Vatican



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Pope Francis will issue an apostolic exhortation on holiness April 9, the Vatican has announced.

In a short note April 5, the Vatican press office said the document will carry the title *Gaudete et Exsultate* ("Rejoice and be glad") and the subtitle: "On the call to holiness in the contemporary world."

An apostolic exhortation is usually considered the second-highest form of papal teaching, after an encyclical letter. Francis has issued two prior exhortations since being elected as pontiff five years ago: *Evangelii Gaudium* ("The Joy of the Gospel") in 2013 and *Amoris Laetitia* ("The Joy of Love") in 2016.

Francis has also authored two papal encyclicals: *Lumen Fidei*, which was begun by retired Pope Benedict XVI; and "*Laudato Si*', On Care for Our Common Home," which focused on environmental issues.

While the new exhortation has been rumored for some weeks, it remains unknown what specifically Francis will address in the document.

The launch event for the exhortation, which will take place mid-day at the Vatican April 9, will be markedly simple. Unlike events for previous papal documents, no cardinals will take part.

Set to speak are Bishop Angelo De Donatis, the vicar general of the Rome diocese, and two laypersons: Gianni Valente, an Italian journalist; and Paola Bignardi, a former president of Catholic Action Italy.

In contrast, the April 2016 launch event for *Amoris Laetitia* included Cardinals Lorenzo Baldisseri and Christoph Schonborn.

The phrase "Rejoice and be glad" is used in Matthew's Gospel at the end of the Beatitudes, when Jesus says of those who are insulted or persecuted for their faith: "Rejoice and be glad for your reward will be great in heaven."

The line is also known from Psalm 118, which offers thanksgiving to God for God's fidelity and mercifulness. "This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice in it and be glad," states the psalm.

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