



# Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Peace

Cathedral of the Honolulu Diocese • Founded 1843 • National Historic Register

## **Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time**

February 19, 2023

Beloved Disciples of Christ,

Greetings of peace, love, and joy!

***“Be holy, for I, the Lord, your God, am holy.” Leviticus 19: 2***

When I became an altar server in the second grade, we met with our coordinator every month. Since I knew my way inside the church, I would always walk inside, go to the sacristy, and pass by statues of saints. In one of our formation programs, we were informed that these statues were men and women who were very holy. With their palms together or hands lifting to the heavens and having a halo, I thought these were enough to say they were holy. Also, knowing that they were very prayerful would make one holy. But when I started to hear or read about how they lived their lives, I realized why they were holy. They had all their pain and sacrifices but remained committed to Jesus. In as much as many of them were forced to recant their faith, they didn't and offered their lives to be true to it. Their faithfulness, love, and living the truth in Jesus were evidence of their holiness, and we regard them as saints.

Our Readings on this seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time sum up God's call for us to be holy. The Book of Leviticus points out that call because the One calling is Holy indeed. But holiness does not mean to be not doing anything wrong. Though this is true, there should be something more and deeper about God's call for us to be holy.

Jesus in our Gospel teaches us to love, care, and forgive, not only those who can share the same. He makes it clear that loving our enemies, going the extra mile, and handing over the other cloak offer a radical change in human values. Living in this way can help us realize God's merciful love and kindness that we are called to follow.

Hearing or reading God's Word today makes us reflect on how we can live our lives for God and be holy. Living a holy life not only affects us but also creates a wonderful relationship with God and others, no matter what. It can bring peace and harmony to a very broken world. It can bring joy and gladness to a world of anxiety and fear. And to a family, it can build a home and become a haven of love and refuge in a divided world. Maybe it is good to read the lives of saints. In this way, we can see where we can grow as God has called us to be holy, just as He is holy.

Ash Wednesday is here. It marks our entry into the Season of Lent. As we spend these days during this Season of Grace, we allow ourselves to reflect more on how we can live to be faithful to our call to holiness. The disciplines of Lent through Prayer, Fasting, Abstinence, and Doing Acts of Charity or Almsgiving can help us refocus our attention on our call to be holy. And to be holy leads us to live our lives in peace and joy. And in the end, may lead us to enter His Kingdom.

Your friend in Jesus,

Fr. Pascual