

Holiness

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“Oh, no, not a talk on holiness!”

We're going to talk about two things:

1. God's holiness
2. The call for us to be holy

Things that we are not drawn to

When we think of what God is like:

Great

Good

Holy

We like his greatness and goodness!

But God's holiness is not optional

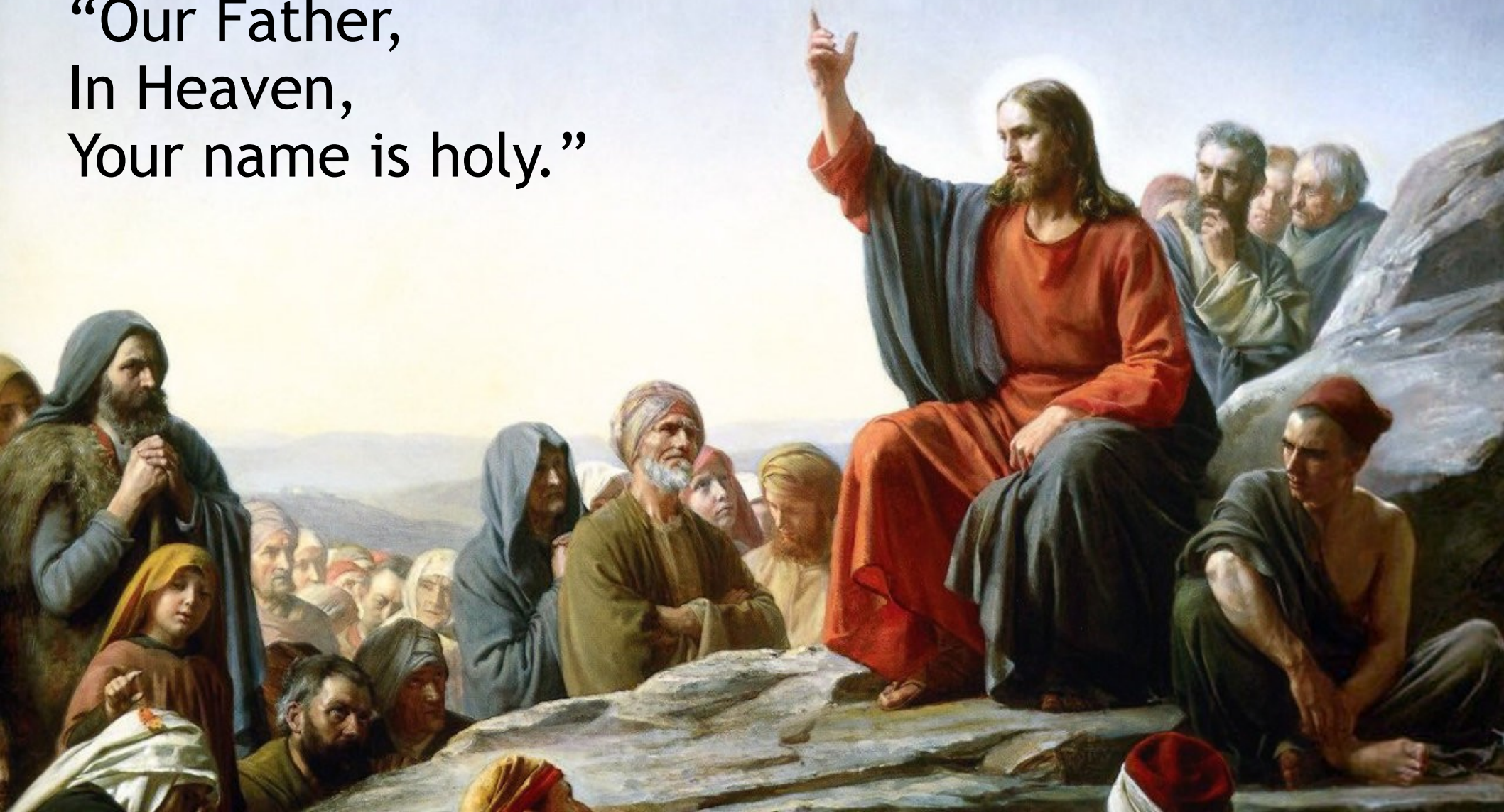
How did Jesus teach us to pray?



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Things that we are not drawn to

It might be because of our own immaturity.

Children don't like:

- the spiciness of curry

- the bitterness of beer

- the texture of smoked salmon

Things that we are not drawn to

It might be because we were shown a pale imitation.

My first pizza (school dinners)



**Things that
we are not
drawn to**

No-one wants
to live the
self-denying life
of a monk or nun.



Growing to love these things

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I didn't like curry because I was immature.
As I have grown up, I have come to love it.



Growing to love these things

I didn't like pizza because
I'd never seen the real thing



Growing to love these things

Similarly, as we grow in Christian maturity:
We develop a mature taste

Growing to love these things

Similarly, as we grow in Christian maturity:
We see things in their proper form

Growing to love these things

Similarly, as we grow in Christian maturity:
We see things in their proper form



What holiness is not

We usually think of holiness as self denial:

Vows of poverty

Vows of chastity

Hair shirts

Lists of things we're
not allowed to do

Disapproving



“Puritanism”



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“Puritanism: The haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy.”

— H. L. Mencken.

“At the bottom of Puritanism one finds envy of the fellow who is having a better time in the world, and hence hatred of him.”

— Also H. L. Mencken.



Actual Puritans

John Howe,
chaplain to
Oliver Cromwell.

A
TREATISE
OF
Delighting
IN
GOD:

From PSAL. xxxvij. 4.

*Delight thy self also in the Lord, and
he shall give thee the Desires of thine
heart.*

In Two Parts.

By John Howe, M. A. sometime Fellow
of Magdalen College, Oxon.

LONDON:

Printed by A. Maxwell, for S. Gellibrand, at
the Ball in St. Pauls Church-yard, 1674.

Actual Puritans

“I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. **I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ.**”

— Philippians 3:8.

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The Puritans *set themselves apart* for God.

“Puritans”

In time, the Puritans came to be known for the things they didn't care for, instead of the one thing they did.



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In time, the Puritans came to be known for the things they didn't care for, instead of the one thing they did.

(No doubt some of them slid into becoming exactly what the caricature looks like.)



A dried-up parody of the real thing

“Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!” [...] Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.”

— Colossians 2:23.



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— Colossians 2:23.

“Having a form of Godliness but denying its power”

— 2 Timothy 3:5.



A dried-up parody of the real thing

“Having a form of pizza
but denying its power”

– 2 Timothy 3:5, more or less.

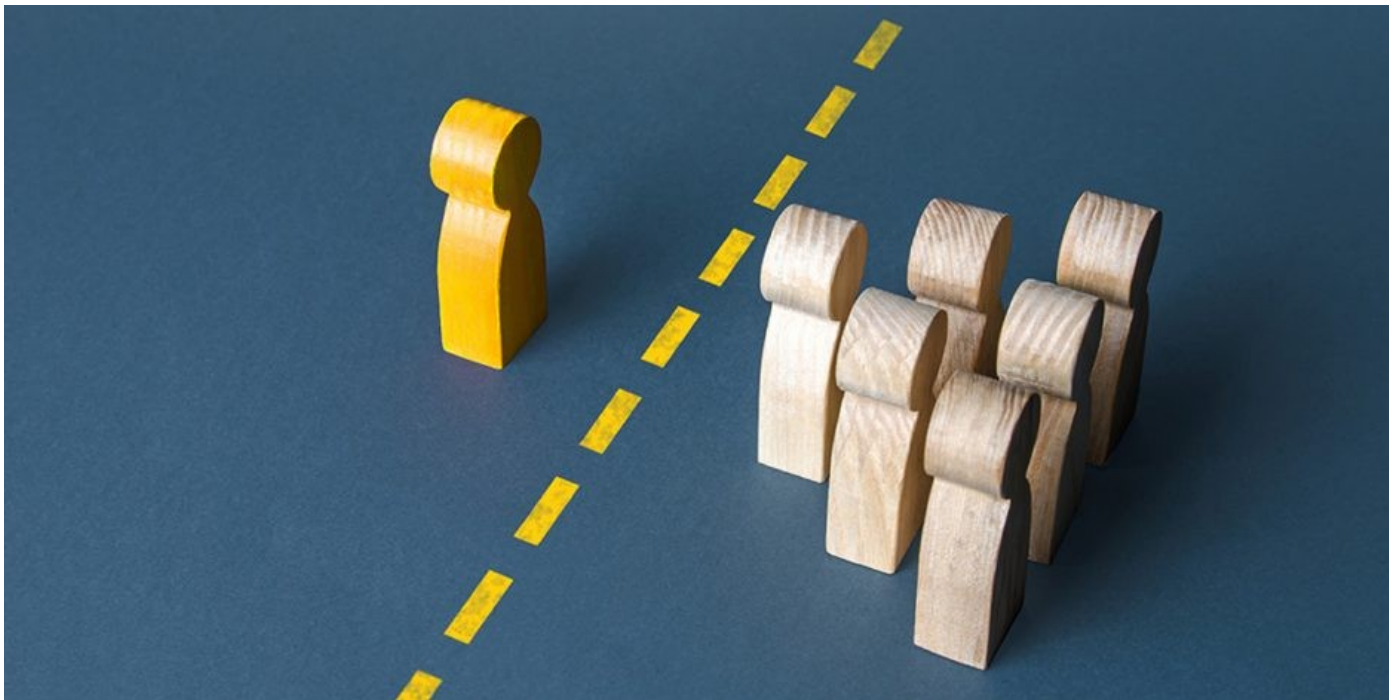


What holiness is

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The Hebrew Old Testament word
And Greek New Testament word
translated "holy" both mean:

“set apart”



What holiness is

“Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.”

— Genesis 2:3.

He set one day apart from the others.

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We start with *God's* holiness.

What holiness is

“My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways”, declares the Lord.

“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

— Isaiah 55:8-9.

God is unimaginably above us.

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(But at the same very close to us: see Psalm 119.)

What holiness is

What does this mean for *our* Holiness?

We are set apart when
we separate ourselves from lesser things
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(Like the real Puritans.)



What holiness is

“Both **the one who makes people holy** and **those who are made holy** are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.”

— Hebrews 2:11.

God's holiness calls us to become holy *as he is*.

What holiness is

Becoming holy is
coming closer to God
at the expense of
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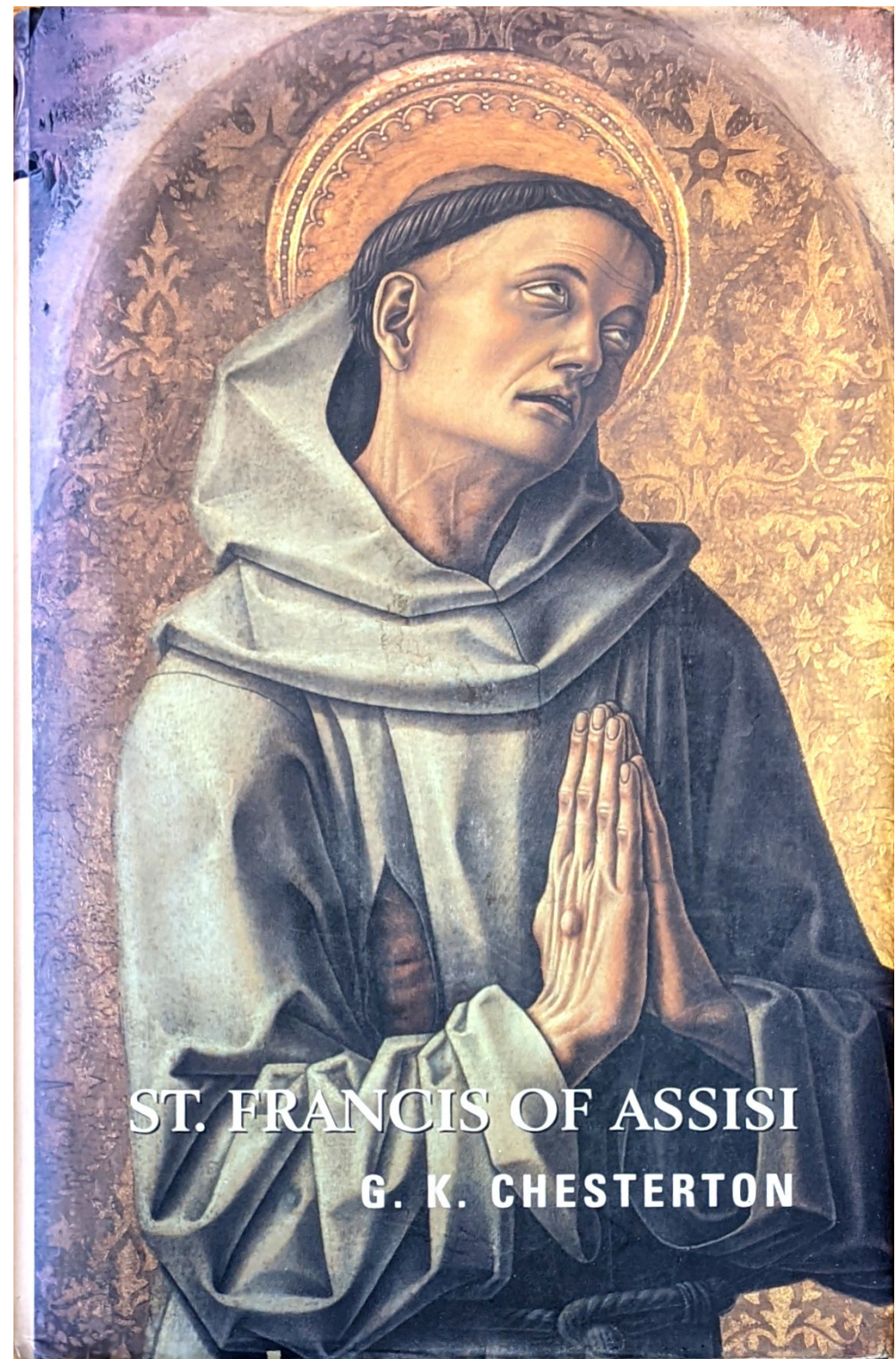
A joyful trade!

What holiness is

I've been cheating!



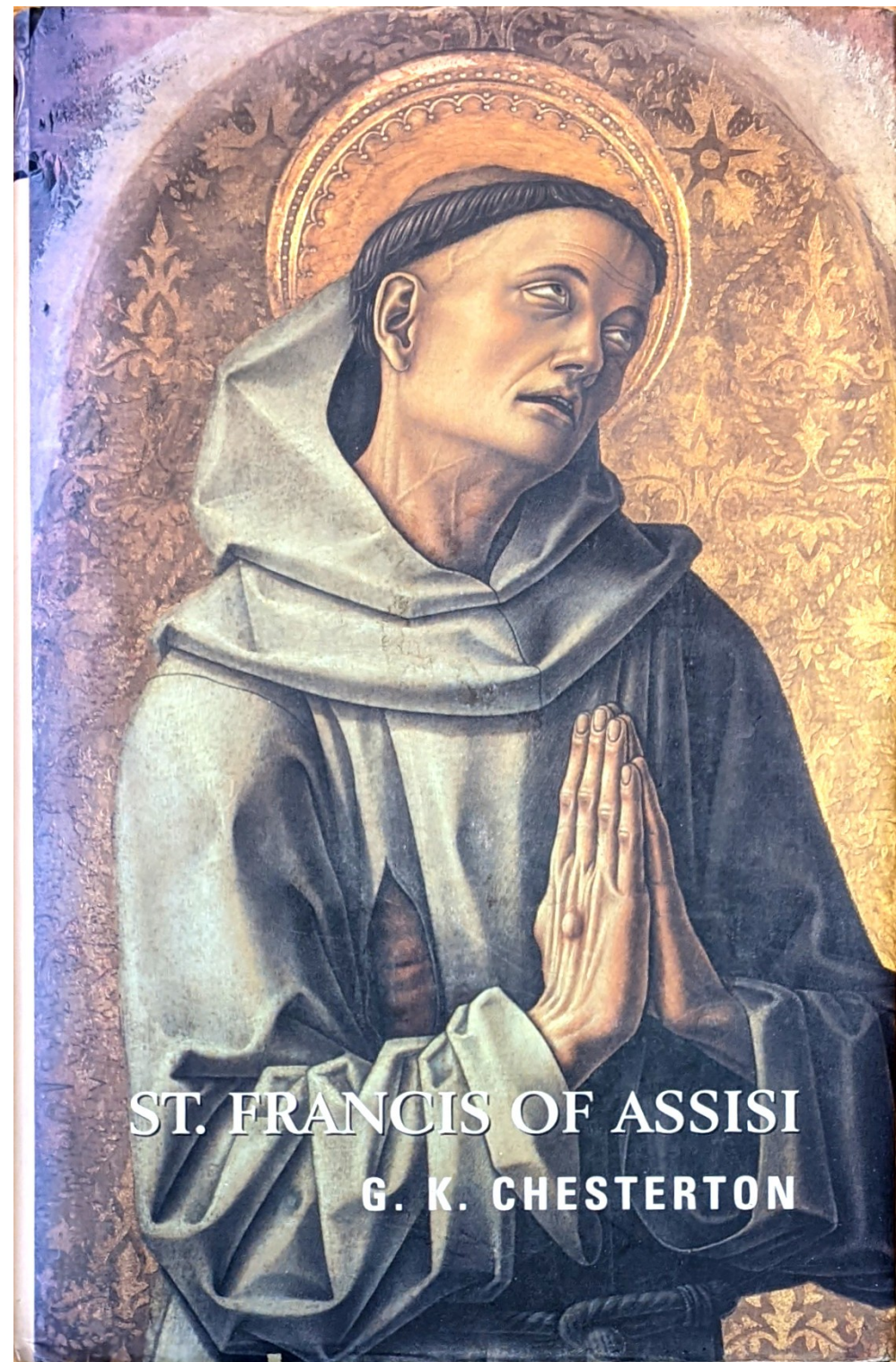
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St. Francis was,
most of all, *joyful*.



What holiness is

“Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; **the reality, however, is found in Christ.**”

— Colossians 2:16-17.

Is holiness an obligation?

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In our wedding vows, I was asked:

Mike, will you take Fiona
to be your wife?
Will you love her,
comfort her,
honour and protect her,
and, forsaking all others,
be faithful to her as long
as you both shall live?



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Is holiness an obligation?

I set myself apart
for Fiona.

I made myself
holy to her.



Holiness is a privilege

Being set apart for Fiona
is a privilege,
not a burden.



Holiness is a privilege

When we love God,
being set apart for him
is a privilege,
not a burden.

Holiness is a privilege

The more clearly we see him,
The better we know him,
The more the love him,
The more we will want to be holy.

Three things that go together

How did Jesus teach us to pray?

“Our Father,
In Heaven,
Your name is holy.”

God is good
God is great
God is holy

The holiness to come

“The spirit in us lives directly on God; but the mind, and still more the body, receives life from Him at a thousand removes — through our ancestors, through our food, through the elements. [...]

What would it be to taste at the fountain-head that stream of which even these lower reaches prove so intoxicating? Yet that, I believe, is what lies before us. [We are] to drink joy from the fountain of joy.

— C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*.

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