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*Venerable Carlo Acutis (1991-2006): Computer Whiz and Social Media Evangelizer
Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation Christus Vivit and the Universal Call to
Holiness and Mission of the Youth and Young Adults of the World*

CHAMINADE HIGH SCHOOL MASS HOMILY MAY 17, 2019

VENERABLE CARLO ACUTIS was an Italian teenager who lived from 1991-2006 and died of leukemia at the age of 15. Pope Francis declared him Venerable on July 5, 2018, and his cause for canonization is gaining momentum.

If you Google Carlo Acutis, you will find the picture of a winning young man with a charismatic smile in a blue blazer with a blue and gold tie.

He attended the Istituto Leone XIII, a high school run by the Jesuits in Milan. Carlo probably would have been very comfortable here as a student at Chaminade.

Carlo was a computer whiz and he was on **fire** with a love for the Mass and the Body and Blood of Christ.

He was known for documenting Eucharistic miracles around the world and cataloging them all onto a website that he himself created in the months before his death from leukemia.

As he battled cancer and faced death, Carlo focused on the Eucharist. He focused on **eternal life**.

In his Apostolic Exhortation to the Young People of the World entitled *Christus Vivit*, Pope Francis cites the heroic holiness of Venerable Carlo Acutis:

“Carlo was well aware that the whole apparatus of (contemporary) communications, advertising and social networking can be used to lull us, to make us addicted to consumerism and buying the latest thing on the market, obsessed with our free time, caught up in negativity. Yet he knew how to use the new communications technology to transmit the Gospel, to communicate values and beauty. Carlo didn’t fall into the trap. He saw that many young people, wanting to be different, really end up being like everyone else, running after whatever the powerful set before them with the mechanisms of consumerism and distraction. In this way they do not bring forth the gifts the Lord has given them; they do not offer the world those unique personal talents that God has given to each of them. As a result, Carlo said, ‘everyone is born an original, but many people end up dying as photocopies.’ Don’t let that happen to you!” (104-106)

So, this morning Venerable Carlo Acutis and our Holy Father Pope Francis are putting on the table a confrontational question to every Chaminade student.

Are you living life as a bland photocopy — surrendering to a bland consumerism and social media addicted culture?

Or are you living as an **original**, an **original** ignited by your love for Jesus Christ, your love for the inspired Word of God and your love for the Eucharist?

As we know, the key to be an **original** is to give ourselves entirely to Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life and to make Eternal Life and a burning desire for **heaven** the **foundation** of our lives on Earth.

This was Venerable Carlo Acutis’ gift. He teaches us that young people are called to be heroically holy — not tomorrow, not 10 years from now, but today!

In *Christus Vivit*, Pope Francis traces the impact of the great young saints of the Old Testament, the New Testament and of Church history.

Young saints keep the Church young, vital and evangelizing. Young saints shake up the Church from its lethargy and reawaken a missionary spirit in her.

St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622), the patron saint of journalists, gave this advice to young people: “Be who you are and be that well...Be who you are and be that well.”

We all discover who we are in the flames of the love of Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the **way**. He leads us on the adventure of our own unique educational, career and vocational path. A deep spiritual life, a deep love for the Gospels, a radical fidelity to the Sunday Mass and the Eucharist is the best investment in being an **original**. If we are lukewarm in our Catholic faith, if we simply drift and let the tide of the world direct us, we very quickly become bland photocopies.

Jesus is the **truth**. The teachings of the Catholic Church are objectively true. When we allow the truths of the Apostles’ Creed, the truths of the Word of God and the

“He teaches us that young people are called to be heroically holy — not tomorrow, not 10 years from now, but today!”



Seven Sacraments, the truths of the Ten Commandments and Catholic Moral Teaching to illuminate our minds, hearts, consciences and daily moral decisions, we became a unique and holy **original** that sets the **world** on **fire** with Christ’s love and the mission of mercy of the holy Catholic Church on Earth.

Jesus is the **life**. Jesus is the life of grace and the life of holiness. Allow the Holy Spirit to direct your life. Allow the young Jesus, the young Mary and all the young saints of the Old Testament, the New Testament and Church history to inspire you to heroic holiness. Do not hold anything back.

To embrace Jesus as the center of your life, embrace the prayer of the young Samuel in the Old Testament who late one night heard the call of God. He opened his heart and responded: “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.” (1 Samuel 3:9-10)

As your Bishop, as your Servant and as your Successor of the Apostles on Long Island, I am very proud of each one of you and am very grateful to each of you for your desire to embrace heroic holiness and the path of young saints like Venerable Carlo Acutis.

Thank you for being an **original** and not a bland photocopy! †

