Wednesday of the Twenty-third Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Lk* 6:20-26): Raising his eyes toward his disciples Jesus said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for the Kingdom of God is yours. Blessed are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in heaven. For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way.

But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. But woe to you who are filled now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will grieve and weep. Woe to you when all speak well of you, for their ancestors treated the false prophets in this way.”

“Blessed are you who are poor. Woe to you who are rich”

Fr. Joaquim MESEGUER García
(Rubí, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, Jesus points out where true happiness lies. In Luke's version, the Beatitudes are accompanied by lamentations for those who do not accept the message of salvation but instead shut themselves off in a self-sufficient and selfish life. With the Beatitudes and the lamentations, Jesus applies the doctrine of the two paths: the path of life and the path of death. There is no neutral third possibility: those who do not walk toward life are headed toward death; those who do not follow the light live in darkness.

"Blessed are you who are poor, for the Kingdom of God is yours" (Luke 6:20). This beatitude is the foundation of all the others, for those who are poor will be able to receive the Kingdom of God as a gift. Those who are poor will realize what they must hunger and thirst for: not for material goods, but for the Word of God; not for power, but for justice and love. Those who are poor will be able to weep at the suffering of the world. Those who are poor will know that all their wealth is God, and that, for this reason, they will be misunderstood and persecuted by the world.

"But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation" (Luke 6:24). This lamentation is also the foundation of all those that follow, for those who are rich and self-sufficient, those who do not know how to put their wealth at the service of others, are locked in their own selfishness and bring about their

own misfortune. May God free us from the desire for riches, from chasing the promises of the world, and from setting our hearts on material goods; may God not allow us to be satisfied with human praise and flattery, for that would mean setting our hearts on the glory of the world and not on that of Jesus Christ. It will benefit us to remember what St Basil tells us: "Those who love their neighbor as themselves possess nothing more than their neighbor."

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “For it is not evil report that you should fear, but that you should prove partners in dissimulation. For then, You will lose your savor, and be trodden under foot.” (Saint john Chrysostom)

- “The Beatitudes are promises resplendent with the new image of the world and of man inaugurated by Jesus, his ‘transformation of values.’ When man is a companion on Jesus’ way, then he lives by new standards.” (Benedict XVI)

- “The Beatitudes are at the heart of Jesus' preaching. They take up the promises made to the chosen people since Abraham. The Beatitudes fulfill the promises by ordering them no longer merely to the possession of a territory, but to the Kingdom of heaven.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, nº 1716)