

**May 5, 2020**

**Dear Parishioners of Christ on the Mountain,**

We continue our reflection on holiness with Pope Francis. Francis points out that there are two ancient enemies of holiness: Gnosticism and Pelagianism. These are ancient heresies that still plague the church today. Gnosticism gives rise to an intellect without God and without flesh. It is a pure subjective faith whose only interest is certain experiences or set of ideas and bits of information which are meant to console and enlighten but ultimately keep one imprisoned in his or her own thoughts and feelings. (36) Pope Francis expresses gratitude when he says:

Thanks be to God, throughout the history of the Church it has always been clear that a person's perfection is measured not by the information or knowledge they possess, but by the depth of their charity. They think of the intellect as separate from the flesh and thus become incapable of touching Christ's suffering flesh in others, locked up as they are in an encyclopedia of abstractions. (37)

The Gnostic think that their explanations can make the entirety of the faith the Gospel perfectly comprehensible. They absolutize their own theories and force others to submit to their way of thinking. Pope Francis explains: A healthy and humble use of reason in order to reflect on the theological and moral teaching of the Gospel is one thing. It is another to reduce Jesus' teaching to cold and harsh logic that seeks to dominate everything (39).

When somebody has all the answers for every question, it is usually a sign that they are on the wrong road. God transcends us; he is full of surprises. We are not the ones to determine when and how we will encounter him; the exact message and places of that encounter are not up to us. (41) Nor can we say that God is not, because God is mysteriously present in the life of every person. (42)

Reason has its limits. Doctrine, or better, our understanding and expression of it, "is not a closed system, devoid of the dynamic capacity to pose questions, doubts, inquiries...The questions of our people, their suffering, their struggles, their dreams, their trials and their worries all possess and interpretational value that we cannot ignore if we want to take the principle of the incarnation seriously. Their wondering helps us to wonder, their questions question us. (44)

Being Catholic does not mean we have all the answers. It means we are open to being surprised by God and mystery. We will look at another heresy Pelagianism in upcoming reflections. The text I am using is the [\*\*Apostolic Exhortation on the Call to Holiness in Today's World\*\*](#) by Pope Francis.

**In the light of the Gospel,**

**Fr. David**

**[Click here to read the full text of  
the Apostolic Exhortation on the Call to Holiness in Today's World  
by Pope Francis.](#)**