

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Gospel text (Mt 5:1-12): When he saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit...”

Fr. Pablo CASAS Aljama
(Sevilla, Spain)

Today, we can read this Gospel, so well known by most of us but, at the same time, so surprising. With this fragment of The Beatitudes, Jesus offers us a model of life; some values that, He says, are the only ones that can make us truly happy.

Surely, happiness is what we all are looking for in our life. And if we would ask anyone how they are trying to be happy, or where they are looking for their own happiness, we would probably get many different answers. There would be those who would claim they only find happiness in solid Christian family principles; others, in being healthy and having a job; others, who revel in friendship and leisure time... and then, there would be those more influenced by our consumer

society, who would claim that happiness consists in having plenty of money to be able to acquire as many things as possible and, most of all, to reach the highest possible social status.

The beatitudes Jesus is proposing to us are not, precisely, those our today's world is offering us. The Lord says that 'fortunate' will be those who are poor in spirit, the gentle, those who mourn, those who hunger and thirst for justice, the merciful, those with a pure heart, those who work for peace, those who are persecuted for the cause of justice... (cf. Mt 5:3-11).

This message by the Lord is addressed to those who want to live a life of unselfishness, of meekness, of desire for justice, of preoccupation and interest for the problems of their fellow men, and cast aside all the rest.

We can do a lot of good by praying, or by fraternally correcting those who criticize us for believing in God and belonging to the Church! Jesus clearly points it out in the last beatitude: "Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me" (Mt 5:11).

St. Basil says: "Beauty, nor stature, nor honors bestowed by all mankind, nor kingship itself, nor other human attribute that one might mention, do we judge great, nay, we do not even consider them worth praying for, nor do we look with admiration upon those who possess them, but our hopes lead us forward to a more distant time, and everything we do is by way of preparation for the other life."

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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"For it is not evil report that you should fear, but lest you should prove partners in dissimulation. For then, You will lose your savor, and be trodden under foot. For this is the very use of salt, to sting the corrupt." (Saint John Chrysostom)

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"The word blessed. It is like a refrain reminding us of the Lord's call to advance together with him on a road which, for all its many challenges, leads to true happiness." (Francis)

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“Blessed are the poor in spirit’ (Mt 5:3). The Beatitudes reveal an order of happiness and grace, of beauty and peace. Jesus celebrates the joy of the poor, to whom the Kingdom already belongs.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, N° 2546)