



In addition to Truth and Beauty, Goodness is one of the fundamental attributes of God. We know goodness when we experience it. The kindness, generosity, and compassion of others makes this sometimes difficult pilgrimage of life a joy and a blessing. Because God is Love, He always wills the ultimate good of everyone. He wants our happiness and salvation more than we do ourselves. This deep conviction that God is on our side is an intrinsic part of the Good News which we proclaim in Christ.

When we embrace goodness, bearing wrongs patiently, serving the needs of others, radiating joy and peace, sacrificing ourselves for love, going the extra mile, we are most imitative of God and become an extension of His life, grace, and presence in the world. Practicing goodness is one of the best methods of evangelization. Joy and love are magnetic, serving as points of attraction, so that we can share with others our faith in Jesus who is the source of our strength and the inspiration of our goodness. No one is attracted to selfishness, crabbiness, and negativity. When we radiate the goodness of God, people are always drawn to that, which is another way of saying that holiness is perennially attractive. The saints radiated the glory of God; His goodness shone out from them.

Jesus Christ is literally the Incarnation of the goodness of God. In His Sacred Heart, we behold the tremendous love of God and the passionate desire of the Blessed Trinity that we share eternity with the Lord forever. When we embrace goodness, we experience a foretaste of that blessed union, passing on to others the divine delights we ourselves have experienced.

## A NOTE FROM BISHOP HYING

# GOODNESS

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**THE GOOD IS THAT WHICH ALL DESIRE.**  
- ARISTOTLE

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## YEARLY FORMATION NEWSLETTER TOPICS

### EASTER 2020

The Paschal Mystery

### JUNE 2020

Evangelization

### JULY 2020

Discipleship

### AUGUST 2020

Baptism and Confirmation

### SEPTEMBER 2020

Reclaiming Sunday

### OCTOBER 2020

Interior Life: Prayer

### NOVEMBER 2020

Interior Life: Mortification

### DECEMBER 2020

Confession

### JANUARY 2021

Goodness

### FEBRUARY 2021

Beauty

### MARCH 2021

Truth

### APRIL 2021

New Methods

## DEFINING OUR TERMS

### GOODNESS

The good is that which perfects a thing according to its nature. For example, it is good for a tree to have deep roots because that perfects the tree according to its nature, allowing it to flourish as an excellent tree. Because a squirrel has a different nature, deep roots are not good for the squirrel, but gathering nuts is good. What are the things that perfect a human being according to our nature? There are some goods proper to us as animals, such as life, nourishment, health, the generation and care of our young; and there are goods unique to us as rational creatures made in the image of God, such as truth, which perfects our minds, and friendship or love, which perfects our wills. Now since everything that exists desires its own perfection, it follows that all things have a natural desire for goodness (although it does not follow that everything we desire is actually good; sometimes the things that appear good to us actually are not good for us, like that fourth piece of chocolate cake, or that little white lie).

### EVANGELIZATION

The word comes from the Greek *evangelion*, which means “good news,” or Gospel. So evangelization simply refers to proclaiming the Gospel. Now the Gospel—in the singular—is the good news that is at the heart of the four Gospels, namely that God, who is infinitely good and powerful, became a human being in order to rescue the human race from Sin, Death, Satan, and Hell, by freely offering up his own life for our salvation, and that he is now calling us to respond to him in faith. Evangelization is proclaiming that good news of Jesus Christ by our words and by the holiness of our lives.

### PRE-EVANGELIZATION

There are certain things we can do prior to proclaiming the Gospel (evangelization) in order to help a person be more open and ready to receive it. This can be called the work of pre-evangelization, which is like tilling the soil before planting the seed of the Gospel. Hospitality, service, and works of mercy are great examples of pre-evangelization. Showing those we meet and serve that we genuinely care about them helps create an important bridge of trust that allows our proclamation of the Gospel to be received more fruitfully.

#### Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 24

The Church which “goes forth” is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice. An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first (cf. *1 Jn* 4:19), and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast.

**An evangelizing community is one that both does the work of pre-evangelization and evangelization well. An community on mission will also give witness to a good life full of charity, in order to help lead others to God who loves us first.**

## A FORCE OF GOOD

LINDSAY FINN

"I did once say that to me art and the Saints are the greatest apologetic for our faith. The arguments contributed by reason are unquestionably important and indispensable, but then there is always dissent somewhere. **On the other hand, if we look at the Saints, this great luminous trail on which God passed through history, we see that there truly is a force of good which resists the millennia; there truly is the light of light.** Likewise, if we contemplate the beauties created by faith, they are simply, I would say, the living proof of faith." - Pope Benedict XVI, August 2008

Among other gems that could be mined from the above quote, a great idea for a New Year's resolution comes to mind: to be a witness to this great force of good.

How could one conceptualize that resolution and make real in their life for a year? The popular quote from French novelist Leon Bloy may help: "The only real sadness, the only real failure, the only great tragedy in life, is not to become a saint."

There are many facets to the life of a saint, all encompassed by a deep and abiding love for Jesus: a life of prayer, participation in the Church, love for neighbor, abandonment to the will of God, desire for heaven, growth in virtue... this list could become quite lengthy.

How can we make this idea of striving to be a saint (and thereby bringing others to the faith through our witness) more concrete? Let's look at the lives of two saints who have been great witnesses for the faith: St. Mother Teresa and St. Frances of Rome.

One of the best evangelists of the modern era, St. Mother Teresa won over the world through her goodness, born out of a love for Jesus Christ. Already a religious sister for over a decade, Sr. Teresa

experienced a "call within a call" on September 10, 1946 while on a train ride to a retreat. Jesus revealed to her the meaning of his words, "I thirst," spoken upon the cross. Sr. Teresa took this inspiration and gave herself to establishing the Missionaries of Charity, wherein she served the poorest of the poor for the rest of her life.

No stranger to mortification and sacrifice, St. Mother Teresa united herself intimately with the poor she was in service of: choosing to live in the hottest room in the house above the kitchen, owning very little, and refusing comforts, like not installing pews in the chapel. The poverty she embraced freed her to better serve those in need. Her life of virtue and profound goodness drew many to her; from there, she was able to speak directly about and invite them deeper into the faith.

Born in the late 14th century, St. Frances of Rome's life was not unlike that of St. Mother Teresa's, as she too gave herself to wholehearted service of the poor. Having felt a call to religious life in childhood, Frances' parents instead had her married. Frances became a loving wife and mother, while at the same time giving herself and her family's wealth to serve the poor in Rome.

In the midst of famines and a plague, St. Frances turned part of her family's home into a hospital, welcoming in the suffering and giving food and clothing to the poor. St. Frances gave all she had for the poor out of love for Jesus Christ and her Catholic faith. Her witness of charity and goodness inspired other women to follow suit. In the later years of her life, St. Frances founded an order for women, so they could together dedicate themselves to prayer and answering the needs of the poor around them.

Consider a resolution in this new year to follow the footsteps of St. Mother Teresa and St. Frances of Rome, witnessing to the good, practicing charity, and leading others to love the Lord.

## FURTHER STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

### TO READ

- Brandon Vogt, [Saints and Social Justice: A Guide to Changing the World](#)
- Fr. John Riccardo, [Heaven Starts Now: Becoming a Saint Day by Day](#)

### TO WATCH

- Fr. Mark Mary, [How Mother Teresa Set the World on Fire](#) (YouTube)
- Bishop Barron, [Evangelizing Through the Good](#) (YouTube)

### TO STUDY

- [Aquinas 101: Good and Evil](#)

### TO LISTEN

- [Evangelizing with Goodness, The Word on Fire Podcast](#)

## THOUGHTS FOR PARISH LEADERSHIP

This newsletter and the next two are meant to sync nicely with one another. In light of this connection, we would recommend you watch this video from Matt Fradd on [The Importance of Goodness, Truth, and Beauty](#).

The video [Outreach to the Unaffiliated](#) (that was shared in the evangelization newsletter) also bridges the topics of goodness, truth, and beauty nicely. If you didn't watch it then, we'd recommend it now.

Practicing the works of mercy and being invested in Catholic Social Teaching (like St. Mother Teresa and St. Frances of Rome) make for a powerful witness amidst the work of evangelization. Learn more about Catholic Social Teaching by following along with the current season of Freshly Brewed. Listen to the [Freshly Brewed podcast](#) or check out [www.freshlybrewedmedia.com](http://www.freshlybrewedmedia.com). Freshly Brewed is a media apostate for youth and those who love and work with them in the Diocese of Madison.

## FORMATION IN THE PARISH

### QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- How is God calling you to live more radically a good life, so as to draw others to Him?
- How are you doing with the spiritual habits we are focusing on in Go Make Disciples: 15 minutes of daily prayer, reclaiming Sunday as the Lord's Day, mortification, and regular Confession? What is going well? Which one will you commit to making progress in next?

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

- Who in your parish is a good example of evangelizing through a witness of charity and goodness?
- What saints inspire you to live more intensely a good life?
- What struck you about the connections between goodness, evangelization, and pre-evangelization?
- How could you commit to living the Church's social teaching more intensely together?






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**MADONNA DI LORETO,**
**1606**

CARAVAGGIO

Jesus Christ, in the Incarnation, gave the ultimate example of becoming poor for the sake of the poor he was serving—mankind! In this painting from Caravaggio that resides in Sant'Agostino in Rome, Mary too is pictured in a state of poverty. She has bare feet and the wall outside her door is crumbling. Even the halos surrounding Mary and Jesus' heads are simple. Fellow artists at the time, in fact, criticized Caravaggio for having made such a decision when depicting the Blessed Mother.

Mary, shown accepting poverty, came to meet the needs of the beggars at her doorstep. One of the fundamental principles of Catholic social teaching is the life and dignity of the human person. Mary in this painting is looking with love upon the couple who has appeared at her door. She sees them and recognizes their dignity; this act of love is an extension of the goodness of the Christ child in her arms.

This piece of artwork is a powerful representation of charity being a meeting place between the human and the divine. St. Mother Teresa and St. Frances of Rome gave the same witness in their own lives and work—by loving their neighbors and the poor, they showed them the face of Christ. As an evangelizer, one has the responsibility and opportunity to do the same. By living a radically good life, one can put others in touch with God Himself.