

Habits of Holiness

The first and foremost habit of holiness is doing God's will. What is God's will for us? This falls into two categories: God's will for us as Christians in general and God's will for us as individuals in particular. St. Paul's Letter to the Thessalonians gives us an idea of God's will for us in general: Rejoice in God always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks to God in all circumstances. This is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus (cf. 1The 5:16-18). God wants us to be aware of His presence, to recognize Him, to depend on Him and to turn our thoughts to Him every day, throughout the day. Jesus summed this up in the first beatitude: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Mt 5:3) To be poor in spirit means to be humble before God and to depend on Him.

St. Paul's Letter to the Thessalonians give us another idea of God's will for us in general: This is the will of God – your holiness: Have a pure mind and heart, refrain from impurity and immorality, and do not take advantage of others (cf. 1The 4:3-7). Having a pure mind and heart does not only mean avoiding unclean and lustful thoughts; it also means having pure intentions for our actions. Jesus summed this up in the sixth beatitude: "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God." (Mt 5:8)

An extension of doing God's will is obedience to God's commandments. The Book of Deuteronomy tells us, "The LORD, your God, shall you follow, and Him shall you fear; His commandments shall you observe, and to His voice shall you listen; Him you shall serve, and to Him you shall hold fast." (Dt 13:5) In the Gospels, Jesus tells His disciples, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." (John 15:16) Obedience to God's commandments is one of the surest ways in which we can live out God's will in our lives.



Another extension of doing God's will is humility. Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart." (Mt 11:29) Imagine that when Jesus said this, He was thinking of carrying out His Father's will for Him. Not only was Jesus obedient to the Father's will, Jesus also humbled Himself to do it. Philippians 2:8 tells us that "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross."

Another habit of holiness is offering spiritual sacrifices to God: "I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship." (cf. Rom 12:1). Spiritual sacrifices are acts of self-sacrifice, self-denial, mercy and forgiveness. Denying ourselves of favorite food or drink for the sake of self-discipline and strengthening our spirit are good, but denying ourselves of something if someone else can actually benefit from it is even better, like forgoing eating at your favorite restaurant so that the money can be donated to the food bank or given to a charity that feeds the homeless.

An important subset of self-giving is generosity; Jesus tells His disciples, "Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give." (Matthew 10:8) Generosity is not only about the amount of what we give; it is more importantly about what's in our hearts when we give. Are we in the habit of expecting a reward or recognition for something we have done? Do we feel that certain individuals or society in general owes us? Towards the end of his reign, David prayed to God in front of the people who had given generously towards the building of the Temple, "Who am I, and who are my people, that we should have the means to contribute so freely? For everything is from you, and what we give is what we have from you." (1Chronicles 29:14) There is much grace to be received when we don't get thanks and recognition from others; yet there is much

耶穌聖名華人天主堂
THE HOLY NAME of Jesus CHINESE CATHOLIC MISSION
5395 Light Circle NW, Norcross GA 30071 678-691-3261 hnojatl.org
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greater grace when we make sacrifices for people who are not even aware of what we do or have done for them.

There are many other habits of holiness like honesty, fairness, caring for others and doing the right thing. These habits build greater intimacy with God, builds spiritual strength to navigate life’s trials, gives us inner peace, and serves as an armor against temptation.

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

The last day to register for our Summer Camp at Unicoi State Park and Lodge is today. For more information, please contact Anhsing Shen or Huiyen Chang. Please register with Daisy.

June 21 is potluck Sunday! This is a great activity for everyone to foster fellowship in our church community. Lunch begins after the 10:30am Mass. Please bring your favorite dish to share. If you are celebrating your birthday in the month of June, we have ordered a birthday cake for you.

The Archdiocese of Atlanta has launched its “Rooted in Christ – Growing in Faith” campaign to raise funds for the programs and activities of the Archdiocese. Each parish and mission church in the Archdiocese is expected to participate with their individual goals. The Archdiocese has designated our parish goal of \$60,000, and has scheduled our parish to begin with a preparation period from January to March 2027 and actual campaign period from April to September 30, 2027.

Did you know that you can make donations to the church directly from your retirement account? Each time you make a distribution from your retirement account, it is counted as taxable income. However, if you make a donation (up to \$108,000), to qualified charities through QCD (Qualified Charitable Distributions), these donations, although not tax-deductible, are excluded from taxable income. Many older retired donors use this strategy to lower their taxable income, but it also satisfies Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) without increasing their adjusted gross income (AGI). Consult your financial advisor or contact your retirement account specialist.

Prayer List: Jasmine Ho, Michael Tan, Bian Meiyi, Chen Shupeng, Chen Jianxin, Liang Chenjing and Xu Taicheng.

Mass Schedule	Confessions	Bible Study
Sundays 10:30 AM (Chinese)	By Appointment	Wednesdays 10:00 AM (Chinese)
Sundays 2:00 PM (English)		
	Anointing of the Sick	Eucharistic Adoration
Mondays 12:00 PM (English)	First Sundays after 10:30 AM Mass	Sundays 9:00 to 10:00 AM
Tuesdays 12:00 PM (English)	First Fridays after 6:30 PM Mass	
Wednesdays 12:00 PM (Chinese)		
Fridays 12:00 PM (English)		
First Friday 6:30 PM (English)		