If you love only those who love you, what good is there?" (Mt. 5:46). He said: Love your enemies; pray for those who persecute you; bless those who curse you" (Lk. 6:27). Christian love is manifested when we do not return evil for evil, but conquer evil with good.

CHURCH - THE MOTHER WHO NOURISHES US IN HOLINESS



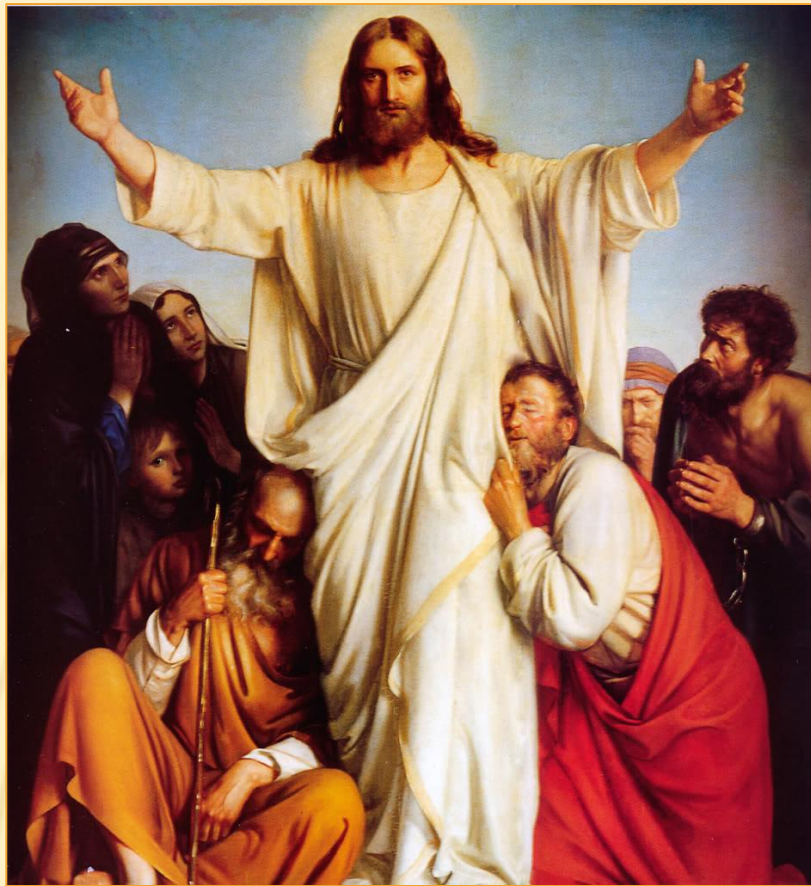
It is the Church, the sacrament and continuation of Jesus, who sanctifies us and leads us through the word of God. The Church gives us the experience of sanctification through sacraments, the Word of God and communion in the community. To the extent we share in the life of the Church, we are able to have the salvation and holiness which Jesus attained for us. We are enabled to experience heavenly joy by growing in holiness through sacraments, the word of God and communion.

HOLINESS IN DAILY LIFE.



We attain holiness in daily life by obeying the commandments of God and thus living according to His will. God's will is revealed to us through the Word of God, the rules of the Church and society and the instructions given by parents, teachers and the authorities of the Church. God's will is also revealed through the inspirations of the Holy Spirit to do good in the circumstances of daily life and the pleasant and unpleasant experiences in life. We can say we love God when we surrender ourselves to His will with love and reverence. Whenever we obey and respect parents, teachers, authorities and keep the rules and good manners, we are fulfilling the will of God, loving God and thus growing in holiness.

The touchstone of love for God is charity. The deeper a person loves God, the greater will be his love for his bretheren. “Those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen”. (1 Jn. 4:20). This is what St. John testifies. We can express our love for fellow beings by helping others in their needs, comforting them in their sorrows, visiting and consoling them when they are sick, encouraging them in their success, comforting and instilling hope in their failures. The world will know that we are the disciples of Christ growing in holiness, when we desire the good of others and pray for it, bring those who have drifted apart to reconciliation, forgive those who offend us and do good for evil. “Beloved, let us love one another because love is from God. Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.” (1 Jn 4:7).



The greatest missionary activity is a witness through holy life. Missionary activity is helping others to experience Jesus, to let His presence and activities reach all areas. Let us become missionaries of holiness by a life in accordance with the Gospel, giving the light of faith to all those around us.

**LET US
READ THE WORD OF GOD
AND MEDITATE**

Is. 6:1-60



A WORD OF GOD TO REMEMBER

“This is the will of God; your sanctification”
(1 Thes. 4:3)

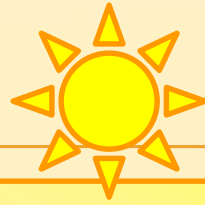
LET US PRAY

Jesus, the fulness of love, help us to grow in love, uniting ourselves to you.



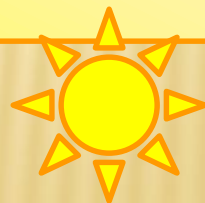
MY DECISION

I will try to witness to the love of Jesus by helping my friends in their needs.



LET US THINK WITH THE CHURCH

The holiness of the Church shines properly through the fruits of grace poured out on the faithful by the Holy Spirit. It must shine too. This holiness is manifested in various forms by the people who grow into the fullness of love according to their state of life and through that helps others to grow in holiness. (Church. 39)



LET US FIND OUT THE ANSWERS

1. Why do we say that the church is holy and she is called to be holy ?
2. Write a note on 'God, the source of holiness'.
3. Explain that love is the measuring rod of holiness.
4. Illustrate that the Church makes us grow in holiness.
5. How do we practice holiness in daily life ?



THANK YOU