Introduction: A Modern Mistake

In a world obsessed with political correctness, superficial morality, and Instagrammable virtues, many have reduced holiness to a mere code of conduct. People assume that being holy means being a "good person," following social norms, or maintaining flawless ethics. But here's the problem: **holiness is not ethics**.

Ethics is human; holiness is divine. Ethics is based on rules; holiness is rooted in Grace. Ethics can be achieved through discipline; holiness requires supernatural transformation.

In this article, we will explore why confusing holiness with mere morality is a grave mistake, how the greatest saints *broke* the ethical norms of their time, and why—now more than ever—we need to rediscover the true face of holiness.

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1. Holiness in the Bible: Scandalous and Radical

The Saints Who Shocked the World

If we examine Scripture, we find that saints did not always act in ways that were "correct" by human standards:

- **David danced half-naked** before the Ark of the Covenant (2 Sam 6:14), scandalizing his wife Michal, who preferred a more "decent" form of worship.
- **John the Baptist** lived as an ascetic in the desert, eating locusts and wearing camel's hair (Mt 3:4)—something many today would call extreme.
- **Jesus Himself** broke the Sabbath, ate with sinners, and allowed a prostitute to anoint His feet (Lk 7:36-50).

Were these actions "ethical"? According to the Pharisees, no. But they were *holy*, because they flowed from a radical love for God.

The Difference Between Morality and Holiness

Morality asks: *"Is this allowed?"*
Holiness asks: *"Does this bring me closer to God?"*

A Pharisee meticulously followed the law, yet his heart was far from God (Mt 15:8). Meanwhile, the Good Thief, a criminal, was sanctified in his final moments because he surrendered to divine mercy (Lk 23:42-43).

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2. Holiness in Church History: Beyond Rules

The Saints Who Defied Convention

- **St. Francis of Assisi** abandoned his wealth and embraced extreme poverty—something even his companions considered excessive.
- **St. Teresa of Ávila**, a woman in a male-dominated era, reformed Carmelite spirituality, challenging Church structures.
- **St. Philip Neri** used humor and jokes to evangelize, something many deemed irreverent.

These saints did not follow a rulebook of politeness; they followed the promptings of the Holy Spirit, even if it made them seem *strange* to the world.

The Danger of Reducing Holiness to "Being Nice"

Today, many think holiness means:

- Not swearing.
- Going to Mass on Sundays.
- Being "kind" to everyone.

But that's just an empty shell. **True holiness hurts**, because it demands dying to sin, embracing the Cross, and living in contradiction to the world (Jn 15:19).

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3. Holiness in Today's World: Virtue or Performance?

The Trap of "Light Catholicism"

We live in an age where:

- A *feel-good God* is preached, who only wants you to "be happy."
- *Tolerance* is confused with *truth*.
- A *comfortable spirituality* is sought, without sacrifice.

But holiness **requires** renunciation, spiritual battle, and sometimes unpopularity.

Modern Examples of Misunderstood Holiness

- **Mother Teresa** was criticized for not focusing on "systemic solutions" but instead loving the poor one by one.
- **St. John Paul II** defied the world by defending life and family in an era of sexual revolution.

These saints were not applauded by all. They were *a sign of contradiction* (Lk 2:34).

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4. How to Live True Holiness Today?

Three Keys to Avoid "False Ethics"

1. **Seek Grace, Not Approval**
   Holiness is not measured by likes but by fidelity to God.
2. **Embrace the Cross**
   Without sacrifice, there is no holiness. The easy path does not lead to Heaven.
3. **Let the Holy Spirit Transform You**
   We are not called to be "good," but *holy* (1 Pet 1:16).

A Call to Boldness

God does not need more *proper people*. He needs **saints** who live with apostolic fire, who love without calculation, and who are unafraid to be different.

Conclusion: Holiness is Revolutionary

Holiness is not a set of rules. **It is a madness of love.** It is not about being *perfect* but

being *transformed* by God.

If you want to be holy, brace yourself: the world will not understand you. But in the end, only one thing matters:

"The one who perseveres to the end will be saved" (Mt 10:22).

Are you ready to live a holiness that breaks the mold?